

at one of these and then lets go, whilst the other rank pulls on the opposite cable. These rowers have a pleasant chaunt at their work usually, singing *Lá la! Lá la!** The three tenders which we have mentioned above also use oars, and tow the great ships when required.

“On each ship four decks are constructed; and there are cabins and public rooms for the merchants. Some of these cabins are provided with closets and other conveniences, and they have keys so that their tenants can lock them, and carry with them their wives or concubines. The crew in some of the cabins have their children, and they sow kitchen herbs, ginger, etc., in wooden buckets. The captain is a very great Don; and when he lands, the archers and negro-slaves march before him with javelins, swords, drums, horns, and trumpets.” (IV. pp. 91 *seqq.* and 247 *seqq.* combined.) Comparing this very interesting description with Polo's, we see that they agree in all essentials except size and the number of decks. It is not unlikely that the revival of the trade with India, which Kúblái stimulated, may have in its development under his successors led to the revival also of the larger ships of former times to which Marco alludes.

CHAPTER II.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ISLAND OF CHIPANGU, AND THE GREAT KAAAN'S DESPATCH OF A HOST AGAINST IT.

CHIPANGU is an Island towards the east in the high seas, 1500 miles distant from the Continent; and a very great Island it is.¹

The people are white, civilized, and well-favoured. They are Idolaters, and are dependent on nobody. And I can tell you the quantity of gold they have is endless; for they find it in their own Islands, [and the King does not allow it to be exported. Moreover] few merchants visit the country because it is so far from the main land, and thus it comes to pass that their gold is abundant beyond all measure.²

I will tell you a wonderful thing about the Palace of the Lord of that Island. You must know that he hath a great Palace which is entirely roofed with fine gold, just as our churches are roofed with lead, insomuch that it

* Corresponding to the “Hevelow and rumbelow” of the Christian oarsmen. (See *Cœur de Lion* in *Weber*, II. 99.)