

paper, which is exchanged every year for other paper freshly stamped; the old money being taken at the new year to the mint, where the owners receive an equal amount of fine new paper, paying always a fee of two per cent. in good silver money, and the old (paper) money is thrown into the fire. Their silver is sold by weight, but they have also some metal coinage of a coarse description.

"I am of opinion that the religion of these Cathayans is paganism, although many people of Zagatai and other nations who have been there assert that they are Christians. And when I asked on what ground they judged them to be Christians, the answer was that they had images in their temples as we have. And it having chanced once when I was at Tana, and the ambassador aforesaid was standing with me, that there passed in front of us one Nicolas Diedo, an old Venetian of ours, who sometimes used to wear a coat of cloth quilted with taffetas, and with open sleeves (as used to be the fashion in Venice) over a jerkin of leather, with a hood on the back, and a straw hat on his head that might be worth four sous, as soon as the ambassador saw him he said with some surprise, 'That's the very dress that the Cathay people wear; they must be of the same religion with you, for they dress just like you!'

"In the country of which we are speaking there is no wine grown, for 'tis a mighty cold country, but of other necessities of life they have good store." *Ramusio* ii, f. 106 v, and 107.

NOTE XVII.

THE EMBASSY SENT BY SHAH RUKH TO THE COURT OF
CHINA.

A.D. 1419—1422.

Abstracted from Quatremère's Translation in NOTICES ET EXTRAITS
xiv, Pt. i, pp. 387 seqq.; with Notes.

The embassy embraced representatives not only of Shah Rukh himself but of several princes of his family governing different provinces of the empire founded by Timur, and appears also, like the ordinary sham embassies which frequented China under the Ming dynasty, to have been accompanied by merchants bound on purely commercial objects. Shádi Khwāja was the chief of Shah Rukh's ambassadors, and Ghaiassuddin Nakkásh ("The Painter"), one of the envoys (sent by one of the king's sons, Mirza Baisangar), was the author of the narrative which has been preserved by Abdurrazzáq; his master having enjoined on him to keep a full diary of everything worthy of note.

The party left Herat, the capital of Shah Rukh, on the 16th of Dhu'lkadah A.H. 822 (4th December, 1419), and proceeded via Balkh to