like some reeds. And when they gather the said ginger, in that same place they take an eye of the said root, which is like an eye of the cane, and plant it in the hole whence they have dug that root, and cover it up with the same earth. At the end of a year they return to gather it, and plant it in the aforesaid manner. This root grows in red soil, and on the mountain, and in the plain, as the mirabolan grows, every kind of which is found here. Their stem is like that of a middle-sized pear tree, and they bear like the pepper tree.

I found in Calicut a kind of fruit which is called cissava [jackfruit]. Its stem is like that of a large pear tree. The fruit is two or two and a half palms long, and is as thick as a man's thigh. This fruit grows on the trunk of the tree, that is to say, under the boughs, and partly on the middle of the stem. The colour of the said fruit is green, and it is formed like the pine, but the work is more minute. When it begins to ripen, the skin becomes black and appears rotten. This fruit is gathered in the month of December, and when it is eaten it seems as though you were eating musk melons, and it appears to resemble a very ripe Persian quince. It appears also, as though you were eating a preparation of honey, and it also has the taste of a sweet orange. Within the said fruit there are some pellucidae like the pomegranate. And within the said pellucidae there is another fruit which, if placed on the embers of the fire and then eaten, you would say that they were most excellent chestnuts. So that this appears to me to be the best and the most excellent fruit I ever ate. Another fruit is also found here, which is called ambo [amb, amba, mango], the stem of which is called mangue [mango]. This tree is like a pear tree, and bears like the pear. This ambo is made like one of our walnuts in the month of August, and has that form; and when it is ripe it is yellow and shining. This fruit has a stone within like a dry almond, and is much better than the Damascus plum. A preserve is made of this fruit, such as we make of olives, but they are much superior. Another fruit is found here resembling a melon, and it has similar divisions, and when it is cut, three or four grains, which look like grapes or sour cherries, are found inside. The tree which bears this fruit is of the height of a quince tree, and forms its leaves in the same manner. This fruit is called ceroopali [papaw]; it is extremely good for eating, and excellent as a medicine. I also found there another fruit, which is exactly like the medlar, but it is white, like an apple. I do not remember by what name it was called. Again, I saw another kind of fruit which resembled a pumpkin in colour, is two spans in length, and has more than three fingers of pulp, and is much better than a gourd (zwecha) for confections, and it is a very curious thing, and it is called
cosolanga [melon], and grows on the ground like melons. This country also produces another very singular fruit, which is called malapalando [plantain, banana]. The tree which bears this fruit is as high as a man or a little more, and it produces four or five leaves which are branches and leaves. Each of these covers a man against rain and sun. In the middle of this it throws out a certain branch which produces flowers in the same manner as the stalk of a bean, and afterwards it produces some fruits which are half a palmo and a palmo in length, and they are as thick as the stuff of a spear. And when they wish to gather the said fruit they do not wait until it is ripe, because it ripens in the house. One branch will produce two hundred or thereabouts of these fruits, and they all touch one against the other. Of these fruits there are found three sorts. The first sort is called cissapalum; these are very restorative things to eat. Their colour is somewhat yellow, and the bark is very thin. The second sort is called cissapalum, and they are much superior to the others. The third sort are bitter. The two kinds above mentioned are good like our figs, but superior. The tree of this fruit produces once and then no more. The said tree always has at its stem fifty or sixty shoots (jigiri), and the owners remove these shoots by the hand and transplant them, and at the end of a year they produce their fruit. And if the said branches are too green when they cut them, they put a little lime upon the said fruits to make them ripen quickly. You must know that a very large quantity of such fruits is found at all times of the year, and twenty are given for a quartino. In like manner, roses and most singular flowers are found here on all the days of the year.

I will describe another tree to you, the best in all the world, which is called longa [coconut], and is formed like the trunk of a date tree. Ten useful things are derived from this tree. The first utility is wood to burn; nuts to eat; ropes for maritime navigation; thin stuffs which, when they are dried, appear to be made of silk; charcoal in the greatest perfection; wine; water; oil; and sugar; and with its leaves which fall, that is, when a branch falls, they cover the houses. And these ward off water for half a year. Were I to declare to you in what manner it accomplishes so many things you would not believe it, neither could you understand it. The said tree produces the above-named nuts in the same manner as the branch of a date tree; and each tree will produce from one hundred to two hundred of these nuts, the outer part of which is taken off and used as firewood. And then, next to the second bark, there is taken off a certain substance like cotton or linen flax, and this is given to workmen to beat, and from the flower, stuffs which appear like oilen stuffs are made. And the
coarse part they spin, and make of it small cords, and of the small they make large cords, and these they use for the sea. Of the other bark of the said nut excellent charcoal is made. After the second bark the nut is good to eat. The size of the said fruit is [at first] that of the little finger of the hand. When the said nut begins to grow, water begins to be produced within; and when the nut has arrived at perfection, it is full of water, so that there are some nuts which contain four and five goblets of water, which water is a most excellent thing to drink, and is also like rose-water, and extremely sweet. Most excellent oil is made from the said nut, and thus you have eight utilities from it. Another branch of the said tree they do not allow to produce nuts, but they cut it in the middle and give it a certain inclination; and in the morning and evening they make an opening with a knife, and then they apply a certain fluid and that fluid draws out a certain juice. And these men set a pot underneath and collect that juice, of which one tree will produce as much as half a jug between the day and the night. This they place over the fire and boil it one, two, and three times, so that it appears like brandy, and will affect a man’s head by merely smelling it, to say nothing of drinking it. This is the wine which is drunk in these countries. From another branch of the said tree they produce in a similar manner this juice, and convert it into sugar by means of fire; but it is not very good. The said tree always has fruit either green or dry, and it produces fruit in five years. These trees are found over two hundred miles of country, and all have owners. As to the goodness of this tree, when the kings are at enmity one with another, and kill each other’s children, they nevertheless sometimes make peace. But if one king cut down any of these trees belonging to another king, peace will never be granted to all eternity. You must know that the said tree lives for twenty or five and twenty years, and grows in sandy places. And when these nuts are planted to produce these trees, and until they begin to germinate, or that the tree begins to grow from them, it is necessary that the men who plant them should go every evening to uncover them, in order that the cool night air may blow over them; and early in the morning they return to cover them up, in order that the sun may not find them thus uncovered. And in this manner does this tree generate and grow. In this country of Calicut, there is found a great quantity of *zincalane* [jafudah], from which they make very excellent [gingelly] oil.

The men of Calicut, when they wish to sow rice, observe this practice. First, they plough the land with oxen as we do, and when they sow the rice in the field they have all the instruments of the city continually sounding and making merry. They also have ten or twelve men clothed like devils, and these unite in making great rejoicing with the players on the instruments, in order that the devil may make that rice very productive.

When a merchant, that is, a pagan, is sick and in great danger, the above-mentioned instruments and the aforesaid men dressed like devils go to visit the sick man; and they go at two or three o’clock in the morning; and the said men so dressed carry fire in their mouths; and in each of their hands and on their feet they wear two crutches of wood, which are one pace (passus) high, and in this manner they go shouting and sounding the instruments, so that truly if the person were not ill, he would fall to the ground from terror at seeing these ugly beasts. And these are the physicians who go to see and to visit the sick man. And although they should fill the stomach full up to the mouth, they pound three roots of ginger and make a cup of juice, and this they drink, and in three days they no longer have any illness, so that they live exactly like beasts.

The money-changers and bankers of Calicut have some weights, that is, balances, which are so small that the box in which they stand and the weights together do not weigh half an ounce; and they are so true that they will turn by a hair of the head. And when they wish to test any piece of gold, they have carats of gold as we have; and they have the touchstone like us. And they test after our manner. When the touchstone is full of gold, they have a ball, of a certain composition which resembles wax, and with this ball, when they wish to see if the gold be good or poor, they press on the touchstone and take away some gold from the said touchstone, and then they see in the ball the goodness of the gold, and they say: "Ida manum, Ida agh," that is, "this is good, and this is poor." And when that ball is full of gold they melt it, and take out all the gold which they have tested by the touchstone. The said money-changers are extremely acute in their business. The merchants have this custom when they wish to sell or purchase their merchandise, that is, wholesale:—They always sell by the hands of the Cortor [Portuguese, mercador] or of the Lella [Arabic, *dallāh*, dealer], that is, of the broker. And when the purchaser and the seller wish to make an agreement, they all stand in a circle, and the Cortor takes a cloth and holds it there openly with one hand, and with the other hand he takes the right hand of the seller, that is, the two fingers next to the thumb, and then he covers with the said cloth his hand and that of the seller, and touching each other with these two fingers, they count from one ducat up to one hundred thousand secretly, without saying "I will have so much" or "so much." But in
merely touching the joints of the fingers they understand the price and say: "Yes" or "No. And the Cortor answers "Yes" or "No." And when the Cortor has understood the will of the seller, he goes to the buyer with the said cloth, and takes his hand in the manner above mentioned, and by the said touching he tells him he wants so much. The buyer takes the finger of the Cortor, and by the said touches says to him: "I will give him so much." And in this manner they fix the price. If the merchandise about which they treat be spices, they deal by the bahar, which bahar weighs three of our cantari. If they be stuffs, they deal by the caria [cenga, corge, score], and in like manner if they be jewels. By a caria is understood twenty; or, indeed, they deal by farasola [farasola, jardaled], which farasola weighs about twenty-five of our lire.

The women of these two [lowest] classes of people, that is, the Pulawi and Hirawa [Pulaian and Vettuvan], suckle their children for about three months, and then they feed them upon cow's milk or goat's milk. And when they have crammed them, without washing either their faces or their bodies, they throw them into the sand, in which they remain covered up from the morning until the evening, and as they are more black than any other colour, they cannot be distinguished from little buffaló[e]s or little bears; so that they appear misshapen things, and it seems as though they were fed by the devil. Their mothers give them food again in the evening. These people are the most agile leapers and runners in the world. I think I ought not to omit explaining to you the many kinds of animals and birds which are found in Calicut, and especially about the lions, wild hogs, goats, wolves, kine, buffaló[e]s, goats, and elephants (which, however, are not produced here, but come from other places), great numbers of wild peacocks, and green parrots in immense quantities; also a kind of red parrot. And there are so many of these parrots, that it is necessary to watch the rice in order that the said birds may not eat it. One of these parrots is worth four quattrini, and they sing extremely well. I also saw here another kind of bird, which is called sarú [Persian, sdr, starrling, here the talking main]. They sing better than the parrots, but are smaller. There are many other kinds of birds here different from ours. I must inform you, that during one hour in the morning and one hour in the evening there is no pleasure in the world equal to that of listening to the song of these birds, so much so that it is like being in paradise, in consequence of there being such a multitude of trees and perpetual verdure, which arises from the circumstance that cold is unknown here, neither is there excessive heat. In this country a great number of apes are produced, one of which is worth four caise [kdu, cash], and one caise is worth a quattrino. They do immense damage to those poor men who make wine. These apes mount on the top of those nuts and drink that same liquor, and then they overturn the vessel and throw away all the liquor they cannot drink.

There is found in this Calicut a kind of serpent [crocodile] which is as large as a great pig, and which has a head much larger than that of a pig, and it has four feet, and is four brazza long. These serpents are produced in certain marshes. The people of the country say that they have no venom, but that they are evil animals, and do injury to people by means of their teeth. Three other kinds of serpents are found here which, if they strike a person a little, that is, drawing blood, he immediately falls to the ground dead. And it has often happened here in my time that there have been many persons struck by these animals, of which animals there are three kinds. The first resemble deaf adders; the next are scorpions; the third are thrice as large as scorpions. Of these three kinds there are immense numbers. And you must know that when the King of Calicut learns where the nest of any of these brutal animals is, he has made over it a little house, on account of the water. And if any person should kill one of these animals the king would immediately put him to death. In like manner, if any one kill a cow, he would also put that person to death. They say that these serpents are spirits of God, and that if they were not his spirits, God would not have given them such a power, that biting a person a little he would immediately fall dead. And it is from this circumstance that there are such numbers of these animals who know the pagans and do not avoid them. In my time one of these serpents entered into a house during the night and bit nine persons, and in the morning they were all found dead and swallowed. And when the said pagans go on a journey, if they meet any of these animals they receive it as a good augury.

In the house of the King of Calicut there are many chambers, in which as soon as evening comes they have ten or twelve vases made in the form of a fountain, which are composed of cast metal, and are as high as a man. Each of these vases has three hollow places for holding oil, about two spans high from the ground. And, first, there is a vase in which is oil with cotton wicks lighted all round. And above this there is another vase more narrow, but with the same kind of lights, and on the top of the second vase there stands another yet smaller, but with oil and lights ignited. The foot of this vase is formed in a triangle, and on each of the faces of the foot there are three devils in relief, and they are very fearful to behold. These are the squires who hold the lights before the king.
king also makes use of another custom. When one of his relations dies, as soon as the year of mourning is accomplished, he sends an invitation to all the principal Brahmins who are in his own kingdom, and he also invites some from other countries. And when they are arrived, they make great feasting for three days. Their food consists of rice dressed in various ways, the flesh of wild hogs, and a great deal of venison, for they are great hunters. At the end of the three days, the said king gives to each of the principal Brahmins three, four, and five parasai, and then everyone returns to his house. And all the people of the kingdom of the king shave their beards for joy.

Near to Calicut there is a temple [of Srivalyavanath] in the midst of a tank, that is, in the midst of a pond of water; which temple is made in antique style with two rows of columns, like San Giovanni in Fonte at Rome. In the middle of that temple there is an altar, made of stone, where sacrifices are performed. And between each of the columns of the lower circle there stand some little ships made of stone, which are two paces long, and are full of a certain oil, which is called aan [oil]. Around the margin of the said tank there is an immense number of trees all of one kind, on which trees there are lights so numerous that it would be impossible to count them. And in like manner around the said temple there are oil lights in the greatest abundance. When the 25th day of the month of December arrives, all the people for fifteen days’ journey around, that is to say, the Naestri and Brahmins, come to this sacrifice [the Navarshtra Festival]. And before performing the said sacrifice, they all wash in the said tank. Then the principal Brahmins of the king mount astride of the little vessels above mentioned where the oil is, and all these people come to the said Brahmins, who assist the head of each of them with that oil, and then they perform the sacrifice on that altar before mentioned. At the end of one side of this altar there is a very large Sathanas [idol], which they all go to worship, and then each returns on his way. At this season the land is free and frank for three days, that is, they cannot exercise vengeance one against another. In truth, I never saw so many people together at one time, excepting when I was at Mecca. It appears to me that I have sufficiently explained to you the customs and manner of living, the religion and the sacrifices, of Calicut. Wherefore departing thence, I will recount to you step by step the rest of my journey, together with all the events which happened to me in the course of it.
in fierce war with each other, we could not remain there long, neither could we see or hear the things thereof; however, having remained there some few days, we saw that which you shall hear. And first, an immense quantity of elephants which are produced there. We also saw rubies found there, at a distance of two miles from the sea shore, where there is an extremely large and very long mountain, at the foot of which the said rubies are found. And when a merchant wishes to find these jewels, he is obliged first to speak to the king and to purchase a braza of the said land in every direction, which braza is called a milra [mooman, a] acres, and to purchase it for live ducats. And then when he digs the said land, a man always remains there on the part of the king. And if any jewel be found which exceeds ten carats, the king claims it for himself, and leaves all the rest free. There is also produced near to the said mountain, where there is a very large river, a great quantity of garnets, sapphires, jacinthes, and topazes. In this island there grow the best fruits I have ever seen, and especially certain artichokes (carajoles) [but probably custard apples] better than ours. Sweet oranges, (meiamesi,) the best, I believe, in the world, and many other fruits like those of Calicut, but much superior.

The tree of the canella is the same as the laurel, especially the leaves; and it produces some berries like the laurel, but they are smaller and more white. The said canella, or cinnamon, is the bark of the said tree, in this wise: Every three years they cut the branches of the said tree, and then take off the bark of them; but they do not cut the stem on any account. There are great numbers of these trees. When they collect that cinnamon it has not the excellence which it possesses a month afterwards. A Moorish merchant told me that at the top of that very large mountain [Adam's Peak] there is a cavern to which the men of that country go once in the year to pray, because, as they say, Adam was up there praying and doing penance, and that the impressions of his feet are seen to this day, and that they are about two spans long. Rice does not grow in this country, but it comes there from the main land. The kings of this island are tributaries of the King of Narsinga, on account of the rice which comes there from the main land. The air in this island is extremely good, and the people are of a dark tawny colour. And here it is neither too hot nor too cold. Their dress is all [euph.] cotton; they wear certain stuffs of cotton or silk, and go bare-footed. This island is placed under the equinoctial line, and the inhabitants of it are not very warlike. Artillery is not used here; but they have some lances and swords, which lances are of cane, and with these they fight amongst each other; but they do not kill each other overmuch, because they are cowardly fellows. Here there are roses
and flowers of every kind, and the people live longer than we do. Being in our ship one evening, a man came on the part of the king to our companion, and told him that he should carry to him his corals and saffron; for he had a great quantity of both. A merchant of the said island, who was a Moor, hearing these words, said to him secretly: "Do not go to the king, for he will pay you for your goods after his own fashion." And this he said out of cunning, in order that my companion might go away, because he himself had the same kind of merchandise. However, answer was given to the message of the king, that on the following day he would go to his lord. And when morning came, he took a vessel and rowed over to the mainland.

We arrived in the course of three days at a place which is called Pidacchet [Pulikat], which is subject to the King of Narasinga. This district is one of immense traffic in merchandise, and especially in jewels, for they come here from Zailon and from Peg [Peru]. There are also here many great Moorish merchants of all kinds of spices. We lodged in the house of a Moorish merchant, and we told him where we came from, and that we had many corals to sell, and saffron, and much figured velvet, and many knives. The said merchant, understanding that we had this kind of merchandise, was greatly pleased. This country is most abundant in everything which is produced in India, but no grain grows there. They have rice here in great abundance. Their laws, manner of living, dress, and customs, are the same as at Calicut, and they are a warlike people, although they have no artillery. As this country was at fierce war with the King of Tarnassari, we could not remain here a very long time. But after remaining here a few days we took our route towards the city of Tarnassari, which is distant a thousand miles from here. At which city we arrived in fourteen days by sea.

CHAPTER IX

CONCERNING TENASSERIM

The city of Tarnassari [Mergui] is situated near to the sea; it is a level place and well watered, and has a good port, that is, a river on the side towards the north. The king of the city is a pagan, and is a very powerful lord. He is constantly fighting with the King of Narasinga and the King of Banghela [Bengal]. He has a hundred armed elephants, which are larger than any I ever saw. He always maintains 100,000 men for war, part infantry and part cavalry. Their arms consist of small swords and some sort of shields, some of which are made of tortoise-shell, and some like those of Calicut; and they have a great quantity of bows, and lances of cane, and some also of wood. When they go to war they wear a dress stuffed very full of cotton. The houses of this city are well surrounded by walls. Its situation is extremely good, after the manner of Christians, and good grain and cotton also grow there. Silk is also made there in large quantities. A great deal of brazill-wood is found there, fruits in great abundance, and some which resemble our apples and pears, some oranges, lemons, and citrons, and gourds in great abundance. And here are seen very beautiful gardens, with many delicate things in them.

In this country of Tarnassari there are oxen, cows, sheep, and goats in great quantities, wild hogs, stags, roebucks, wolves, cats which produce the civet, lions, peacocks in great multitudes, falcons, gosh-hawks, white parrots, and also other kinds which are of seven very beautiful colours. Here there are hares and partridges, but not like ours. There is also here another kind of bird, one of prey, much larger than an eagle, of the beak of which, that is, of the upper part, they make sword-hilts, which beak is yellow and red, a thing very beautiful to behold. The colour of the said bird is black, red, and some feathers are white. There are produced here hens and cocks, the largest I ever saw, so much that one of these hens is larger than three of ours. In this country in a few days we had great pleasure from some things which we saw, and especially that every day in the street where the Moorish merchants abide they make some cocks fight, and the owners of these cocks bet as much as a hundred ducats on the one which will fight best. And we saw two fight for five hours continuously, so that at the last both remained dead. Here also is a sort of goat, much larger than ours, and which is much more handsome, and which always has four kids at a birth. Ten and twelve large and good sheep are sold here for a ducat. And there is another kind of sheep, which has horns like a deer; these are larger than ours, and fight most terribly. There are buffalo[s] here, much more misshapen than ours. There are also great numbers of fish like ours. I saw here, however, a bone of a fish which weighed more than ten centuri. With respect to the manner of living of this city, the pagans eat all kinds of flesh excepting that of oxen, and they eat on the ground, without a cloth, in some very beautiful vessels of wood. Their drink is water, sweetened where possible. They sleep high from the ground, in good beds of cotton, and covered with silk or cotton. Then, as to their dress, they go all apostolica, with a quilted cloth of
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obliged to yield to his caresses, and all of us, five in number, together with all our things, were lodged in his house. Fifteen days from that time this merchant brought home his wife, and my companion slept with her the first night. She was a young girl of fifteen years, and he did for the merchant all that he had asked of him. But after the first night, it would have been at the peril of his life if he had returned again, although truly the lady would have desired that the first night had lasted a month. The merchants, having received such a service from some of us, would gladly have retained us four or five months at their own expense, for all kinds of wares cost very little money, and also because they are most liberal and very agreeable men.

All the Brahmins and the king are burnt after death, and at that time a solemn sacrifice is made to the devil. And then they preserve the ashes in certain vases [Marranaan jars] made of baked earth, vitriified like glass, which vases have the mouth narrow like a small cutella [bowl]. They then bury this vase with the ashes of the burnt body within their houses. When they make the said sacrifice, they make it under some trees, after the manner of Calicut. And for burning the dead body they light a fire of the most odiferous things that can be found, such as aloes-wood, benzoin, sandal-wood, brazil-wood, storax and amber, incense, and some beautiful branches of coral, which things they place upon the body, and while it is burning all the instruments of the city are sounding. In like manner, fifteen or twenty men, dressed like devils, stand there and make great rejoicing. And his wife is always present, making most exceedingly great lamentations, and no other woman. And this is done at one or two o’clock of the night.

In this city of Tamassari, when fifteen days have passed after the death of the husband, the wife makes a banquet for all her relations and all those of her husband. And then they go with all the relations to the place where the husband was burnt, and at the same hour of the night. The said woman puts on all her jewels and other objects in gold, all that she possesses. And then her relations cause a hole to be made of the height of a human being, and around the hole they put four or five canes, around which they place a silk cloth, and in the said hole they make a fire of the above-mentioned things, such as were used for the husband. And then the said wife, when the feast is prepared, eats a great deal of betel, and eats so much that she loses her wits, and the instruments of the city are constantly sounding, together with the above-mentioned men clothed like devils, who carry fire in their mouths, as I have already told you in Calicut. They also offer a sacrifice to Deumo [South Indian term,
dévon, a godling). And the said wife goes many times up and down that place, dancing with the other women. And she goes many times to the said men clothed like devils, to entreat and tell them to pray the Deumo that he will be pleased to accept her as his own. And there are always present here a great many women who are her relations. Do not imagine, however, that she is unwilling to do this; she even imagines that she shall be carried forthwith into heaven. And thus running violently of her own free will, she seizes the above-mentioned cloth with her hands, and throws herself into the midst of the fire. And immediately her relations and those most nearly allied to her fall upon her with sticks and with balls of pitch, and this they do only that she may die the sooner. And if the said wife were not to do this, she would be held in like estimation as a public prostitute is among us, and her relations would put her to death. When such an event takes place in this country the King is always present. However, those who undergo such a death are the most noble of the land: all, in general, do not do thus. I have seen in this city of Tarnassari another custom, somewhat less horrible than the before mentioned. There will be a young man who will speak to a lady of love, and will wish to give her to understand that he really is fond of her, and that there is nothing he would not do for her. And, discoursing with her in this wise, he will take a piece of rag well saturated with oil, and will set fire to it, and place it on his arm on the naked flesh, and whilst it is burning he will stand speaking with that lady, not caring about his arm being burnt, in order to show that he loves her, and that for her he is willing to do every great thing.

q] He who kills another in this country is put to death, the same as in Calicut. With respect to conveying and holding, it is necessary that it should appear by writing or by witnesses. Their writing is on paper like ours, not on the leaves of a tree like that of Calicut. And then they go to a governor of the city, who administers justice for them summarily. However, when any foreign merchant dies who has no wife or children, he cannot leave his property to whomsoever he pleases, because the king wills to be his heir. (And in this country [that is, the natives, commencing from the king] after his death his son remains king.) And when any Moorish merchant dies, very great expense is incurred in odoriferous substances to preserve the body, which they put into wooden boxes and then bury it, placing the head towards the city of Mecca, which comes to be towards the north. If the deceased have children, they are his heirs.

q] These people make use of very large ships and of various kinds, some of which are made flat bottomed, because such can enter into places where there is not much water. Another kind are made with prows before and behind, and they carry two helms and two masts, and are uncovered. There is also another kind of large ship which is called sirachi [junks], and each of these is of the tonnage of one thousand butts, on which they carry some little vessels to a city called Melacha [Malacca], and from thence they go with these little vessels for small spices to a place which you shall know when the proper time comes.

CHAPTER X

CONCERNING BENGAL

Let us return to my companion, for he and I had a desire to see farther on. After we had been some days in this said city, and being, indeed, tired of that same service of which you have heard above, and having sold some of our merchandise we took the route towards the city of Bungella [Safiqán in Bengal], which is distant from Tarnassari seven hundred miles, at which we arrived in eleven days by sea. This city was one of the best that I had hitherto seen, and has a very great realm. The sultan of this place is a Moor, and maintains two hundred thousand men for battle on foot and on horse; and they are all Mahometans; and he is constantly at war with the King of Narisingha. This country abounds more in grain, flesh of every kind, in great quantity of sugar, also of ginger, and of great abundance of cotton, than any country in the world. And here there are the richest merchants I ever met with. Fifty ships are laden every year in this place with cotton and silk stuffs, which stuffs are these, that is to say, bairam, namou, lizali, ciantar, doozar, and sinabur. These same stuffs go through all Turkey, through Syria, through Persia, through Arabia Felix, through Ethiopia, and through all India. There are also here very great merchants in jewels, which come from other countries.

q] We also found some [Nestorian] Christian merchants here. They said that they were from a city called Sarneu [in Siam], and had brought for sale silken stuffs, and alcaz-wood, and bensoin, and musk. Which Christians said that in their country there were many lords also Christians, but they are subject to the great Khan [of Cathai [China]. As to the dress of these Christians, they were clothed in a xheke [jerkin] made with folds, and the sleeves were quilted with cotton. And on their heads they wore a cap a palm and a half long, made of red cloth.
These same men are as white as we are, and confess that they are Christians, and believe in the Trinity, and likewise in the Twelve Apostles, in the four Evangelists, and they also have baptism with water. But they write in the contrary way to us, that is, after the manner of Armenia. And they say that they keep the Nativity and the Passion of Christ, and observe our Lent and other vigils in the course of the year. These Christians do not wear shoes, but they wear a kind of breeches made of silk, similar to those worn by mariners, which breeches are all full of jewels, and their heads are covered with jewels. And they eat at a table after our fashion, and they eat every kind of flesh. These people also said that they knew that on the confines of the Rumi, that is, of the Grand Turk, there are very great Christian kings. After a great deal of conversation with these men, my companion at last showed them his merchandise, amongst which there were certain beautiful branches of large coral. When they had seen these branches they said to us, that if we would go to a city where they would conduct us, that they were prepared to secure for us as much as 10,000 ducats for them, or as many rubies as in Turkey would be worth 100,000. My companion replied that he was well pleased, and that they should depart immediately thence. The Christians said: "In two days' time from this a ship will sail which goes towards Pegu, and we have to go with it; if you are willing to come we will go together." Hearing this we set ourselves in order, and embarked with the said Christians and with other Persian merchants. And as we had been informed in this city that these Christians were most faithful, we formed a very great friendship with them. But before our departure from Banghella, we sold all the rest of the merchandise, with the exception of the corals, the saffron, and two pieces of rose-coloured cloth of Florence. We left this city, which I believe is the best in the world, that is, for living in. In which city the kind of stuffs you have heard of before are not woven by women, but the men weave them. We departed thence with the said Christians, and went towards a city which is called Pego, distant from Banghella about a thousand miles. On which voyage we passed a gulf [of Martaban] towards the south, and so arrived at the city of Pegu.

CHAPTER XI
CONCERNING PEGU

The city of Pegu is on the mainland, and is near to the sea. On the left hand of this, that is, towards the east, there is a very beautiful river, by which many ships go and come. The king of this city is a pagan. Their faith, customs, manner of living and dress, are after the manner of Tarnasuari; but with respect to their colour, they are somewhat more white. And here, also, the air is somewhat more cold. Their seasons are like ours. This city is walled, and has good houses and palaces built of stone, with lime. The king is extremely powerful in men, both foot and horse, and has with him more than a thousand Christians of the country which has been above mentioned to you. And he gives to each, for pay, six golden pardai [ducats] per month and his expenses. In this country there is a great abundance of grain, of flesh of every kind, and of fruits of the same as at Calicut. These people have not many elephants, but they possess great numbers of all other animals; they also have all the kinds of birds which are found at Calicut. But there are here the most beautiful and the best parrots I had ever seen. Timber grows here in great quantities, long, and I think the thickest that can possibly be found. In like manner I do not know if there can be found in the world such thick canes as I found here, of which I saw some which were really as thick as a barrel. Civet-cats are found in this country in great numbers, three or four of which are sold for a ducat. The sole merchandise of these people is jewels, that is, rubies, which come from another city called Capellan [Ruby Mines District in Burma], which is distant from this thirty days' journey; not that I have seen it, but by what I have heard from merchants. You must know that in the said city, a large pearl and diamond are worth more here than with us, and also an emerald. When we arrived in this country, the king was fifteen days' journey distant, fighting with another who was called King of Ava [Burma]. Seeing this, we determined to go and find the king where he was, in order to give him these corals. And so we departed thence in a ship made all of one piece, and more than fifteen or sixteen paces long. The oars of this vessel were made of cane. Understand well in what manner: where the oar takes the water it was a cloven, and they insert a flat piece of board fastened by cords, so that the said vessel went with more power than a brigantine. The mast of it was a cane as thick as a barrel where they
put in the provisions. In three days we arrived at a village where we found certain merchants, who had not been able to enter into the said city of Ava on account of the war. Hearing this, we returned with them to Pego, and five days afterwards the king returned to the said city, who had gained a very great victory over his enemy. On the second day after the return of the king, our Christian companions took us to speak with him.

Do not imagine that the King of Pego enjoys as great a reputation as the King of Calicut, although he is so humane and domestic that an infant might speak to him, and he wears more rubies on him than the value of a very large city, and he wears them on all his toes. And on his legs he wears certain great rings of gold, all full of the most beautiful rubies; also his arms and his fingers all full. His ears hang down half a palm, through the great weight of the many jewels he wears there, so that seeing the person of the king by a light at night, he shines so much that he appears to be a sun. The said Christians spoke with him, and told him of our merchandise. The king replied: "That we should return to him the day after the next, because on the next day he had to sacrifice to the devil for the victory which he had gained." When the time mentioned was past, the king, as soon as he had eaten, sent for the said Christians, and for my companion, in order that he might carry to him his merchandise. When the king saw such beautiful corals he was quite astonished and greatly pleased; for, in truth, among other corals there were two branches, the like of which had never before entered India. This king asked what people we were. The Christians answered: "Sir, these are Persians." Said the king to the interpreter: "Ask them if they are willing to sell these things." My companions answered: "That the articles were at the service of his highness." Then the king began to say: "That he had been at war with the King of Ava for two years, and on that account he had no money; but that if we were willing to barter for so many rubies, he would amply satisfy us." We caused him to be told by these Christians that we desired nothing further from him than his friendship, that he should take the commodities and do whatever he pleased. The Christians repeated to him what my companion had charged them to say, by telling the king that he might take the corals without money or jewels. He hearing this liberality answered: "I know that the Persians are very liberal, but I never saw one so liberal as this man!" and he swore by God and by the devil that he would see which would be the more liberal, he or a Persian. And then he desired one of his confidential servants to bring him a certain little box which was two palms in length, worked all round in gold, and was full of rubies, within and without. And when he had opened it, there were six separate divisions, all full of different rubies; and he placed it before us, telling us we should take what we wished. My companion answered: "O, sir, you show me so much kindness, that by the faith which I bear to Mahomet I make you a present of all these things. And know, sir, that I do not travel about the world to collect property, but only to see different people and different customs." The king answered: "I cannot conquer you in liberality, but take this which I give you." And so he took a good handful of rubies from each of the divisions of the said casket, and gave them to him. These rubies might be about two hundred, and in giving them he said: "Take these for the liberality you have exercised towards me." And in like manner he gave to the said Christians two rubies each, which were estimated at a thousand duscuts, and those of my companions were estimated at about one hundred thousand duscuts. Wherefore by this he may be considered to be the most liberal king in the world, and every year he has an income of about one million in gold. And this because in his country there is found much lacca [lac], a good deal of sandal-wood, very much brazal-wood, cotton and silk in great quantities, and he gives all his income to his soldiers. The people in this country are very sensual. After some days, the said Christians took leave for themselves and for us. The king ordered a room to be given to us, furnished with all that was requisite for so long as we wished to remain there; and so it was done. We remained in the said room five days. At this time there arrived news that the King of Ava was coming with a great army to make war upon him, on hearing which, this one [of Pego] went to meet him half way with a great many men, horse and foot. The next day we saw two women burnt alive voluntarily, in the manner as I have described it in Tarnassari.

CHAPTER XII

CONCERNING MALACCA AND SUMATRA

The next day we embarked on board a ship and went to a city called Malacha [Malacca], which is situated towards the west, at which we arrived in eight days. Near to the said city we found an extremely great strait [sumatra], as large as any we had ever seen, which they call Gaza [Arabic baghluč, a strait], which is evidently more than twenty-five miles wide. And opposite to the said river there is a very large island, which is called Sumatra. The inhabitants of it say that the circum-
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ference of it is four thousand five hundred miles. I will tell you about the said island at the proper time. When we had arrived at the city of Melach, we were immediately presented to the Sultan, who is a Moor, as is also all his kingdom. The said city is on the mainland and pays tribute to the King of Cini [Siam], who caused this place to be built about eighty years ago, because there is a good port there, which is the principal port of the main ocean. And, truly I believe, that more ships arrive here than in any other place in the world, and especially there come here all sorts of spices and an immense quantity of other merchandise. This country is not very fertile, yet there is produced here grain, a little animal food, wood, birds like those of Calicut, excepting the parrots, which are better here than in Calicut. A great quantity of sandal-wood and of tin is found here. There are also a great many elephants, horses, sheep, cows and buffalo's, leopards and peacocks, in great abundance. A few fruits like those in Zelam. It is not necessary to trade here in anything excepting in spices and silken stuffs. These people are olive-coloured, with long hair. Their dress is after the fashion of Cairo. They have the visage broad, the eye round, the nose compressed. It is not possible to go about the place here when it is dark, because people are killed like dogs, and all the merchants who arrive here go to sleep in their ships. The inhabitants of this city are of the nation of Gavial [Java]. The king keeps a governor to administer justice for foreigners, but those of the country take the law into their own hands, and they are the worst race that was ever created on earth. When the king wishes to interfere with them, they say that they will disinherit the land, because they are men of the sea. The air here is very temperate. The Christians who were in our company gave us to understand that we ought not to remain long here because they are an evil race. Wherefore we took a junk and went towards Sumatra to a city called Pider [Pedir], which is distant from the mainland eighty leagues, or thereabouts. They say that in this district there is the best port of the whole island, which I have already told you is in circumference 4,500 miles. In my opinion, which agrees also with what many say, I think that it is Taprobana, in which there are some crowned kings who are pagans, and their faith, their manner of living, dress, and customs, are the same as in Tarnassari, and the wives also are burnt alive. The colour of these inhabitants is almost white, and they have the face broad, and the eyes round and green. Their hair is long, the nose broad and flat, and they are of small stature. Here justice is strictly administered, as in Calicut. Their money is gold, and silver, and tin, all stamped. Their golden money has on one side a devil, on the other there is something resembling a chariot drawn by elephants: the same on the silver and tin money. Of the silver coin ten go to a ducat, and of those of tin, twenty-five. Elephants in immense quantities are produced here, which are the largest I ever saw. These people are not warlike, but attend to their merchandise, and are very great friends of foreigners.

In this country of Pider [Pedir] there grows a very great quantity of pepper, and of long pepper which is called mulaga. This said kind of pepper is larger than that which comes here to us, and is very much whiter, and within it is hollow, and is not so biling as that of ours, and weighs very little, and is sold here in the same manner as cereals are sold with us. And you must know that in this port there are laden with every year eighteen or twenty ships, all of which go to Cathai, because they say that the extreme cold begins there. The tree which produces this pepper produces it long, but its vine is larger, and the leaf broader and softer, than that which grows in Calicut. An immense quantity of silk is produced in this country, a great deal is also made in the forests without being cultivated by anyone. This, it is true, is not very good. A great quantity of benzoin is also produced here, which is the gum of a tree. Some say, for I have not seen it myself, that it grows at a considerable distance from the sea, on the mainland.

Inasmuch as it is the variety of objects which most delights and invites man, as well to read as to understand, it has therefore appeared to me well to add that of which I have real certainty by my own experience. Wherefore you must know that neither benzoin nor aloes-wood comes much into Christian ports, and therefore you must understand that there are three sorts of aloes-wood. The first and most perfect sort is called calampos [calombal], and which does not grow in this island, but comes from a city called Sarana [in Siam], which (as the Christians our companions said) is near to their city, and here this first sort grows. The second sort is called loban [labdan], which comes from a river. The name of the third sort is called bochar [bakhi-kher]. The said Christians also said that the reason the said calampos does not come to us is this, that in Gran Cathai, and in the kingdom of Cini and Macini [Chinese Empire], and Sarana and Gavial [Java], they have a much greater abundance of gold than we have. They also say that there are much greater lords there than there are in our parts, and that they delight more than we do in those two sorts of perfumes, and that after their death a very great quantity of gold is expended in these perfumes; and for this reason these excellent sorts do not come into our parts. In Sarana they are worth ten ducats per pound, because there is very little of them.