

back to the first, and go through with them again in the same succession.]

NOTE I.—It is odd that Marsden should have sought a Chinese explanation of the Arabic word *Takwīm*, even with Tavernier before him: "They sell in Persia an annual almanac called *Tacuim*, which is properly an ephemeris containing the longitude and latitude of the planets, their conjunctions and oppositions, and other such matter. The *Tacuim* is full of predictions regarding war, pestilence, and famine; it indicates the favourable time for putting on new clothes, for getting bled or purged, for making a journey, and so forth. They put entire faith in it, and whoever can afford one governs himself in all things by its rules." (Bk. V. ch. xiv.)

The use of the term by Marco may possibly be an illustration of what I have elsewhere propounded, viz. that he was not acquainted with Chinese, but that his intercourse and conversation lay chiefly with the foreigners at the Kaan's Court, and probably was carried on in the Persian language. But not long after the date of our Book we find the word used in Italian by Jacopo Alighieri (Dante's son):—

"A voler giudicare  
Si conviene adeguare  
Inprimo il *Taccuino*,  
Per vedere il cammino  
Come i Pianeti vanno  
Per tutto quanto l'anno."

—*Rime Antiche Toscane*, III. 10.

Marco does not allude to the fact that almanacs were published by the Government, as they were then and still are. Pauthier (515 *seqq.*) gives some very curious details on this subject from the Annals of the Yuen. In the accounts of the year 1328, it appears that no less than 3,123,185 copies were printed in three different sizes at different prices, besides a separate almanac for the *Hwei-Hwei* or Mahomedans. Had Polo not omitted to touch on the issue of almanacs by Government he could scarcely have failed to enter on the subject of printing, on which he has kept a silence so singular and unaccountable.

The Chinese Government still "considers the publication of a Calendar of the first importance and utility. It must do everything in its power, not only to point out to its numerous subjects the distribution of the seasons, . . . but on account of the general superstition it must mark in the almanac the lucky and unlucky days, the best days for being married, for undertaking a journey, for making their dresses, for buying or building, for presenting petitions to the Emperor, and for many other cases of ordinary life. By this means the Government keeps the people within the limits of humble obedience; it is for this reason that the Emperors of China established the Academy of Astronomy." (*Timk.* I. 358.) The acceptance of the Imperial Almanac by a foreign Prince is considered an acknowledgment of vassalage to the Emperor.

It is a penal offence to issue a pirated or counterfeit edition of the Government Almanac. No one ventures to be without one, lest he become liable to the greatest misfortunes by undertaking the important measures on black-balled days.

The price varies now, according to Williams, from 1½*d.* to 5*d.* a copy. The price in 1328 was 1 *tsien* or cash for the cheapest edition, and 1 *liang* or tael of silver for the *édition de luxe*; but as these prices were in paper-money it is extremely difficult to say, in the varying depreciation of that currency, what the price really amounted to.

["The Calendars for the use of the people, published by Imperial command, are of two kinds. The first, *Wan-nien-shu*, the *Calendar of Ten Thousand Years*, is an abridgment of the Calendar, comprising 397 years, viz. from 1624 to 2020. The