

CHAPTER XXIX.

CONCERNING THE RICE-WINE DRUNK BY THE PEOPLE OF CATHAY.

MOST of the people of Cathay drink wine of the kind that I shall now describe. It is a liquor which they brew of rice with a quantity of excellent spice, in such fashion that it makes better drink than any other kind of wine; it is not only good, but clear and pleasing to the eye.¹ And being very hot stuff, it makes one drunk sooner than any other wine.

NOTE 1.—The mode of making Chinese rice-wine is described in Amyot's *Mémoires*, V. 468 *seqq.* A kind of yeast is employed, with which is often mixed a flour prepared from fragrant herbs, almonds, pine-seeds, dried fruits, etc. Rubruquis says this liquor was not distinguishable, except by smell, from the best wine of Auxerre; a wine so famous in the Middle Ages, that the Historian Friar, Salimbene, went from Lyons to Auxerre on purpose to drink it.* Ysbrand Ides compares the rice-wine to Rhenish; John Bell to Canary; a modern traveller quoted by Davis, "in colour, and a little in taste, to Madeira." [Friar Odoric (*Cathay*, i. p. 117) calls this wine *bigni*; Dr. Schlegel (*T'oung Pao*, ii. p. 264) says Odoric's wine was probably made with the date *Mi-yin*, pronounced *Bi-im* in old days. But Marco's wine is made of rice, and is called *shao hsing chiu*. Mr. Rockhill (*Rubruck*, p. 166, note) writes: "There is another stronger liquor distilled from millet, and called *shao chiu*: in Anglo-Chinese, *samshu*; Mongols call it *araka*, *arrak*, and *arreki*. Ma Twan-lin (Bk. 327) says that the Moho (the early Nu-chên Tartars) drank rice wine (*mi chiu*), but I fancy that they, like the Mongols, got it from the Chinese."

Dr. Emil Bretschneider (*Botanicon Sinicum*, ii. pp. 154-158) gives a most interesting account of the use and fabrication of intoxicating beverages by the Chinese. "The invention of wine or spirits in China," he says, "is generally ascribed to a certain I TI, who lived in the time of the Emperor Yü. According to others, the inventor of wine was TU K'ANG." One may refer also to Dr. Macgowan's paper *On the "Mutton Wine" of the Mongols and Analogous Preparations of the Chinese.* (*Jour. N. China Br. R. As. Soc.*, 1871-1872, pp. 237-240.—H. C.]

* *Kington's Fred.* II. II. 457. So, in a French play of the 13th century, a publican in his *patois* invites custom, with hot bread, hot herrings, and wine of Auxerre in plenty:—

"Chaiens, fait bon disner chaiens;
Chi a caut pain et caus herens,
Et vin d'Aucheurre à plain tonnel."—

(*Théat. Franç. au Moyen Age*, 168.)