

No wheat grows in this province, but rice only.

And another strange thing to be told is that there is no possibility of breeding horses in this country, as hath often been proved by trial. For even when a great blood-mare here has been covered by a great blood-horse, the produce is nothing but a wretched wry-legged weed, not fit to ride.¹³

The people of the country go to battle all naked, with only a lance and a shield; and they are most wretched soldiers. They will kill neither beast nor bird, nor anything that hath life; and for such animal food as they eat, they make the Saracens, or others who are not of their own religion, play the butcher.

It is their practice that every one, male and female, do wash the whole body twice every day; and those who do not wash are looked on much as we look on the Patarins. [You must know also that in eating they use the right hand only, and would on no account touch their food with the left hand. All cleanly and becoming uses are ministered to by the right hand, whilst the left is reserved for uncleanly and disagreeable necessities, such as cleansing the secret parts of the body and the like. So also they drink only from drinking vessels, and every man hath his own; nor will any one drink from another's vessel. And when they drink they do not put the vessel to the lips, but hold it aloft and let the drink spout into the mouth. No one would on any account touch the vessel with his mouth, nor give a stranger drink with it. But if the stranger have no vessel of his own they will pour the drink into his hands and he may thus drink from his hands as from a cup.]

They are very strict in executing justice upon criminals, and as strict in abstaining from wine. Indeed they have made a rule that wine-drinkers and seafaring men are never to be accepted as sureties. For they say