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 Edited by Richard Henry Major
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India in the Fifteenth Century

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India in the Fifteenth Century

*Being a Collection of Narratives of Voyages to
India in the Century Preceding the Portuguese
Discovery of the Cape of Good Hope, from
Latin, Persian, Russian, and Italian Sources*

EDITED BY RICHARD HENRY MAJOR



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NOW FIRST TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH.
EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION,
BY
R. H. MAJOR, Esq., F.S.A.

LONDON:
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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE present collective volume has been produced by the joint labours of three different persons, and hence, in a great measure, has arisen the delay which has taken place in its completion. In the first instance, the translation of the interesting manuscript of Nikitin, procured for the Society from Moscow, through the instrumentality of our president, Sir Roderick I. Murchison, was undertaken by the late estimable Count Wielhorsky, Secretary of the Russian Legation at the Court of St. James's, and by great good fortune was completed by him before his recall. The smallness of this document made it unfit to form a separate work ; and it was thought that by bringing together a collection of voyages in the same century, previously untranslated into English, an interesting volume might be formed. Mr. Winter Jones, the

“

present Keeper of the Printed Books in the British Museum, was requested to edit such a volume, which he obligingly undertook to do, though with much hesitation, in consequence of the increasing pressure of his important duties in the Museum. After translating and annotating the voyage of Nicolò de' Conti and seeing it through the press, he felt compelled by the claims of his present responsible position to give up a task which he would otherwise gladly have completed, but which he could not continue with justice to the members of the Society or to himself. In the spring of the present year, the Honorary Secretary of the Society volunteered to complete what Mr. Jones had left undone, a task which, although laborious, has been performed under the advantage of not having in any way to interfere with the labours of his predecessor.

While thus called upon to refer to the contributors to this volume, the editor cannot deny himself the satisfaction of recording in this place the following exalted testimony to the generous conduct of his lamented friend, Count Wielhorsky, after his return to Russia. The following autograph letter

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from the present Empress of Russia to the Count's father, the Count Michel Wielhorsky, was published in the *Journal de St. Petersburg* of the 3rd January, 1856, and its translation into English appeared in *The Times* of the 12th of the same month.

“Count Michel Yourievitch,—Appreciating the generous sentiment which led your son to express the desire to go to the aid of the suffering among our brave soldiers wounded in the army of the Crimea, I intrusted to him, in this sacred work, the accomplishment of my views and intentions.”

“Count Wielhorski Matuschkine completely justified my choice and my confidence, by wise measures and indefatigable activity, which were joined, in the midst of incessant labours, to his feelings of humanity and ardent zeal. Thousands of wounded men, thousands of mourning families have blessed, and still bless, the attentions, so full of humanity and Christian sentiment, which your son lavished upon them. It gave me pleasure to think that, on his return to St. Petersburg, I should have the heartfelt joy of expressing to him my sincere gratitude for his arduous labours, and for having so well divined my wishes and carried them out with so much success. He had already worthily received a testimony of the high satisfaction of His Majesty the Emperor, at the period of his visit to the Crimea.

“The Most High has otherwise ordained. It is with keen sorrow that I have learned the premature and unexpected death of your son. I appreciate the extent of your grief, and I am unable to express the interest and sympathy with which it inspires me. One consolation remains to your sorrow—it is the secret thought that your son, in his short career, has known how to distinguish himself by a useful activity in the performance of his professional duties, and that Divine Grace has granted him an end that every Christian may envy.

“Deprived of the satisfaction of expressing my thankfulness to

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

your son himself, it is in his name and in remembrance of him that I address myself to you. It was in the paternal house and in the example of the family that he imbibed the principles which formed the rule of his life, and which, after his death, will assure to his memory an imperishable fame.

“ I remain, ever yours, very affectionately,

“ MARIE.”

“ St. Petersburg, Dec. 26, 1855.”

To those who knew Count Wielhorsky in England the noble conduct thus feelingly appreciated by the Empress will occasion no surprise ; while, by those who did not, it is hoped that this testimony to the worth of one, now gone, who obligingly rendered his best services to our Society, will not be deemed superfluous.

R. H. M.

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INTRODUCTION.

BEFORE the days when Alexander of Macedon sought to add to his triumphs the conquest of the Eastern world, India had been pronounced by Herodotus to be the wealthiest and most populous country on the face of the earth. The subsequent history of commerce has proved the correctness of his assertion. Yet, though endowed with a soil and climate on which nature has poured forth her choicest gifts with the most partial profusion, and at the same time boasting a civilisation even far beyond the limits of authentic history, it is remarkable that India has never been thoroughly explored till within the last century. No era in the history of the exploration of such a country can be without its interest, but the period treated of in the collection of documents which are here for the first time laid before the English reader, claims a peculiarly honourable place in the chain of our information respecting it. It is true that it was no longer possible at that period to speak, as Horace poetically did of old, of the “*intacti thesauri divitis Indiæ*”, yet the time had not yet come when Vasco de Gama, by rounding the

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Cape of Good Hope, had opened up a readier track to that more active commerce, by which these riches should become the property of the whole western world. The interest which attaches to these documents, however, will be best appreciated by our taking a brief retrospect of the intercourse of the West with India, and bringing under review the earlier voyages made to that country; it being premised that the word India is here used in its most extended sense, comprising India within and beyond the Ganges, with the East Indian Islands.

Although it is now well ascertained that India was the country from which the Phœnician pilots of King Solomon's fleets "brought gold and silver, ivory, apes and peacocks", inasmuch as the original designations of these various importations are not Hebrew but Sanscrit, yet even so late as the days of Herodotus the knowledge of that country was extremely limited. The earliest fact which he has recorded respecting the intercourse of Indians with other nations, is the conquest of the western part of Hindostan by Darius I. He also states that Indians served in the Persian armies. The sway of the Persians over that country was, however, but of brief duration. With the conquest of Darius III by Alexander, and the death of that prince in the year 330, A. C., the Persian empire ceased.

Alexander, in his famous expedition, when he had reached the Hyphasis, or Gharra, one of the five great affluents of the Indus constituting the Punjab, was compelled, by the discontent of his troops, to re-

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linquish the design of advancing any further. To this expedition, nevertheless, apparently so unsuccessful, was due the commencement of that Indian trade, which has subsequently proved of such vast importance to Europe. The Macedonian conqueror, by founding several cities on the branches of the Indus, and by commissioning Nearchus to survey the coasts from the mouth of the Indus to that of the Tigris, laid open the means of a communication with India both by land and by sea. It was evidently his plan that the treasures of that country might thus be carried through the Persian Gulf into the interior of his Asiatic dominions, while by the Red Sea they might be conveyed to Alexandria. The untimely death of this great monarch, however, suddenly arrested the prosecution of these grand conceptions.

The narratives which we have had handed down to us respecting India, through a long series of ages, have been mixed up largely with the fabulous. The earliest dealer in these fictions was Megasthenes, who was sent by Seleucus, one of the immediate successors of Alexander, to negotiate a peace with Sandracottus [Chandra-gupta], an Indian prince ; Seleucus himself being compelled to withdraw from India to encounter Antigonos, his rival for the throne. Megasthenes was, perhaps, the first European who had ever beheld the Ganges. He dwelt for several years in Palibothra, on the banks of that river,—a city supposed to have occupied the site of the modern Patna,—and afterwards wrote an account of the country, which, though now lost, has probably been transmitted to us pretty closely

in the narratives of Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, and Arrian. Yet though his minuter details seem—nay, in many respects, are—totally undeserving of credit, his geographical description of India may, curiously enough, be commended for its accuracy. Moreover, it is to Onesicritus, one of the companions of Megasthenes, that we are indebted for the earliest account of Ceylon or Taprobane. From him we first hear of its trained elephants, its pearls, and its gold.

The development of the plans of Alexander was not lost sight of under the enlightened government of the Ptolemies. By the establishment of the port of Berenice, on the Red Sea, goods brought from the East were conveyed by caravans to Coptus on the Nile, and hence to Alexandria. Thus Egypt became the principal point of communication between India and Europe.

Meanwhile the Persians, notoriously addicted to refined and effeminate luxuries, could by no means dispense with the costly productions and elegant manufactures of India. These people, however, seem to have had an unconquerable aversion to the sea,—a ludicrous example of which we have in the singular instance of the voyage, now first rendered into English in the following pages, of Abderrazzak, the ambassador of Shah Rokh to the Court of Bij-nagar. The droll pathos with which he bemoans his sad lot in having to undergo so many hardships, loses nothing from the florid exaggeration of oriental hyperbole. But of this hereafter. The supply of Indian commodities to the various provinces of Persia

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was effected by camels, from the banks of the Indus to those of the Oxus, down which river they were conveyed to the Caspian, and thence circulated either by land-carriage, or by the navigable rivers, through the various parts of the country.

It was the opinion of Major Rennell, an authority always deserving to be listened to with deference, that “under the Ptolemies the Egyptians extended their navigations to the extreme points of the Indian continent, and even sailed up the Ganges to Palibothra”; and it is certain that Strabo, who wrote a little before the commencement of the Christian æra, states that some, though few, of the traders from the Red Sea had reached the Ganges.

By this time, however, Rome had become the mistress of Egypt,—the great highway of Indian maritime commerce to the west,—and the luxurious and costly articles which that distant country alone could furnish, became necessary to feed the pleasures and maintain the grandeur of an empire glutted to satiety with the successes of conquest. It was about eighty years after Egypt had been annexed to the Roman empire,—that is, about the year A.D. 50,—that a discovery was made of the greatest importance both to geography and commerce. During the many voyages made by the navigators of Egypt and Syria, it was scarcely possible that the regular shiftings of the periodical winds, or monsoons, blowing during one part of the year from the east, and during the other from the west, could have failed to be observed. It is by the author of the *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* (supposed to be Arrian,

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to whom we are indebted for the earliest mention of the peninsula of the Deccan, and whose details are remarkable for their correctness), that we are informed that Hippalus, the commander of a vessel in the Indian trade, had the hardihood to stretch out to sea from the mouth of the Arabian Gulf, and practically tested the more theoretical observations of his predecessors. His experiment was successful, and he found himself carried by the south-western monsoon to Musiris, a port on the coast of Malabar, in all probability Mangalore. This bold adventure gained for him the honour of having his name attached to the wind by which he was enabled to perform this novel voyage.

Pliny has very fully described to us the shortened route thus gained. He says: "The subject is well worthy of our notice, inasmuch as in no year does India drain our empire of less than five hundred and fifty millions of sesterces, giving back her own wares in exchange, which are sold at fully one hundred times their prime cost." The sum here mentioned may be computed at about £1,400,000 of our money. The first point he mentions, from Alexandria, is Julio-polis, which Mannert considers to be that suburb of Alexandria called by Strabo Eleusis. From Julio-polis to Coptos, on the Nile, is three hundred miles. From Coptos to Berenice are noted various *ὕδρευματα*, or watering places, at which the travellers rested during the day time, the greater part of the distance being travelled by night, on account of the extreme heat. The entire distance from Coptos to Berenice

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occupied twelve days. The traces of several of these *ὕδρευματα* were found by Belzoni, and the site of Berenice, whose ruins still exist, was ascertained by Moresby and Carless, at the bottom of the inlet known as the Sinus Immundus, or Foul Bay. The distance from Coptos was two hundred and fifty-seven miles. The voyage from Berenice was generally commenced before or immediately after the rising of the Dog-Star, and thirty days brought them to Ocelis, now called Gehla, a harbour at the south-western point of Arabia Felix, or else to Cave, which D'Anville identifies with Cava Canim Bay, near Mount Hissan Ghorib, at the foot of which ruins are still to be seen. Pliny states that Ocelis was the best place for embarkation, and if *Hippalus*, or the west wind, were blowing, it was possible to reach Musiris, to which we have already referred, in forty days. He describes this place, however, as dangerous for disembarkation, on account of the pirates which frequent the neighbourhood, and as the roadstead was at a considerable distance from the shore, cargoes had to be conveyed thither in boats. A much more convenient port was Barace, to which pepper was conveyed, in boats hollowed out of a single tree, from Cottonara, the Cotiara of Ptolemy, supposed to be either Calicut or Cochin.

In the present advanced stage of our acquaintance with India, we are accustomed to receive from that country, in large supply, a vast variety of important articles, such as cotton, silk, wool, gums, spices, indigo, and coffee. In the days of which we write, commerce

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was confined to commodities more immediately meeting the requirements of the most luxurious subjects of a very luxurious kingdom. The importations at that time consisted mainly of precious stones and pearls, spices and silk. Diamonds and pearls, which history tells us were so much in demand amongst the Romans, were principally supplied from India. Spices, such as frankincense, cassia, and cinnamon, were largely used, not only in their religious worship, but in burning the bodies of the dead ; and silk, at that time derived alone from India, was sought for eagerly by the wealthiest Roman ladies, and so late as the time of Aurelian, in the later half of the third century of our era, was valued at its weight in gold.

The great geographer Ptolemy, who wrote at the commencement of the second century, describes the peninsula of India with far less accuracy than Arrian, who wrote but shortly after him and in the same century, and who correctly represented it as extending from north to south, while Ptolemy commits the egregious error of making the coast line run nearly west and east, the mouths of the Ganges being removed sufficiently eastward to allow room for the insertion of the numerous names of places of which he had gained information. The abundance of topographical information, for which his writings are remarkable, was due to the great extension which commercial intercourse had received in the century immediately preceding, and to the facility which his residence in Alexandria, the centre of a large proportion of the commerce of the day, afforded him of

consulting the itineraries of various merchants. He was, in short, the Hakluyt of that day. He first acquaints us with the names of six different mouths of the Ganges, and describes their positions. He delineates, with great inaccuracy as to its general form, but with wonderful copiousness of detail as to the names of towns, rivers, and headlands, that part of India which lies beyond the Ganges. His Aurea Chersonesus has been shown by D'Anville to be the Malay Peninsula, and his Sin-hoa, the western part of the kingdom of Cochin China.

We have already spoken of the trade which had long before been opened into the interior of Persia, and to the countries bordering on the Caspian and Black Sea by land carriage through the provinces that stretch along the northern frontier of India. Of the distant inland regions thus traversed Ptolemy was enabled to gain some general information, though the inaccuracy of his geographical delineations throws great obscurity over the identification of most of the points he lays down.

From the age of Ptolemy until the reign of the Emperor Justinian but small addition was made to geographical knowledge concerning India. That the communication between the east and west in the fourth century was tolerably frequent and regular, may be gathered from the language of Ammianus Marcellinus, who, wishing to pay homage to the memory of the Emperor Julian, says that on the first rumour of his accession to the throne, deputations came from the farthest east to congratulate him. His words are:

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“ Inde nationibus Indicis certatim cum donis optimates mittentibus ante tempus abusque Divis et Serendivis. (Lib. 22, cap. vii.)

After the partition of the Roman empire, the intercourse between Rome and India by way of the Red Sea began to decline; but while the Greek empire flourished, Constantinople was the centre of commerce between Asia and Europe. The caravans came by Candahar into Persia, but through Egypt especially the Greeks received an enormous quantity of the costly products of the East. This latter channel of commerce, however, was doomed to receive an almost fatal blow under the following circumstances. The Persians, who, as we have already said, had in earlier times manifested an extreme dislike to maritime commerce, began, after the subversion of the Parthian empire, to entertain a more reasonable notion of its importance and value. Having learned from the small Indian traders who frequented the various ports in the Persian Gulf, with what safety and rapidity the voyage from thence to Malabar and Ceylon might be performed, they fitted out vessels which made this voyage annually, and thus, in exchange for specie and some of the commodities of their own country, they brought home not only the costly products of India, but also those of China, which they were enabled to procure at Ceylon. By this channel the luxurious inhabitants of Constantinople were furnished in large abundance with the manufactures of Hindustán; and by this means, in conjunction with other causes, the Egyptian trade

was subjected to a depression almost amounting to annihilation.

The success of the Persians in their commerce with India, which was mainly due to the advantages of their physical situation, increased to such an extent, that at length the whole of the silk trade, which from time immemorial had been imported into Ceylon from China, fell into their hands. As at the same time the frequent wars between the Persians and the Imperial government of Constantinople afforded the former a pretext for seizing the caravans by which the manufactures of China were conveyed through Tartary into Greece, it followed that the Greeks were obliged to purchase from their enemies at an exorbitant rate all those valuable commodities of the East, which had now become to them almost a necessity. The Emperor Justinian, after making some fruitless efforts to rescue the commerce of his subjects from the exactions of the Persians, had the satisfaction of seeing his wish partially gratified by the occurrence of a curious and unexpected circumstance. Two monks of the Nestorian persuasion, who had been sent as missionaries to India and China, and had during their residence in the latter country acquired a knowledge of the methods not only of training the silkworm, but of manufacturing silk into those beautiful fabrics that were so much admired in Europe, returned to Constantinople and imparted to Justinian the important discovery which they had made. The emperor encouraged them to go out again to China, and in the course of a few years the

monks returned from their mission, bringing with them the eggs of the silkworm concealed in a hollow cane. They were hatched by the heat of a dunghill, and fed with the leaves of the mulberry. They multiplied rapidly, and extensive silk manufactures were soon established in the Peloponnesus and in some of the Greek Islands. The subjects of the Greek emperors were no longer indebted to the Persians for their silks: even Chinese silks underwent a temporary depreciation in the European markets, and thus an important change was effected in the commercial intercourse between Europe and India. In spite, however, of the advantage thus suddenly obtained by the Greeks, the merchants of Constantinople, narrowed in their fortunes by the repeated exactions of Justinian, were but little able to contend with their wealthy rivals in commercial pursuits, and even the wealth and mercantile influence of the latter had not yet so entirely destroyed the Egyptian trade but that some of the commodities of Hindustán were still imported into Egypt, and thence found their way into Italy and the Grecian States.

It was in the reign of Justinian that Cosmas, an Egyptian merchant, made some voyages to India, on account of which he received the surname of Indico-pleustes. Retiring in the later years of his life into a monastic cell, he composed various works, of which one, entitled *Topographia Christiana*, has been preserved to our own times. This work contains a particular description of India. It is from his account, together with that of the cotemporary Greek historian,

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Procopius, that the above events connected with Indian commerce in the reign of Justinian have been derived.

In the course of the succeeding century other events occurred, by which the nations of Europe became almost entirely excluded from any share in the old modes of intercourse with the East. The disciples of Mahomet, stimulated alike by the love of gain and the desire of propagating their new religion, laid aside the pristine peaceful habits of their race, and betook themselves with enthusiastic ardour to the task of promulgating the doctrines of their prophet and extending the dominion of his successors. This new and vehement spirit with which the Arabs had become imbued, was, after the death of Mahomet, fostered and brought into action by his successor, the intrepid Omar, who, at the head of a numerous army of the faithful, marched into Persia, and in the course of a few years subdued the whole of that ancient empire, and established the dominion of the Khalífs and the faith of his great predecessor on the ruins of the dynasty of the Sassanides and the religion of Zoroaster. The rapidity of the successes of the Muhammedans stands unrivalled in the history of mankind. Egypt soon fell beneath their sway, and as they not only subdued but took possession of that country, the Greeks were excluded from all intercourse with Alexandria, which had for a long time been their principal resort for Indian goods. The Arabs thus becoming sensible of the enormous advantages derivable from Eastern commerce, soon

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entered upon the pursuit of mercantile enterprize with the same ardour which had characterized their efforts as warriors. They speedily outstepped the limits of previous nautical investigation, and imported many of the most costly commodities of the East immediately from the countries which produced them. In order to give every possible encouragement to commerce, the Khalíf Omar founded the city of Busrah on the west bank of the Shat el Arab, between the junction of the Tigris and Euphrates and the Persian Gulf, a station scarcely inferior to Alexandria for the shipping engaged in the Indian trade.

We find from the narratives of the celebrated Arabian traveller and historian Masúdi, who wrote at the beginning of the tenth century, and of Ibn Haukal, also an Arabian traveller, who visited India a short time after Masúdi, that although the Arabs, who in the course of the seventh and eighth centuries made several descents upon the coasts of Guzerat, the Gulf of Cambay, and Malabar, made no fixed stay on these coasts, nevertheless a considerable number of individual merchants established themselves there, and the Arab name was held in high respect in the country. They both agree that Muhammedanism had begun to develope itself. The Mussulmans had erected mosques, and were in the habit of publicly celebrating their five prayers in the day. The part of India with which the Arabs had the least intercourse was Hindustán properly so called, namely, the country watered by the Jumna and the Ganges, from the Panjab to the Sunderbunds. Ibn

Haukal, after making mention of some cities in the Gulf of Cambay and on the neighbouring coasts, says: "These are the towns with which I am acquainted. There are other cities, such as Canooj, which lie in deserts at great distances. These are desolate countries, which the native merchants alone can penetrate, so wide apart are they and so encompassed with dangers."

But whatever limit may be assigned to the advance of the Muhammedans into the interior of the country, it is certain that they obtained a monopoly of the Indian commerce, and a consequent enormous increase in wealth and prosperity. Nor were their successes confined to the East. The whole of the north coast of Africa, from the Delta of the Nile to the Straits of Gibraltar, together with a great part of Spain, had submitted to their sway. Meanwhile, during this same period, the continued hostilities in which they were engaged with the Christians precluded the latter from deriving any of the benefits which had previously been open to them through the medium of commerce. It was by the inland intercourse through Tátary alone that they received the productions of the East, and then only enough to stimulate their desire to obtain more. About the commencement of the tenth century, however, a remarkable spirit of industry, particularly in the cultivation of the mechanical arts and in the pursuit of domestic traffic, began to manifest itself in the free cities of Amalfi and Venice, and this with an earnestness of purpose which the wealth they thereby acquired only

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served to augment. The new desires and increasing ardour for commercial enterprize thus engendered, tended gradually to soften the feelings of alienation which had grown up between the Christians and Muhammedans; the ancient channel of intercourse with India by Egypt was again laid open, and under the auspices of these Italian merchants the Eastern trade diffused its beneficial influence over all the west of Europe.

About the middle of the eleventh century the empire of the Khalifs began to decline, and its decline paved the way for the irruptions of the Turks, whose invasion of Syria and Palestine was one of the proximate causes of the crusades. These expeditions, the religious object of which it is not our purpose now to dwell upon, while they naturally revived the old hostility between the Christians and Muhammedans, and thus caused a suspension of their growing intercourse, yet by more fully opening the eyes of the sovereigns of the West to the wealth which was to be gained by the lucrative commerce of the East, laid the basis of that mercantile prosperity which Western Europe has never since lost sight of.

The illustrious warriors of the West who led their armies into Palestine, themselves became the sovereigns of the very states and cities into which the costly products of India were so largely imported; and though the commercial intercourse with the East was doubtless not the primary object with the distinguished commanders of the Crusades, it became a matter of paramount importance to the merchants

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who were associated in the enterprize. They gained permission to settle at Acre, Aleppo, and other trading towns on the coast of Syria, together with a variety of privileges which greatly enhanced the advantage of their position. By this means the cities of Venice, Genoa, Amalfi, Pisa, and Florence entirely engrossed the Indian trade, and every important port in Europe was at that time visited by their mariners.

On the partition of the Grecian States in 1204 by the leaders of the fourth Crusade, the Venetians obtained possession of part of the Morea, and of some of the most important islands of the Archipelago, and were thus enabled to secure essential advantages in the Indian trade over the rival states of Italy. The Genoese, jealous of this superiority, conspired with the disaffected Greeks under the command of Michael Palæologus, and drove the Venetian merchants from Constantinople; and thus the entire commerce by the Black Sea, and consequently the inland trade with India, fell into their hands. The Venetians in retaliation procured a Bull of dispensation from the Pope, by which they were permitted to open a free trade with the infidels; and accordingly, by the settlement of their merchants at the different trading cities of Egypt and Syria, established their intercourse with India upon a more solid basis than that which they had heretofore possessed.

While these rivalries were pending between the Venetians and the Genoese, we find the republic of Florence bestirring itself so actively in the pursuit of commercial influence, that by their success

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both in manufactures and in banking transactions, they were enabled, under the administration of Cosmo de Medicis, to procure, through ambassadors sent to Alexandria, a participation in the commercial privileges which were enjoyed by the Venetians. The Genoese, however, still carried on the northern trade between India and Constantinople, until, by the conquest of the Greek empire by Mahmúd II in 1453, they were finally expelled from that city. At this time the Turkish government became permanently established in Europe, Constantinople was no longer a mart open to the nations of the West for Indian commodities, and no supply of them could now be obtained but in Egypt and the ports of Syria, subject to the Sultáns of the Mamlúks, and as the Venetians by their commercial treaty with those powerful princes commanded these channels of intercourse, they were enabled to monopolize the supply of the products of the East to the countries of the West, until the close of the fifteenth century. At this period, the grand turning point of geographical discovery, two of the most memorable events in the annals of the world, viz., the discovery of America and the rounding of the Cape of Good Hope, produced an effect which proved fatal to the commerce of the Venetian Republic and opened the commerce of India to the Portuguese, whose perseverance, enterprize, and nautical skill so eminently qualified them to follow up the advantage with success.

Having endeavoured thus briefly to trace the political changes which affected the intercourse of India