

diversion and mirth, so that everybody is full of laughter and enjoyment. And when the performance is over, the company breaks up and every one goes to his quarters.

NOTE 1.—We are to conceive of rows of small tables, at each of which were set probably but two guests. This seems to be the modern Chinese practice, and to go back to some very old accounts of the Tartar nations. Such tables we find in use in the tenth century, at the court of the King of Bolghar (see *Prologue*, note 2, ch. ii.), and at the Chinese entertainments to Shah Rukh's embassy in the fifteenth century. Megasthenes described the guests at an Indian banquet as having a table set before each individual. (*Athenaeus*, IV. 39, *Yonge's Transl.*)

[Compare Rubruck's account, Rockhill's ed., p. 210: "The Chan sits in a high place to the north, so that he can be seen by all : . . ." (See also Friar Odoric, *Cathay*, p. 141.)—H. C.]

NOTE 2.—This word (G. T. and Ram.) is in the Crusca Italian transformed into an adjective, "*vaselle vernicate d'oro*," and both Marsden and Pauthier have substantially adopted the same interpretation, which seems to me in contradiction with the text. In Pauthier's text the word is *vernigal*, pl. *vernigaux*, which he explains, I know not on what authority, as "*coupes sans anses vernies ou laquées d'or*." There is, indeed, a Venetian sea-term, *Vernegal*, applied to a wooden bowl in which the food of a mess is put, and it seems possible that this word may have been substituted for the unknown *Vernique*. I suspect the latter was some Oriental term, but I can find nothing nearer than the Persian *Bärni*, Ar. *Al-Bärniya*, "vas fictile in quo quid recondunt," whence the Spanish word *Albornia*, "a great glazed vessel in the shape of a bowl, with handles." So far as regards the form, the change of *Barniya* into *Vernique* would be quite analogous to that change of *Hundwáníy* into *Ondanique*, which we have already met with. (See *Dozy et Engelmann, Glos. des Mots Espagnols*, etc., 2nd ed., 1867, p. 73; and *Boerio, Diz. del. Dial. Venez.*)

[*F. Godefroy, Dict., s.v. Vernigal*, writes: "Coupe sans anse, vernie ou laquée d'or," and quotes, besides Marco Polo, the *Regle du Temple*, p. 214, éd. Soc. Hist. de France:

"Les *vernigaus* et les *escuelles*."

About *vernegal*, cf. *Rockhill, Rubruck*, p. 86, note. Rubruck says (*Soc. de Géog.* p. 241): "Implevimus unum *veringal* de biscocto et platellum unum de pomis et aliis fructibus." Mr. Rockhill translates *veringal* by *basket*.

Dr. Bretschneider (*Peking*, 28) mentions "a large jar made of wood and *varnished*, the inside lined with silver," and he adds in a note "perhaps this statement may serve to explain Marco Polo's *verniques* or *vaselle vernicate d'oro*, big enough to hold drink for eight or ten persons."—H. C.]

A few lines above we have "of the capacity of a *firkin*." The word is *bigoncio*, which is explained in the *Vocab. Univ. Ital.* as a kind of tub used in the vintage, and containing 3 *mine*, each of half a *stajo*. This seems to point to the *Tuscan* mina, or half *stajo*, which is = $\frac{1}{2}$ of a bushel. Hence the *bigoncio* would = a bushel, or, in old liquid measure, about a firkin.

NOTE 3.—A buffet, with flagons of liquor and goblets, was an essential feature in the public halls or tents of the Mongols and other Asiatic races of kindred manners. The ambassadors of the Emperor Justin relate that in the middle of the pavilion of Dizabulus, the Khan of the Turks, there were set out drinking-vessels, and flagons and great jars, all of gold; corresponding to the *coupes* (or *hanas à mances*), the *verniques*, and the *grant peitere* and *petietes peiteres* of Polo's account. Rubruquis describes in Batu Khan's tent a buffet near the entrance, where *Kumiz* was set forth,