

THE STRAVIZA OR DRINKING PARTIES IN ROSIE \neq MARCO POLO
which are thirty, in some forty, in some fifty, where there will be husbands and wives and children. And each company set up among themselves a king or captain and rules, namely that if anyone said some improper word or did something which is against the rule he would be punished by the master set up. Now there are men who might be called innkeepers, who keep this cerbesia for sale. These companies go indeed to these taverns and continue the whole day in drinkings. And they call those drinkings straviza. But in the evening the innkeepers make reckoning of the cerbesia which they have consumed, and each pays the share belonging to himself and wife and children, if they are there. And while they are at those straviza or drinkings they have money advanced to them on the children by the merchants from abroad, namely from Gaçarie, Soldanie, and other places round about. And they spend these coins in drinking, and so they sell their children. But when the ladies stay all day at these drinkings, they do not leave them because they wish to pass water, but their maids bring great sponges and put them under them so stealthily that the other people do not notice. For one seems to be talking with the mistress and another puts the sponge under, and so the mistress passes water in the sponge as she sits, and afterwards the maid takes away the sponge quite full, and so they pass water whenever they wish to do so. We will also tell you a thing which once happened there. For when, while a man was leaving those drinkings with his wife to go home in the evening, his wife set herself down to pass water, the hair of her thigh being frozen by the exceeding cold was caught up with the grass, so that the woman being unable to move herself for pain cried out. And then her husband, who was very drunk, being sorry for his wife stooped down there and began to blow, wishing to melt that ice with warm breath. And while he blew the moisture of the breath was frozen and so the hairs of the beard were caught together with the hair of the woman's thigh. And therefore in the same way he could not move thence because of the exceeding pain; and there he was bending down like this. And thus, if they wished to leave that spot, it was necessary for some to come by who should break up that ice. The large money truly of those people are bars of gold of the length indeed of one half-foot, and of the price perhaps of five shillings of grossi for one. The small money also are martens heads. There is nothing else which does to mention and so we will leave Rosie and will tell you of the

z z Greater Sea, namely what cities and provinces there are all round and what people,
 z so as you will be able to hear quite clearly. And we will begin first of all to speak
 z of Constantinople. But yet we will tell you first of all of a certain province which
 is between tramontaine and the plough-beam. Now you may know that there is
 in that country of which I have told you a province which is called Lac which
 TA borders with the great province of Rosie. And they have a king and they are Christians
 z and Saracens. And they have furs enough and good which are carried away by the
 z merchants through many other parts. They live moreover by trade and by crafts.