

T H E
F I R S T B O O K
 O F
 M O N S I E U R T A V E R N I E R ' s
Perfian Travels,
 Containing the feveral
R O A D S
 From *PARIS* to *ISPAHAN* the Chief
 City of *P E R S I A*,
 Through the *Northern* Provinces of *TURKY*.

C H A P. I.

*Of the Roads from France to the hither parts of Asia, and the Places
 from whence they usually set out for Ispahan.*



Man cannot travel in *Asia*, as they do in *Europe*; nor at the same Hours, nor with the same ease. There are no weekly Coaches or Wagons from Town to Town; besides, that the Soil of the Countries is of several natures. In *Asia* you shall meet with several Regions untill'd and unpeopl'd, either through the badness of the Climate and Soil, or the sloth of the Inhabitants, who rather choose to live miserably, than to work. There are vast Deserts to cross, and very dangerous, both for want of Water, and the Robberies that the *Arabs* daily commit therein. There are no certain Stages, or Inns to entertain Travellers. The best Inns, especially in *Turkie*, are the Tents which you carry along with you, and your Hosts are your Servants, that get ready those Victuals which you have bought in good Towns. You set up your Tent in the open Field, or in any Town where there is no Inn: and a good shift too in temperate weather, when the Sun is not too hot, or that it does not rain. In the *Caravansera's* or Inns which are more frequent in *Persia* than in *Turkie*, there are persons that furnish you with Provisions, and the first come are best served. As for *Turkie* it is full of Thieves, that keep in Troops together, and way-lay the Merchants upon the Roads, and if they be not very well guarded will certainly rob them: nay many times murder them. A mischief prevented in *Persia*, by the well order'd convenience which is provided for Travellers. To avoid these dangers and inconveniences, you are oblig'd to stay

heap'd together great Sums, they would fain be going to Mecca, and making rich Presents to Mahomet. But the Great Mogul, unwilling to let his Money go out of his Countrey, will seldom permit them leave to undertake that Pilgrimage: and therefore not knowing what to do with their Money, they employ a great part thereof in Monuments, to perpetuate their Memories.

Of all the Monuments that are to be seen at Agra, that of the Wife of Cha-jehan is the most magnificent; she caus'd it to be set up on purpose near the Tasmacan, to which all Strangers must come, that they should admire it. The Tasmacan is a great Bazar, or Market-place, compos'd of six great Courts, all encompass'd with Portico's; under which there are Warehouses for Merchants; and where there is a prodigious quantity of Calicots vended. The Monument of this Begum, or Sultaness, stands on the East-side of the City, upon the River side, in a great place enclosed with Walls, upon which there runs a little Gallery, as upon the Walls of many Cities in Europe. This place is a-kind of Garden with Compartments, like our Garden-plots; but whereas our Walks are made with Gravel, here the Walks are black and white Marble. You enter into this place through a large Portal; and presently upon the left hand you espy a fair Gallery, that looks towards Mecca; wherein there are three or four Niches, wherein the *Masji* comes at certain hours to pray. A little beyond the middle of the place, toward the Water, are three great Platforms, one rais'd above another, with four Towers at the four Corners of each, and Stairs within, upon the top whereof they call the people before the time of their prayer. On the top there is a *Capole*, little less magnificent than that of *Val de Grace* in Paris; it is cover'd within and without with black Marble, the middle being of Brick. Under this *Capole* is an empty Tomb; for the *Begum* is inter'd under the Arch of the lowest Platform. The same change of Ceremonies which is observ'd under ground, is observ'd above. For they change the Tapers, Candles, and other Ornaments at several times, and there are always *Mollahs* attending to pray. I saw the beginning and completing of this great work, that cost two and twenty years labour, and twenty thousand men always at work; so that you cannot conceive but that the Expence must be excessive. Cha-jehan had begun to raise his own Monument on the other side of the River; but the Wars with his Son, broke off that design, nor did *Aurangzeb*, now reigning, ever take any care to finish it. There is an *Emmeh* who commands two thousand men, that is entrusted to guard not only the Sepulcher of the *Begum*, but also the Tasmacan.

On another side of the City, appears the Sepulcher of King Akabar. And as for the Sepulchers of the *Emmehs*, they have only one Platform, with four little Chambers at the four Corners. When you come to Agra from *Dehly*, you meet a great Bazar; near to which there is a Garden, where King *Jehan-giur*, Father of Cha-jehan, lies inter'd. Over the Garden Gate you see the Tomb it self, beset with Portraits, cover'd with a black Hearse-Cloath, or Pall, with Torches of white Wax, and two *Jesuits* attending at each end. There are some who wonder, that Cha-jehan against the practice of the *Mahometans*, who abhor Images, did permit of carving; but the reason conjectur'd at is, that it is done upon the consideration that his Father and himself learnt from the *Jesuits* certain principles of Mathematicks and Astrology. Though he had not the same kindness for them at another time; for going one day to visit an *Armenian*, that lay sick, whose name was *Corgia*, whom he lov'd very well, and had honour'd with several Employments, at what time the *Jesuits*, who liv'd next to the *Armenians* house, rang their Bell; the sound thereof displeas'd the King, as being a disturbance to the sick person, that in a great fury he command'd the Bell to be taken away, and hang about his Elephants neck. Some few days after, the King seeing his Elephant with that great Bell about his neck, fearing so great a weight might injure his Elephant, caus'd the Bell to be carried to the *Convent*, which is a kind of a rail'd place, where a *Boy* sits as a Judge, and decides differences among the people of that *Convent*, where it has hung ever since. This *Armenian* had been brought up with *Cherchans*, and in regard he was an excellent Wit, and an excellent Poet, he

he was very much in the Kings favour, who had confer'd upon him many fair Commands, though he could never either by threats or promises win him to turn *Mahometan*.

CHAP. VIII.

The Road from Agra to Patna, and Dacca, Cities in the Province of Bengala, and of the Quarrel which the Author had with Cha-Est-Kan, the King's Uncle.

I departed from Agra toward Bengala the 25th of November 1665, and that day I reach'd no farther than a very bad Inn, distant from Agra, coftes 3
The 26th I came to *Beruzabad*, coftes 9
This is a little City where, at my return, I received eight thousand Roupies, being the remainder of the Money which *Giafer-Kan* ow'd me for Wares that he had bought at *Janabac*.

The 27th to *Serail Morlides*, coftes 14

The 28th to *Serail Eshamja*, coftes 12

The 29th to *Serail Hais-mal*, coftes 12

The 30th to *Serail Sekandera*, coftes 14

The 1st of December to *Sangual*, coftes 14

I met that day 110 Waggon, every Waggon drawn by six Oxen, & in every Waggon 50000 Roupies. This is the Revenue of the Province of Bengala, with all charges defray'd, and the Governor's Purse well-fill'd, comes to 500000 Roupies. A league beyond *Sangual*, you must pass a River call'd *Saingour*, which runs into *Gemine*, not above half a league distant from it. You pass over this River of *Saingour* upon a Stone-bridg, and when you come from toward *Bengala* to go to *Seronge* or *Surat*, if you have a mind to shorten your journey ten days, you must leave *Agra-Road*, and come to this Bridg, and so Ferry over *Gemine* in a Boat. But generally *Agra-Road* is taken, because the other way you must travel five or six days together upon the Stones; and also for that you are to pass through the Territories of certain *Raja's*, where you are in danger of being robb'd.

The second day I came to an Inn call'd *Cherourabad*, coftes 12

When you are got about half the way, you pass through *Gianabad*, a little City, near to which, about a quarter of a League on this side, crossing a Field of Millet, I saw a *Rhinoceros* feeding upon Millet-Canes, which a little Boy of nine or ten years old gave him to eat. When I came near the Boy, he gave me some Millet to give the *Rhinoceros*; who immediately came to me, opening his chops three or four times; I put the Millet into his mouth, and when he had swallow'd it, he still open'd his mouth for more.

The 3d I came to *Serrail Chafada*, coftes 10

The 4th to *Serrail Atakan*, coftes 13

The 5th to *Aurang-Abad*, coftes 9

Formerly this Village had another name; but being the place where *Aurangzeb* gave Battel to his Brother *Sultan Sujab*, who was Governour of all the Province of *Bengala*; *Aurangzeb*, in Memory of the Victory he had won, gave it his own name, and built there a very fair Houfe, with a Garden, and a little Mosque.

The 6th to *Alinchan*, coftes 9

Two leagues on this side *Alinchan*, you meet the River *Ganges*. *Monfieur Bernier* the King's Physician, and another person whose name was *Rachepot*, with whom I travell'd, were amaz'd to see, that a River that had made such a noise in the World, was no broader than the River *Seine* before the *Lovre*; believing before, that it had been as wide as the *Danaw* above *Belgrade*. There is also so little water in it from *March* to *June* or *July*, when the rains fall, that it will not bear a small Boat. When we came to *Ganges*, we drank every one of us a Glass

and which lives all the year long under the trees. The Silks which are made of this Silk glut'n very much, but they fret presently. The Country produces also great store of Gum-Lake; of which there is two sorts, one grows under the trees of a red colour, wherewith they paint their Linnen and Stuffs; and when they have drawn out the red juice, the remaining substance serves to varnish Cabinets, and to make Wax; being the best Lake in *Afa* for those uses. As for their Gold they never suffer it to be transported out of the Kingdom, nor do they make any Money of it; but they preserve it all in Ingots, which pass in trade among the Inhabitants; but as for the Silver, the King coins it into Money, as is already describ'd.

Though the Country be very plentiful of all things, yet there is no flesh which they esteem so much as Dogs flesh; which is the greatest delicacy at all Feasts; and is sold every month in every City of the Kingdom upon their Market-days. There are also great store of Vines, and very good Grapes, but they never make any Wine; only they dry the Grapes to make *Aqua Vita*. As for Salt they have none but what is artificial, which they make two ways. First they raise great heaps of that green Stuff that swims at the top of standing waters, which the Ducks and Frogs eat. This they dry and burn; and the ashes thereof being boil'd in a Cloth in water, become very good Salt. The other way most in use is to take the leaves of *Adams* Fig-tree, which they dry and burn; the ashes whereof make a Salt so tart, that it is impossible to eat it until the tartness be tak'n away; which they do by putting the ashes in water, where they stir them ten or twelve hours together; then they strain the substance through a Linnen Cloth and boil it; as the water boils away, the bottom thick'ns; and when the water is all boil'd away, they find at the bottom very good and white Salt.

Of the ashes of these Fig-leaves they make a Lye, wherewith they wash their Silk, which makes it as white as Snow; but they have not enough to whiten half the Silk that grows in the Country.

Kemeroof is the name of the City where the King of *Asem* keeps his Court; twenty-five or thirty days journey from that which was formerly the Capital City, and bore the same name. The King requires no Subsidies of his people; but all the Mines in his Kingdom are his own; where for the ease of his Subjects, he has none but slaves that work; so that all the Natives of *Asem* live at their ease, and every one has his house by himself, and in the middle of his ground a fountain encompass'd with trees; and most commonly every one an Elephant to carry their Wives; for they have four Wives, and when they marry, they say to one, I take thee to serve me in such a thing; to the other, I appoint thee to do such business; so that every one of the Wives knows what she has to do in the House. The men and women are generally well complexion'd; only those that live more Southerly are more swarthy, and not so subject to Wens in their throats; neither are they so well featur'd, besides that the women are somewhat flat Nos'd. In the Southern parts the people go stark naked, only covering their private parts, with a Bonnet like a blew Cap upon their heads, hung about with Swines teeth. They pierce holes in their ears, that you may thrust your thumb in, where they hang pieces of Gold and Silver. Bracelets also of Tortoise-shells, and Sea-shells as long as an egg, which they saw into Circles, are in great esteem among the meaner sort; as Bracelets of Coral and yellow Amber among those that are rich. When they bury a man, all his Friends and Relations must come to the burial; and when they lay the body in the ground, they all take off their Bracelets from their Arms and Legs, and bury them with the Corps.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of the Kingdom of Siam.

THE greatest part of the Kingdom of *Siam* lies between the Golf of *Siam* and the Golf of *Bengala*; bordering upon *Pegu* toward the North, and the *Peninsula* of *Malacca* toward the South. The shortest and nearest way for the *Europeans* to go to this Kingdom, is to go to *Ispahan*, from *Ispahan* to *Ormus*, from *Ormus* to *Surat*, from *Surat* to *Golconda*, from *Golconda* to *Malipatan*, there to embark for *Denouferin*, which is one of the Ports belonging to the Kingdom of *Siam*. From *Denouferin* to the Capital City, which is also call'd *Siam*, is thirty-five days journey, part by Water, part by Land, by Waggon, or upon Elephants. The way, whether by Land or Water, is very troublesome; for by Land you must be always upon your guard, for fear of Tigers and Lions; by Water, by reason of the many falls of the River, they are forc'd to hoist up their Boats with Engines.

All the Countrey of *Siam* is very plentiful in Rice and Fruits; the chiefest whereof are *Mangos*, *Davians*, and *Mangostians*. The Forests are full of Harts, Elephants, Tigers, Rhinocero's, and Apes; where there grow also large Bambou's in great abundance. Under the knots of these Bambou's are Emets nests as big as a mans head, where every Emet has his apartment by himself; but there is but one hole to enter into the nest. They make their nests in these Canes to preserve themselves from the rains which continue four or five months together.

In the night time the Serpents are very busie. There are some two foot long, with two heads; but one of them has no motion.

There is also another creature in *Siam*, like our *Salamander*, with a forked tail, and very venomous.

The Rivers in this Kingdom are very large; and that which runs by *Siam* is equally as large as the rest. The water is very wholesome; but it is very full of Crocodiles of a monstrous bigness, that devour men if they be not very careful of themselves. These Rivers overflow their banks while the Sun is in the Southern Tropick; which makes the fields to be very fertile as far as they flow; and it is observ'd, that the Rice grows higher or lower, as the floods do more or less increase.

Siam, the Capital City of the Kingdom, where the King keeps his Court, is wall'd about, being about three of our Leagues in circuit; it is situated in an Island, the River running quite round it, and might be easily brought into every street in the Town, if the King would but lay out as much Money upon that design, as he spends in Temples and Idols.

The *Siamers* have thirty-three Letters in their Alphabet. But they write from the left to the right, as we do, contrary to the custom of *Japon*, *China*, *Cochinchina*, and *Tunquin*, who write from the right to the left.

All the Natives of this Kingdom are slaves, either to the King or the great Lords. The women as well as the men cut their hair; neither are they very rich in their habits. Among their complements, the chiefest is, never to go before a person that they respect, unless they first ask leave, which they do by holding up both their hands. Those that are rich have several Wives.

The Money of the Country is already describ'd.

The King of *Siam* is one of the richest Monarchs in the East, and styles himself King of Heaven and Earth; though he be Tributary to the Kings of *China*. He seldom shews himself to his Subjects; and never gives Audience, but to the principal Favourites of his Court. He trusts to his Ministers of State, for the management of his affairs, who sometimes make very bad use of their authority. He never shews himself in publick above twice a year; but then it is with an extraordinary magnificence. The first is, when he goes to a certain Pagod within the City, which is gilded round both within and without. There are three Idols between six and seven foot high, which are all of massie Gold;