

reason given is to say the evening prayer at the Mosque of Musdalifa, three hours distant, in imitation of Muhammad. Half-way on the road he mentions the wall at al-Mûna, known as the Shaitân al-Kabîr, the Great Devil, and built up with the stones cast by pilgrims at the devil (Shaitân) in remembrance of a legend; but Badger, in a valuable footnote, shows that "maledictory lapidation" of this kind is a very old and common custom in the East. Lastly, as regards the city generally, he notices the great number of doves that are never disturbed because of "that dove which spoke to Mahomet in the form of the Holy Spirit."

¶ Lastly, Varthema makes a remarkable observation "concerning the unicorns in the temple of Mecca, not very common in other places." He describes the unicorns as if he had seen them: resembling a dark bay horse with a stag's head, slender legs like a goat's and cloven hoofs. "These two animals were presented to the Sultan of Mecca as the finest things that could be found in the world at the present day, and as the richest treasures ever sent by a king of Ethiopia, that is, by a Moorish king." Ethiopia is generally used to designate Abyssinia, but that has always been a Christian and not a Muhammadan country, and Varthema probably means Berbera, which he afterwards visits as an "island of Ethiopia." This story of the unicorns has always been a puzzle, and it will be observed that the description of them is the old established one in folklore. Badger gives many quotations from every part of the world in favour of the following judgment by him on the whole story: "I am still disposed to rely on the credibility of Varthema and to believe that he saw at Mecca two ordinary specimens of the famous unicorn." It may be as well to leave the matter there.

¶ Varthema tells us that he was in Mecca twenty days, *i.e.* till, say, 12 June, and shows his anxiety to leave the Syrian Hajj caravan in order to continue his journey to the East with the return caravan for India via Jedda. Fortunately, he comes across "a Moor," who knew him for a foreigner, as he had been in Genoa and Venice, no doubt as a merchant. To him Varthema describes himself as a Roman, *i.e.* a European, and as "the most skilful maker of mortars in the world," and, therefore, most useful to the Muhammadans against the Europeans, then newly arrived in the East as a powerful people. Next follows a conversation in which he shows his knowledge of the early Portuguese movements in the Red Sea in 1502, the year before his journey. He then deserts the Hajj caravan and lives in concealment with the family of his new friend—a very dangerous proceeding. The "Moor" adds to his services by directing him to "the King, who is in the parts of India Major, and who is called the

¶ It is hardly surprising that Varthema is somewhat confused as to time after he was taken prisoner at Aden, but a careful reading of his account shows that the dates given above must be approximately accurate. He thus continued his voyage for "India" about 3 March, 1504, when the North-east Monsoon was in full force, and fine weather was to be expected. The Arab commander knew what he was doing when he fixed the date for departure from Aden. It is important to preserve as accurate a time table as possible in such travels as these, since the weather at various seasons in Eastern seas and countries greatly governs the movements of wayfarers, and so is a test of the accuracy of old travellers' tales.

¶ By "India" Varthema meant the only part of India then known to Europeans in general, *i.e.* the south-west coast about Calicut, and this accounts for his statement: "I spoke secretly with the captain of a ship, and told him that I wished to go to India, and if he would take me I would give him a handsome present. He replied that, before he went to India, he wished to touch at Persia. With that I was satisfied and so we agreed." In the sequel he did actually go to India before he reached Persia, *i.e.* he touched first at Cambay in Gujarât *en route*: but Cambay is nowhere near the "India" that he had read about.

IN "ETHIOPIA"

¶ Deserting his cavalcade, Varthema leaves Aden in a hurry and in secret: "As soon as I had arrived in Aden, I placed myself in the mosque pretending to be ill, and remained there all day. In the evening I went to find the captain of the ship, so that he put me on board secretly." Thus on 4 March, 1504, he starts for his goal—India—in a convoy of twenty-five vessels laden with madder, the trade in which from Aden is still carried on. The weather, however, proves to be against them—they probably met with a *balât* or north-westerly gale, such as occasionally occurs in the fine weather—and so they have to put into Zeila about 17 March. Varthema says it is "in Ethiopia," *i.e.* on the African coast across the water not far from Aden. He describes the place as a slave-dealing port for "those people of Prester John (Africans), whom the Moors take in battle." He also descants on the oil made there from *zerzalino*, *i.e.* *juljulan* or sesamum, known in India as gingelly oil. He also remarks two sorts of sheep—fat-tailed and twisted-tailed; the latter with heavy dewlaps is the *oryx*, which he calls "a certain kind of cows, which had horns like a stag and were wild." The rhinoceros he further describes as "cows, which had a single horn in the forehead, which horn is a *palmo* and a half in length,

and turns more towards the back of the cow than forwards." Lastly, he gives a fairly accurate description of the town and of the Somâlis that inhabit it.

¶ On the weather becoming again possible, the ships set sail about 22 March and reached "an island which is called Barbara." Berbera, however, is not an island, though the anchorage might have made it appear to be one, or Varthema may have mistranslated *jazīra*, used usually for an island, but also on occasion for a peninsula or a harbour. He found the place "small but good and very well peopled." In this he was more fortunate than he knew, as from April to October Berbera is deserted, though it is filled by a large crowd of African traders from October to April, and it was very near the end of the busy season that Varthema's convoy was in the place. The ship remains only one day at Berbera and sails for India and Persia presumably about 1 April.

IN GUJARAT (INDIA)

¶ Varthema now crosses the northern part of the Indian Ocean without touching at any point on the Arabian or Persian coasts, and about 13 April reaches the island of Diu, off the coast of Gujarât in India, though to him it is not "India," as explained above. Diu, he tells us, "is called Diuobandierrumi, that is, Diu, the port of the Turks," meaning thereby Diu Bandar ar-Rûmî, Diu the Port of the Rûmîs, *i.e.* of foreigners from Rûm or Turkey, or perhaps better the Nearer East, or foreigners in general. He says that it was "subject to the Sultan of Combeia," *i.e.* Kambâya or Kambâyat (Cambay), and that "the captain of this Diu is one named Menacheaz," thus giving a neat reference to the notorious foreign *mamlûk* of uncertain origin, Malik 'Aiyâz, an important personage then on the west coast of India, who greatly impressed the Portuguese, and of whom there are long accounts by both Barbosa and de Barros. He also notices that the small sailing vessels in use thereabouts were called *thalae*, *i.e.* *at-talâyi* or *atalâya*, coast-guard boats.

¶ The ship stays only two days at Diu and goes on to Gogo or Gôghâ, which Varthema calls Goa, in Kâthiâwâr, then included in the Kingdom of Gujarât. He arrives at Gogo in three days, say by 18 April, and notes that the Gogo district, *i.e.* Kâthiâwâr, is "fat and wealthy," and says incorrectly that the inhabitants are "all Mahommedans," but he could not have remained there long; and again he puts to sea, crossing the Indian Ocean westwards beyond the entrance to the Persian Gulf.

CHAPTER II

CONCERNING ARABIA DESERTA

THE matters relating to Damascus having been here described perhaps more diffusely than was necessary, opportunity invites me to resume my journey. In 1503, on the 8th day of April, the caravan being set in order to go to Mecca, and I being desirous of beholding various scenes and not knowing how to set about it, formed a great friendship with the captain of the said Mamelukes of the caravan, who was a Christian renegade, so that he clothed me like a Mameluke and gave me a good horse, and placed me in company with the other Mamelukes, and this was accomplished by means of the money and other things which I gave him; and in this manner we set ourselves on the way, and travelled three days to a place which is called Mezeribe [al-Mazarîb], and there we remained three days, in order that the merchants might provide themselves, by purchase, with as many horses as they required. In this Mezeribe there is a lord who is named Zambei [az-Za'abî], and he is lord of the country, that is to say, of the Arabians; which Zambei has three brothers and four male children, and he has 40,000 horses, and for his court he has 10,000 mares. And he has here 300,000 camels, for his pasture-ground extends two days' journey. And this lord Zambei, when he thinks proper, wages war with the Sultan of Cairo, and the Lord of Damascus and of Jerusalem, and sometimes, in harvest time, when they think that he is a hundred miles distant, he plans some morning a great incursion to the granaries of the said city, and finds the grain and the barley nicely packed up in sacks, and carries it off. Sometimes he runs a whole day and night with his said mares without stopping, and when they have arrived at the end of their journey they give them camels' milk to drink, because it is very refreshing. Truly it appears to me that they do not run but that they fly like falcons; for I have been with them, and you must know that they ride, for the most part, without saddles, and in their shirts, excepting some of their principal men. Their arms consist of a lance of Indian cane ten or twelve cubits in length with a piece of iron at the end, and when they go on any expedition they keep as close together as starlings. The said Arabians are very small men, and are of a dark tawny colour, and they have a feminine voice, and long, stiff, and black hair. And truly these Arabs are in such vast numbers that they cannot be counted, and they are constantly fighting amongst

thou going?" He answered him: "I am going to my father, who is waiting for me in such a place." The devil answered him: "Do not go, my son, for thy father will sacrifice thee to God and will put thee to death." And Isaac replied: "Let it be so; if such be the will of God, so let it be." The devil then disappeared, and a little farther on he appeared in the form of another dear friend of Isaac, and said to him the above-mentioned words. They relate that Isaac answered with anger: "Let it be so;" and took a stone and threw it in the devil's face: and for this reason, when the people arrive at the said place, each one throws a stone at the said wall, and then they go to the city. We found in the street of the said city 15,000 or 20,000 doves, which they say are of the stock of that dove which spoke to Mahomet in the form of the Holy Spirit, which doves fly about the whole district at their pleasure, that is, in the shops where they sell grain, millet, rice, and other vegetable productions. And the owners of the said articles are not at liberty to kill them or catch them. And if anyone were to strike any of those doves, they would fear that the country would be ruined. And you must know that they cause very great expense within the temple.

¶ In another part of the said temple is an enclosed place in which there are two live unicorns, and these are shown as very remarkable objects, which they certainly are. I will tell you how they are made. The elder is formed like a colt of thirty months old, and he has a horn in the forehead, which horn is about three *braccia* in length. The other unicorn is like a colt of one year old, and he has a horn of about four *palmi* long. The colour of the said animal resembles that of a dark bay horse, and his head resembles that of a stag; his neck is not very long, and he has some thin and short hair which hangs on one side; his legs are slender and lean like those of a goat; the foot is a little cloven in the fore part, and long and goat-like, and there are some hairs on the hind part of the said legs. Truly this monster must be a very fierce and solitary animal. These two animals were presented to the Sultan of Mecca as the finest things that could be found in the world at the present day, and as the richest treasure ever sent by a king of Ethiopia, that is, by a Moorish king [of Zeila]. He made this present in order to secure an alliance with the said Sultan of Mecca.

¶ I must here show how the human intellect manifests itself under certain circumstances, in so far as it became necessary for me to exercise it in order to escape from the caravan of Mecca. Having gone to make some purchases for my captain, I was recognized by a Moor who looked me in the face and said to me: "*In te menaine?*" that is, "Where are you from?" I answered: "I am a Moor." He replied: "*In te chedeab,*" that is, "You