EXCERPTS FROM THE BOOK OF MARCO POLO

*THE VENETIAN: CONCERNING THE KINGSOM AND MARVELS OF THE EAST*

**BOOK SECOND. PART I.**

**CHAPTER X.**

**THE PALACE OF THE GREAT KAAN**

*You must know that it is the greatest palace that ever was. … The roof is very high, and the walls of the Palace are all covered with gold and silver. They are also decorated with dragons, beasts and birds, knights and idols, and other subjects. And on the ceiling too you see nothing but gold and silver and painting.*

*On each of the four sides there is a great marble staircase leading to the top of the marble wall, and forming the approach to the palace.*

*The Hall of the Palace is so large that it could easily dine 6000 people; and it is amazing to see how many rooms there are. The building is so big, so rich, and so beautiful, that no man on earth could design anything superior to it. …*

**BOOK SECOND. PART I.**

**CHAPTER XXX.**

**THE BLACK STONES THAT ARE DUG AND ARE BURNT FOR FUEL**

*It is a fact that all over the country of Cathay there is a kind of black stone existing in the mountains, which they dig out and burn like firewood. If you supply the fire with them at night, you will find them still lit in the morning; and they make such fine fuel that no other is used throughout the country. It is true that they have plenty of wood also, but they do not burn it, because those stones burn better and cost less.*

*With the large number of people and the number of public baths they have—for every one takes a bath at least three times a week, and in winter if possible every day, whilst every nobleman and man of wealth has a private bath for his own use—the wood would not work for keeping the water warm.*