

king, there presented himself a Mahomedan merchant of some sixty years of age. After he had made his salutations to the king, in answer to a question whence he was come, he said that he was lately arrived from the kingdom of XETAIA. This Xavier supposed to be the same as the Cathay spoken of by Marco Polo the Venetian in his Travels, and by Hayton the Armenian in his History, and which later writers have determined to be in Tartary, or not far from it. And when the king inquired for further particulars about that empire, and as to the length of the merchant's residence there, he replied that he had been thirteen years at the metropolis of the country, which he called Kambalu. . . . This he said was the residence of the kings, who were most powerful sovereigns. For, indeed, their empire included one thousand five hundred cities; some of them immensely populous. He had often seen the king, and it was his practice never to give any reply, favourable or unfavourable, to a request, but through the eunuchs who stood by him, unless, indeed, he was addressed in writing. King Akbar asking how he had got admission into the empire, he replied that it was under the character of an ambassador from the King of *Caygar* (KASHGAR). On arriving at the frontier he was detained by the local governor, who after inspecting the seals of the letters which he carried, sent off a despatch to the king by swift horse-post. The answer giving permission for the party to proceed came back within a month. In going on to the capital they changed horses at every stage, as is practised in Europe, and thus got speedily over the ground, although the distance is very great; for they accomplished one hundred Italian miles every day. On the whole journey they met with no affront or unfair treatment, for the local judges administered justice to all, and thieves were punished with great severity. When asked about the aspect of the natives, he said that they were the whitest people he had ever seen, whiter even than the *Rumis*, or Europeans. Most of the men cherished a long beard. . . . The greater number were *Isautes*, i.e. Christians (for thus Christians are called after Jesus, just as if you were to say Jesuits!) When asked if they were all *Isautes*, he said, by no means, for there are many *Mussautes* (i.e. Jews, for Moses in the tongue of