

WATCHTOWERS AND STOREHOUSES IN QUINSAI ~~≠~~MARCO POLO

take through the city in the same way as they do with the barges on the lake. There are many  
R beautiful houses in the town, and through all the city there are built both here and  
P V FB FB P there about the streets many great and high towers of fine stone for the common use of the  
P P district, where the neighbouring people carry all their things that they be not burnt up,  
R P Z when about the city any house by misfortune catches fire. And there are sixty thousand  
guards who guard the city from fire, for you may know [67a] that fire is very often lighted  
FB Z in the town here and there by accident because there are very many houses of wood.  
R FB Moreover I tell you that the people of this city are idolaters and since it was conquered  
V VL G are subject to the rule of the great Kaan, and have Tartar money of notes by the  
commandment of the great Kaan. One makes the money thus. One takes the innermost bark of a  
mulberry tree and lays it together and makes of it, the same as one does with us, paper of which  
one makes sheets, as one does our paper. The sheets one tears after the shape of a penny on which  
one prints the stamp and mark of the great Kaan. The money is taken for everything which one  
R will buy and sell. And the men as well as the women are fair and handsome and always dress  
for the most part in silk, because of the great abundance which they have of that material which  
is produced in the whole territory of Quinsai, besides the great quantity which is continually  
V VA brought in from other provinces by merchants. And they eat all flesh both of horses, dogs,  
Z and of all other brute beasts and other animals in general which for nothing in the  
FB world would any Christian here eat. And again I tell you that after the great Kaan  
V took the city it was ordered that on each of the greater part of the twelve thousand bridges<sup>1</sup>  
P R of the city ten men are on guard for each night and each day, under a covering, that is  
five by night and five by day. And these are to guard the city that none should do evil  
FB FB things and that none should dare to think of treason nor make his city rebel against  
P R him, or thefts or murders be committed. And in each guard-room there is a great wooden  
tabernacle with a large basin and a clock,<sup>2</sup> with which they know the hours of the night and  
likewise those of the day. And always when an hour is past at the beginning of the night one of  
the said watchmen strikes once on the tabernacle and on the basin, and the district perceives that  
it is one hour. At the second they give two blows, and they do the like at each hour, increasing

<sup>1</sup> en chascune des.xii<sup>m</sup>.pont cf. p. 327 n.1 above, and n.2 below. chascune des.xii.porte would be an easy correction, but seems to have no support. Notice the feminine chascune agreeing with porte compared with chascun de cesti pont above. G here omits the number. V: e sapiate che per chadaun luogo ouer per la mazor parte di ponte sono la note guardadi da diexe milia homeni per che algun non la fesse reuelar.

<sup>2</sup> vn tabernacolo grande di legno con vn bacino grande, & vn horiuolo The tabernacle was, perhaps, a wooden fish or hollow wood-drum shaped something like a reliquary or tabernacle. The basin was a brass gong made like a basin. The three instruments have been the normal furniture of the guardhouses above city gates in more recent times.