

They all carry a stick with an iron ferule, on which they lean in walking, and this they call their third leg.

Silk is very plentiful in China, for the worms which produce it attach themselves to certain fruits on which they feed, and require little attention. This is how they come to have silk in such abundance that it is used for clothing even by poor monks and beggars. Indeed, but for the demand among merchants, silk would there have no value at all. Among the Chinese one cotton dress is worth two or three of silk.

They have a custom among them for every merchant to cast into ingots all the gold and silver that he possesses, each of these ingots weighing a hundredweight, more or less, and these he places over the gate of his house. The man who has accumulated five such ingots puts a ring on his finger; he who has ten puts two rings; he who has fifteen is called *Satí*, which amounts to the same thing as *Káramí* in Egypt. An ingot is in China called *Barkálah*.¹

The people of China do not use either gold or silver coin in their commercial dealings. The whole amount of those metals that reaches the country is cast into ingots as I have just said. Their buying and selling is carried on by means of pieces of paper about as big as the palm of the hand, carrying the mark or seal of the Emperor. Twenty-five of these bills are called *bálishht*, which is as much as to say with us

¹ *Pers.* Pargálah, *frustum, segmentum* (*Meninski*). *Sati*, again, is probably the Indian word *Set*, or *Cheti* as it is called by some old travellers. The *Karami* merchants were a sort of guild or corporation in Egypt, who appear to have been chiefly occupied in the spice trade. Quatremère gives many quotations mentioning them, but without throwing much light on the subject (see *Not. et Extraits*, xii, 639, and xiv, 214). It is a common story in India, of rich Hindu bankers and the like, that they build gold bricks into the walls of their houses.

The *Masálah-al Absár* relates that in some of the Indian islands there are men who, when they have succeeded in filling one pot with gold, put a flag on their house-top, and another flag for each succeeding potful. Sometimes, it is said, as many as ten of these flags are seen on one roof. And in Russia, according to Ibn Fozlan, when a man possessed 10,000 dirhems, his wife wore one gold chain, two gold chains for 20,000 dirhems, and so on (*Not. et Extraits*, xiii, p. 219; *Ibn Fozlan* by *Fraehn*, p. 5).