

with some other odoriferous ingredients to burn as a perfume before their idols. And in some other places it is so abundant that they constantly use it for fuel, whilst others give it to their sick horses, so little esteem have they for this root in those regions of Cathay. But they have a much greater appreciation of another little root which grows in the mountains of Succuir where the rhubarb grows, and which they call *Mambroni Cini*. This is extremely dear, and is used in most of their ailments, but especially where the eyes are affected. They grind it on a stone with rosewater, and anoint the eyes with it. The result is wonderfully beneficial. He did not believe that this root was imported into these parts, and he was not able to describe it.¹ Then seeing the great pleasure that I beyond the rest of the company took in his stories, he told me that over all the country of Cathay they made use of another plant, or rather of its leaves. This is called by those people *Chiai Catai*,² and grows in the district of Cathay, which is called CACIANFU.³ This is commonly used and much esteemed over all those countries. They take of that herb whether dry or fresh, and boil it well in water. One or two cups of this decoction taken on an empty stomach removes fever, head-ache, stomach-ache, pain in the side or in the joints, and it should be taken as hot as you can bear it. He said besides that it was good for no end of other ailments which he could not then remember, but gout was one of them. And if it happens that one feels incommoded in the stomach from having eaten too much, one has but to take a little of this decoction and in a short time all will be digested. And it is so highly valued and esteemed that every one going on a journey takes it with him, and those people would gladly give (as he expressed it) a sack of rhubarb for an ounce of *Chiai Catai*. And those people of Cathay do say that if in our parts of the world, in Persia and the country of the Franks, people only knew of it there is no doubt that the merchants would cease altogether to buy *Ravend Cini* as they call rhubarb in those parts.⁴ . . . "I asked him what route he had followed in returning from Campion

¹ *Mambroni Cini* is, I suppose, *Mámírán-i-Chíní*; the first word of which is explained by F. Johnson as "swallow-wort." Bernier also mentions *Mamiron* as a little root very good for eye ailments, which used to be brought with rhubarb to Kashmir by caravans from China (in *H. Gen. des Voyages*, tom, 37, p. 335). It is possibly the *Jinseng* or "Man-Root" (from its forked radish shape), so much prized by the Chinese as a tonic, etc., and which used to sell for three times its weight in silver. Another root, called by the Chinese *Foling*, comes from the rhubarb region in question, and was formerly well known in European pharmacy under the name *Radix China*. This, however, was not a "little root."

² (Pers.) *Chá-i-Khitai*, "Tea of China." Here and in some other words in this narrative the *ch* must be sounded soft, and not as usual in Italian. I do not know of any earlier mention of tea in an European book.

³ *Cachanfu* is probably Kanjanfu, i.e. Singanfu (see *infra*, p. 148). Tea would come to the frontier from that quarter, whether it grows there or not.

⁴ Pers. *Ráwand-i-Chíní*, "China Rhubarb."