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NARRATIVE  
OF THE  
JOURNEY OF ABD-ER-RAZZAK,  
AMBASSADOR FROM SHAH ROKH.  
A.H. 845. A.D. 1442.

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IN this year 845 (A.D. 1442), the author of this narrative, Abd-er-Razzak, the son of Ishak, in obedience to the orders of the sovereign of the world, set out on his journey towards the province of Ormuz and the shores of the ocean. In the hope that the author's friends, instead of finding fault, will take pleasure in reading this work, the narrative shall be given in its minutest details, and I shall insert in it all sorts of marvellous facts and wonderful matters worthy of notice. I shall set forth all the circumstances which have fallen under my notice in the space of three years; I shall recount, fully and in detail, all my adventures, and the dangers by which they have been rendered remarkable; and I shall also relate, in my usual manner, those events which affect the provinces of Khorassan, Ma-wara-amahar,<sup>1</sup> Irak, Fars, and Azerbijan. I venture to hope that my work will find credit amongst men of intelligence, and that the leading people of our age will allow the sun of their consideration to shine upon the recital.

<sup>1</sup> Better spelt in English Ma Wara-ee Alnahar. It is an Arabic designation, literally signifying—"beyond the river," and representing the Transoxiana of the ancients. Its limits are not easily defined, but the territory it comprehends is better recognized by Europeans as that occupied by the Uzbek Tartars. The Arab geographers, Abulfeda and Nassir Eddin, have given long lists of places in the province, with their positions, as gathered from various authors. The three principal cities are Bokhara, Samarcand, and Osrushnah.

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NARRATIVE OF THE JOURNEY OF  
ABD-ER-RAZZAK.

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NARRATIVE OF MY VOYAGE INTO HINDOOSTAN, AND DESCRIPTION OF THE WONDERS AND REMARKABLE PECULIARITIES WHICH THIS COUNTRY PRESENTS.

EVERY man, the eyes of whose intelligence are illuminated by the light of truth, and whose soul, like a bird, soars with fixedness of vision into the regions of knowledge, observes with certainty, and brings home to his recognition the fact, that the revolution of the great bodies which people the heavens, as well as the progress of the smaller bodies which canopy the earth, are subject to the wisdom and the will of a Creator, Who is alike holy and powerful; that the intelligence of His omnipotence, and the characteristics of His omniscience, are manifested alike in the nature of those beings which resemble the atoms contained in creation, as well as in the movements and actions of man; that the bridle which guides all created beings is held by the hand of a Divine power, by the fingers of Providence; that the proudest existences are forced to bow the head beneath the commands of a God who does everything according to His pleasure.

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*“If Providence were not the mover of all the events of the world, how is it that the progress of those events is so frequently in opposition to our own will?”*

*“In every occurrence, whether fortunate or unfortunate, it is Providence who holds the reins, and guides His creatures; the proof of this is found in the fact that the measures adopted by men are all fallacious.”*

The events, the perils, which accompany a voyage by sea (and which in themselves constitute a shoreless and a boundless ocean), present the most marked indication of the Divine omnipotence, the grandest evidence of a wisdom which is sublime. Hence it is that the utility of such a voyage as this has been shown in the most perfect manner in the marvellous language of the king, who is the author of all knowledge, and also that the execution of so important an undertaking cannot be either accomplished or related, but by the help of that living and powerful Being, who makes easy that which is most difficult.

In pursuance of the orders of Providence, and of the decrees of that Divine prescience, the comprehension of which escapes all the calculations and reflections of man, I received orders to take my departure for India; and how shall I be able to set forth the events of my journey with clearness, seeing that I have wandered at hap-hazard into that country devoted to darkness. His majesty, the happy Khakan, condescended to allot to me my provisions and post horses. His humble slave, after having made the necessary preparations, started on his journey on the first day of the month of Ramazan (January 13th), by the route of Kohistan. In the middle of the desert of Kerman, he arrived at the ruins of a city, the wall of which and four bazaars could still be distinguished; but no inhabitant was to be found in all the country round.

(I passed in the desert near ancient dwellings, none of which presented signs of anything but ruin and decay.)

This desert extends to the frontier of Mekran and Seistan, as far as the environs of the city of Damghan, and all this space presents formidable dangers to travellers.

On the eighteenth day of Ramazan (Jan. 30th) I reached the city of Kerman; it is a pleasant place, as well as one of great importance. The *darogah* (governor), the Emir Hadji-Mohamed-Kaiaschirin, being then absent, I was compelled to sojourn in this city until the day of the feast. The illustrious Emir Borhan-Eddin-Seid-Khalil-Allah, son of the Emir Naim-Eddin-Seid-Nimet-Allah, who was the most distinguished personage of the city of Kerman, and even of the whole world, returned at this time from the countries of Hindoostan. He loaded me with attentions and proofs of his kindness. On the fifth day of Schewal (February 16th) I quitted the city of Kerman. On my road I met the Emir Hadji-Mohammed, on his return from an expedition which he had made into the province of Benboul. Continuing my journey, I arrived towards the middle of the month at the shore of the Sea of Oman, and at Bender-Ormuz. The prince of Ormuz, Melik-Fakhr-Eddin-Touranschah, having placed a vessel at my disposal, I went on board of it, and made my entry into the city of Ormuz. I had had assigned to me a house, with everything that I could require, and I was admitted to an audience of the prince.

Ormuz, which is also called Djerrun, is a port situated in the middle of the sea, and which has not its equal on the surface of the globe. The merchants of seven climates, from Egypt, Syria, the country of Roum,<sup>1</sup> Azerbijan, Irak-Arabi, and Irak-Adjemi, the provinces of Fars, Khorassan, Ma-wara-amahar, Turkistan, the kingdom of Deschti-Kaptchack,<sup>2</sup> the countries inhabited by the Kalmucks, the whole of the kingdoms of Tchin<sup>3</sup> and Matchin,<sup>4</sup> and the city of

<sup>1</sup> The Arabic name for Anatolia.

<sup>2</sup> Or rather Dasht-i-Kipchak, the desert of Kipchak in Tartary.

<sup>3</sup> China.

<sup>4</sup> The southern parts of China.

Khanbâlik,<sup>1</sup> all make their way to this port ; the inhabitants of the sea coasts arrive here from the countries of Tchin, Java, Bengal, the cities of Zirbad,<sup>2</sup> Tenasserim, Sokotora, Schahrinou,<sup>3</sup> the islands of Dîwah-Mahall,<sup>4</sup> the countries of Malabar, Abyssinia, Zanguebar, the ports of Bidjanagar,<sup>5</sup> Kalbergah,<sup>6</sup> Gudjarat, Kanbaït,<sup>7</sup> the coasts of Arabia, which extend as far as Aden, Jiddah, and Yembo ; they bring hither those rare and precious articles which the sun, the

<sup>1</sup> Pekin.

<sup>2</sup> This name in Indian language means, "the country under the wind," and is referred to India beyond the Ganges, comprising the whole South-East Peninsula.

<sup>3</sup> Query, Shahnoor or Sivanur, in the province of Bejapoor, fifty miles south south-east from Darwar.

<sup>4</sup> The Maldives.

<sup>5</sup> The author means the ports of the sovereignties so named, as the capital cities bearing the same name were not on the sea-coast. The city of Bijanagar, now in ruins, was once the metropolis of a mighty Hindoo empire. It was thither that our author, as the reader will hereafter see, ultimately directed his steps ; and his narrative mainly consists of the description of this empire, its capital, and people. The remains of the city are situated on the south bank of the Toombuddra river, directly opposite to Annagoondy. It was begun to be built in A.D. 1336, and was finished in 1343. The incessant hostilities between the Mahommedan sovereigns of the Deccan and this Hindoo principality, resulted in the total defeat of Ram Rajah, the sovereign of Bijanagar, and the sacking of the metropolis in 1565, and its subsequent depopulation in 1567. The celebrated Italian traveller Cesare Federici, who was there in the latter year, speaks with enthusiasm of its extent and enormous wealth. An interesting account of this empire and its fall, is given in the commencing chapter of Colonel Wilks's "Historical Sketches of the South of India," London, 1810, 4to.

<sup>6</sup> The town now known as the capital of a district of the same name, is situated in the province of Beeder, one hundred and five miles west of Hyderabad. Though now of little note, it was formerly famous as the metropolis both of a Hindoo and Mahomedan sovereignty. Rajahs of Kalberga are mentioned by Ferishta as independent princes when the Deccan was invaded by Alla ud Deen in A.D. 1295, and on the establishment of Mahommedan independence in the Deccan in 1347, this city was made the capital of the new government.

<sup>7</sup> Cambay.

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moon, and the rains have combined to bring to perfection, and which are capable of being transported by sea. Travelers from all countries resort hither, and, in exchange for the commodities which they bring, they can without trouble or difficulty obtain all that they desire. Bargains are made either by money or by exchange.

For all objects, with the exception of gold and silver, a tenth of their value is paid by way of duty.

Persons of all religions, and even idolators, are found in great numbers in this city, and no injustice is permitted towards any person whatever. This city is also named Dâr-alaman (the abode of security). The inhabitants unite the flattering character of the people of Irak with the profound cunning of the Indians.

I sojourned in this place for the space of two months ; and the governors sought all kinds of pretexts to detain me ; so that the favorable time for departing by sea, that is to say the beginning or middle of the monsoon, was allowed to pass, and we came to the end of the monsoon, which is the season when tempests and attacks from pirates are to be dreaded. Then they gave me permission to depart. As the men and horses could not all be contained in the same vessel, they were distributed among several ships. The sails were hoisted, and we commenced our voyage.

As soon as I caught the smell of the vessel, and all the terrors of the sea presented themselves before me, I fell into so deep a swoon, that for three days respiration alone indicated that life remained within me. When I came a little to myself, the merchants, who were my intimate friends, cried with one voice that the time for navigation was passed, and that every one who put to sea at this season was alone responsible for his death, since he voluntarily placed himself in peril. All, with one accord, having sacrificed the sum which they had paid for freight in the ships, abandoned their project, and after some difficulties disembarked at the port

of Muscat. For myself, I quitted this city, escorted by the principal companions of my voyage, and went to a place called Kariat, where I established myself and fixed my tents, with the intention of there remaining. The merchants of the coasts designate by the word *telâhi* (loss) the condition in which they find themselves when, having undertaken a sea voyage, they cannot accomplish it, and are obliged to stop in some other place. In consequence of the severity of pitiless weather and the adverse manifestations of a treacherous fate, my heart was crushed like glass and my soul became weary of life, and my season of relaxation became excessively trying to me.

At the moment when, through the effect of so many vicissitudes, the mirror of my understanding had become covered with rust, and the hurricane of so many painful circumstances had extinguished the lamp of my mind, so that I might say in one word I had fallen into a condition of apathetic stupidity, on a sudden I one evening met a merchant who was on his return from the shores of Hindoostan. I asked him whither he was going? he replied: "My only object is to reach the city of Herat." When I heard him utter the name of that august city I went very nearly distracted. The merchant having consented at my request to tarry awhile, I threw off the following verses upon paper.

*When in the midst of strangers, at the hour of the evening prayer I set me down to weep,*

*I recall my adventures, the recital of which is accompanied with unusual sighs.*

*At the remembrance of my mistress and of my country I weep so bitterly,*

*That I should deprive the whole world of the taste and habit of travelling.*

*I am a native of the country of the Arabs, and not of a strange region.*

*O mighty God, whom I invoke! vouchsafe to bring me back to the companionship of my friends.*



Everything which relates to my condition, and to the tediousness and dangers against which I have had to contend, has been set forth in full detail in this narrative. As far as regards a certain number of men and horses, which were embarked at Ormuz upon a separate vessel, I have been unable hitherto to ascertain what has been their fate. It may be that some day I shall be able to put their adventures into writing.

DESCRIPTION OF WHAT OCCURRED DURING THE TIME THAT  
 I WAS INVOLUNTARILY DETAINED UPON THE SEA SHORE,  
 AND OF WHAT HAPPENED TO ME IN THE ENCAMPMENT  
 OF KARIAT, AND IN THE CITY OF KALAHAT.

AT the time that I was perforce sojourning in the place called Kariat, and upon the shores of the ocean, the new moon, of the month of Moharrem of the year 846 [May 1442], showed me in this abode of weariness the beauty of her disk. Although it was at that time spring, in the season in which the nights and days are of equal length, the heat of the sun was so intense that it burned the ruby in the mine and the marrow in the bones; the sword in its scabbard melted like wax, and the gems which adorned the handle of the khandjar were reduced to coal.

*Soon as the sun shone forth from the height of heaven,  
 The heart of stone grew hot beneath its orb;  
 The horizon was so much scorched up by its rays,  
 That the heart of stone became soft like wax;  
 The bodies of the fishes, at the bottom of the fish-ponds,  
 Burned like the silk which is exposed to the fire;  
 Both the water and the air gave out so burning a heat,  
 That the fish went away to seek refuge in the fire;*

*In the plains the chase became a matter of perfect ease,  
 For the desert was filled with roasted gazelles.*

The extreme heat of the atmosphere gave one the idea of the fire of hell. As the climate of this country is naturally opposed to human health, my elder brother, a respectable and learned man, Maulana-Aff-Eddin-Abd-el-Wahhâb, the rest of my companions, and myself, fell sick, in consequence of the excessive heat, and we resigned our fate into the hands of Divine goodness.

*Since the power of doing our own will has escaped from our hands, we surrender ourselves to God, waiting to see what His munificence will work for us.*

The constitution of each one of us had undergone so sad a change; trouble, fatigue, sickness, and the burning of the fever, went on increasing every day. This cruel condition was prolonged for the space of four months; our strength gave way by degrees, and the malady increased.

*I am reduced to such a state of weakness, O my friend, that the zephyr carries me each instant from one climate to another, like the smell of the rose.*

*I continue no longer in my gay position, for the action of fate has made me rise and fall like the cord of a hydraulic machine.*

*No one has seen the pain withdraw from my body, any more than cause and effect have been seen to separate themselves the one from the other.*

In the meanwhile I was informed that, in the environs of the city of Kalahat, there was a place called Sour, which offered a salubrious temperature and agreeable waters. In spite of my extreme weakness I went on board the vessel, and departed from Kalahat. No sooner had I arrived than my malady increased; in the daytime I was consumed by the fire of a burning fever, and in the night I was devoured by the anguish of chagrin. The unwholesomeness of the disease disordered my bodily frame, much as the earthly