

thirty-one elephants, two of which were more gorgeously adorned than any thing I ever saw, or shall see in the course of my life. They had each four massy chains all of beaten gold, around their bodies, with two chains of the same about their legs, furniture for their buttocks of the same rich material, and two golden lions on their heads.

§ 2. *Letter from Agra, the Capital of the Great Mogul, to his Mother, dated 31st October, 1616.*

Most dear and well-beloved Mother,

This city is the metropolis of the whole dominions of the Great Mogul, and is at the distance of ten days journey from Ajimeer, whence I departed on the 12th September this year, after having abode there twelve months and sixty days. This my long stay in one place, was for two principal causes; one being to learn the languages of these countries through which I am to pass between this country and Christendom, namely, Persian, Turkish, and Arabic, which I have competently attained to by labour and industry, being as available to me as money, and the chiefest, or rather the only means to get me money if I should happen to be in want; and, secondly, that, by the help of the Persian, I might get myself access to the Mogul, and be able to express my mind unto him about what I proposed to lay before him. During all this time, I abode in the house of the English merchants, my dear countrymen, not expending any money at all for lodging, diet, washing, or any other thing.

I attained to a reasonable skill in the Persian tongue, by earnest study in a few months, so that I made an oration to the king in that language, before many of his nobles; and afterwards discoursed with him very readily. The copy of this speech I have sent you, as a novelty, though the language may seem strange and uncouth to an Englishman; and I have sent you herewith a translation, which you may shew along with the Persian original to some of my learned friends of the clergy, and also of the laity, who may take some pleasure in reading so rare and unusual a tongue. The Persian is this that follows:

*Hazaret Aallum-pennah, Salamet : fooker Darveish, ve jehaun-gesht hastam ; ke mis emadam az wellageti door, yanne as malk Ingliz-stan, ke kessanion pesheen mushacar cardand,*  
ke

*ke wellageti mazcoor der akeri mugrub bood, ke mader hamma jezzaereti dunia ast, &c.*—The English of it is this :

“ Lord protector of the world, all hail ! I am a poor traveller and world-seer, who am come here from a far country called England, which ancient historians thought to have been situated in the farthest bounds of the west, and which is the queen of all the islands in the world. The causes of my coming hither are four. First, that I might behold the blessed countenance of your majesty, whose great fame has resounded over all Europe, and through all the Mahometan countries. When I heard of the fame of your majesty, I made all possible haste hither, and cheerfully endured the labour of travelling, that I might see your glorious court. Secondly, I was desirous of seeing your majesty’s elephants, which kind of beasts I have not seen in any other country. Thirdly, that I might see your famous river the Ganges, the captain of all the rivers in the world. Fourthly, to entreat your majesty, that you would vouchsafe to grant me your most gracious phirmaund, that I may travel into the country of Tartaria to the city of Samarcand, to visit the blessed sepulchre of the *Lord of the Corners*,<sup>2</sup> whose fame, by reason of his wars and victories, is published over the whole world, so that perhaps he is not altogether so famous in his own country of Tartary as in England. I have a strong desire to see the sepulchre of the Lord of the Corners for this cause, that, when in Constantinople, I saw a notable old building in a pleasant garden near the said city, where the Christian emperor, Emanuel, made a sumptuous banquet to the Lord of the Corners, after he had taken Sultan Bajazet in a great

<sup>1</sup> The whole discourse, of which the following paragraph in the text is the translation, is contained in the *Pilgrims* : But doubting its accuracy, as that book is most incorrectly printed throughout, the editor requested the favour of the late learned professor of oriental languages in the University of Edinburgh, Dr Alexander Murray, to revise and correct this first sentence, which he most readily did, adding the following literal translation :

“ Presence, [or face,] of the world—protector, salutation to thee : A poor dervish and world-wanderer I am ; that I have come from a kingdom far, to-wit, from the kingdom of Ingliz-stan, which historians ancient, relation have made, that kingdom said, in the end of the west was, which the mother of every island of the world is,” &c.

<sup>2</sup> This is the title given to Tamerlane in this country, in the Persian language, meaning that he was lord over the four corners of the earth, that is, the highest and supreme monarch of the world.—*Purch.*

great battle near the city of Brusa, when the Lord of the Corners bound Sultan Bajazet in golden fetters, and put him into an iron cage. These causes have induced me to travel thus far from my native country, having come a-foot through Turkey and Persia into this country, my pilgrimage having extended so three thousand miles, with much labour and toil, such as no mortal man hath ever yet performed, to see the blessed countenance of your majesty, since the first day of your being inaugurated in your imperial throne."

When I had ended my speech, I conversed with him for a short space in Persian, when, among other things, he told me that he could do me no service in regard to my proposed journey to Samarcand, as there was no intimacy between him and the princes of the Tartars, so that his commendatory letters would avail me little. He also added, that the Tartars bore so deadly a hate against all Christians, that they would certainly kill any who might venture into their country, wherefore he earnestly dissuaded me from this proposed journey, as I valued my life and welfare. At last, he concluded his discourse by throwing down to me, from a window in which he stood, that looked into the street, an hundred pieces of silver, worth two shillings each, or ten pounds in all, which were thrown into a sheet hanging by the four corners.

I had conducted this affair so secretly, by the help of the Persian which I had learnt, that neither our English ambassador, nor any other of my countrymen, excepting one special and private friend, knew any thing at all about the matter till I had thoroughly accomplished my design. For I well knew, if the ambassador had got the smallest notice of my purpose, that he would have counteracted me, as indeed he signified to me after I had effected my purpose, alledging that this might redound to the discredit of our nation, for one of our country to present himself in that poor and beggarly manner before the king, to crave money from him by flattery. But I answered our ambassador so resolutely, that he was glad to let me alone. Indeed, I never had more need of money in all my life than at this time, having only to the value of twenty shillings remaining, owing to my having been stripped of almost all my money by a miscreant Turk, in a city called *Imaret*, in Mesopotamia.

After my interview with the Mogul, I went to visit a certain noble and generous Christian of the Armenian nation,

two

two days journey from court, to observe certain remarkable matters at that place; and, by means of my knowledge of the Persian language, he made me very welcome, entertaining me with much civility and kindness; and, at my departure, gave me very bountifully twenty pieces of the same coin as the king had done, worth forty shillings of our money. About ten days after this, I departed from Ajimeer, the court of the Great Mogul, to resume my pilgrimage, after my long rest of fourteen months, proposing to go back into Persia. On this occasion, our ambassador gave me a gold piece of this king's coin, worth twenty-four shillings, which I shall save till my arrival in England, if it be possible. I have thus received in benevolences, since I came into this country, twenty marks sterling,<sup>3</sup> bating two shillings and eight-pence, besides £1 : 13 : 4 sterling, in Persian money, from Lady Shirley, upon the confines of Persia. At this present, being in Agra, whence I write this letter, I have about twelve pounds, which, according to my manner of living on the way, at two-pence a-day, will very competently maintain me during three years travel, considering the cheapness of all eatables in Asia. Drink costs me nothing, as I hardly ever drink any thing beyond pure water during my pilgrimage.

I mean to remain in Agra for six weeks longer, waiting an excellent opportunity of going to the famous river Ganges, about five days journey from hence, to see a memorable meeting of the idolatrous people of this country, called Banians, of whom to the number of 400,000 go thither, on purpose to bathe and shave themselves in the river, and to sacrifice a world of gold to that same river, partly in stamped coin, and partly in great massy lumps and wedges, thrown into the river as a sacrifice, besides many other strange ceremonies, worthy of being observed. So notable a spectacle is no where to be seen, neither in this the *greater* Asia, nor in the *lesser*, now called Natolia. This shew is made once in every year, on which occasion people flock thither from almost a thousand miles off, worshipping the river as a god and saviour; a most abominable and impious superstition of these brutish heathens, aliens from Christ. As soon as I have seen this ceremony, I propose, by God's help, to repair to La-

<sup>3</sup> Twenty marks are £13 : 6 : 8 sterling.—E.

hore, twenty days journey from hence, and so into Persia, &c.

Your dutiful, loving, and obedient son,  
Now a desolate pilgrim in the world,  
THOMAS CORYAT.

§ 3. *Some Observations concerning India, by Thomas Coryat.*<sup>2</sup>

Whereas in this country the beggars beg from a Christian in the name of *Bibbee Maria*, and not of *Hazaret Fesa*, we may gather that the jesuits have preached our *Lady Mary* more than the *Lord Jesus*.

A great rajah of the Hindoos, who was a notorious atheist, and a contemner of all diety, and who boasted that he knew of no God except the king, and neither believed nor feared any other, happened one day to sit dallying among his women, when one of them plucked a hair from his breast, which hair being fast-rooted, plucked off along with it a small bit of skin, so that a small spot of blood appeared. This small scar festered and gangrened incurably, so that in a few days his life was despaired of, and being surrounded by all his friends, and several of the courtiers, he broke out into these excellent words:—"Which of you would have thought that I, a warrior, should not have died by the stroke of a sword, a spear, or an arrow? But now am I enforced to confess the power of the great God I have so long despised, who needs no other lance to slay so blasphemous a wretch and contemner of his holy majesty, such as I have been, than a small hair."

Akbar Shah, the former king, had learnt all manner of sorceries; and being once in a strange humour to shew a spectacle to his nobles, he brought forth his favourite Sultana before them, and cut off her head with a sword in their presence. Seeing them struck with horror and amazement at this action, by virtue of his exorcisms and sorceries, he caused her head to fix on again, and no sign remained of any wound.

The same prince, who was very fortunate during his reign, shewed the utmost attention and respect to his mother, of which

<sup>2</sup> Purchas informs us, that these were taken from certain notes written by Coryat, given him by Sir Thomas Roe; "whence, omitting such things as have been given before from the observations of Sir Thomas Roe himself, I have inserted a few."—*Purch.*