

MY VOYAGE
AROUND
THE WORLD

FRANCESCO CARLETTI
A 16th CENTURY FLORENTINE MERCHANT



SECOND ACCOUNT: THE EAST INDIES

FIRST CHRONICLE OF THE EAST INDIES

In which is told the voyage from the Philippine Islands to those of Japan, and other notable things of that region



In the first, Western account, made to Your Serene Highness in six chronicles, I have recounted all the voyages that we made upon leaving Italy for Spain, and thence by way of the new Indies until our arrival in those Philippine Islands, the farthest boundary of the acquisitions made by the Castilians, who always reached the East by way of the West. And in them I also have made mention of every other detail remaining in a memory now aged by the passing of so many years in the abyss and confusion of so many things seen and done by me, one of which confuses the other.

Well, it may be that in this second account, in which my memory will be fresher, I can proceed with better recall of everything I did, saw, underwent, and observed during the voyages made through East India until I reached Europe again. And there will be more to tell of those voyages and regions because the Castilians had not imposed their yoke there, they being changers, not to say destroyers, of everything. And there, further, the natives of the region live and wholly maintain their ancient and indigenous customs and most of the rites and ceremonies of their human laws and superstitions. In dealing with them, then, I shall be speaking at length

of everything that my memory of things seen will return to me—for the copious writing about them that I put together was lost, to my misfortune, together with all my goods of fortune. And if I had them now, they would be very dear to me because with them I could much better delight Your Serene Highness.

But as there is no remedy, I therefore shall begin to tell you of the voyage that we made from the Philippine Islands to those of Japan, for which place we embarked in the month of May in the year 1597 on a vessel of the sort that the Japanese call *somme* and which differ from ours in all respects. They carry sails made from the leaves of trees and other substances woven together in the manner of mats and then reinforced with stalks of split cane arranged in such a way that when they want to furl the sails, these fold up like a fan. They carry these attached to the mast in the manner of a flag, navigating with them as the Flemings in their boats navigate in the low countries of Holland and Zeeland. When they wish to unfurl the sails, they do so in the same way, heading the prow into the wind and letting the sail unfurl in a burst, violently, from the other direction, it being held by a single sheet attached to the ends of the sail in more than one place.

And they do the same with the foresail, which, however, is much smaller in proportion to that which we use on our ships. And by that rigging, without other sails, they navigate, but in much danger of being submerged because of their rudder, which in the slightest heavy sea is in danger of being broken, though so as to protect it from the waves and keep it from being damaged, they usually carry two large thick beams in the style of oars from one side to the other of the abovementioned rigging. In good weather, they lower these deep into the water, thus breaking up the waves of the sea.

And these at the same time also sustain the vessel, which does not quiver so much. But often not even that suffices, and as soon as the rudder breaks, they must trim the mainsail, which has no shrouds and therefore cannot be left unfurled because of the great agitation of the craft.

And the mast also is in danger of being broken, as it is made very weakly and not tarred. Instead, they use a certain bitumen made of lime and oil with beaten oakum which, when it is all mixed together, they call *seiucui*, and which is known throughout the Indies as *galagala*.^{*} With it they smear the planking on the outside, and it makes a very hard and tenacious covering that protects the ships from the water and from the worms that the sea generates, which then cannot nibble at the planking. The anchors of these vessels are wooden, and the hawsers are made of a very strong sort of withe that the Japanese call *ziú*, the Manila people *vesciuco*, and those of East India *botta*. These withes grow to great lengths on the trees and have nodes like those of cane every so often. They have a very hard skin, into which, when it is dry, it is very difficult to plunge a knife. Also, these withes being smooth, things slide over them and nothing clings to them any more than it can to a vitrified thing.

These withes, on the other hand, have a very tender pith, so that when they are broken open they split into four sections, like osiers, so that they can be stripped in this fashion and only the skin used, just as we use it to bind the staves of barrels. And they use these for fastening together whatever they wish. And when twisted together whole they make ropes of incredible strength that last a long time and do not rot even when always in the water—in which, like osiers, they turn green again and become stronger and easier to manipulate

^{*}Translator's note. *Galagala* actually is a Tagalog term for the Amboina pine and its resin.

into whatever shape one may wish. And when they are green and in the water, it never is possible for them to break, neither as the result of twisting nor from pulling. And because they are so strong and flexible, the Christians are forbidden, under pain of excommunication, to use them for beating or whipping their slaves.

In navigating, those people do not make use of either maps or astrolabes. They have the science of the winds, and they use the magnet and the compass differently than we do, though making use of the two chief materials—that is, the magnet and the iron. They place these in an earthenware bowl full of salt water, which they change often. Then they put the bowl into a round wooden box, on the top of which certain characters are written in a circle as denoting all the principal winds. In order to determine these and thus be able to direct their course as they need, they place in the bowl, when it is full of water, a very thin leaf of iron just about the size of a fly's wing, sharp at one side and blunt at the other. One of the parts being touched with the magnet stone as it floats upon the surface, the leaf turns about and faces toward that part which, by natural secret and virtue, God has permitted—that is, toward the north.

In that way they distinguish among the winds and guide their navigations without other instruments, making use only of knowledge of the earth. And, taking soundings, they make observations by them and by the writings that other pilots have left behind as to the place where they can be according to the quality of the sand or gravel or any other sort of bottom that they bring up with the lead that they have let down. They know nothing of astrolabes for determining the height of the sun, nor of Jacob's staff for the sun and for the stars, nor of degrees, nor of the equinoctial line, nor of charts for putting down the ship's course day by day. Nonetheless,

they make their voyages and navigations, as we did. Having navigated with great trouble because of the continuous calms that we met with for thirty days through that eastern gulf which stretches about one thousand miles from the Philippine Islands to those of Japan, we attained salvation and made port in the month of June of that same year 1597, in the place at which lies the city of Nagasaki, situated at a latitude of from thirty to thirty-two degrees toward the north.

When we still were some distance off shore, it being toward evening and with no breath of wind stirring, from that port came out a large number of boats, of the sort that they call *junee*, to carry us ashore. Those boats are entirely different from ours. And where we, when rowing, move the oar toward the prow, hold it there, and then dip it back into the water, and face the poop when sitting down, they do not, while rowing, otherwise move the oar or even dip it into the water or sit down. But with their faces toward the sea, standing up on the edge of the boat, their backs toward one another, the oars always in the water and looking like so many feet attached to the two sides of the boat as it comes over the sea boundingly, they come, pushing along swiftly. And while they row, they sing happy sailors' songs, to the sound of which we entered into the aforementioned port of Nagasaki.

In the morning, before we set foot on the land, ministers of justice came by command of the governor of that region, so as to search among all the sailors, passengers, and merchants for certain earthenware vases that often are brought there from the Philippine Islands and other places in that sea. By order of Japan, these must, under pain of death, be showed by anyone who has them, as the King wishes to buy them all. Who ever would believe it? And it is the truth nonetheless, and had I not seen it on my arrival there, I should not dare to recount it to Your Serene Highness. Those vases

often are worth five, six, or ten thousand scudos each, though ordinarily one would not say that they were worth a *giulio*, and the reason is that they have the property of preserving unspoiled—and for nine, ten, and twenty years—a certain leaf that they call *cha*.*

This leaf is produced by a plant that grows almost like that of the box tree except that its leaves are three times as large and it remains green throughout the year. And it has a fragrant flower in the shape of a damask rose. From its leaves they make a powder that they then mix with hot water—which they continually have on the fire for this purpose, in an iron cauldron—and then drink it daily, more as a medicine than for its taste. It has a somewhat bitter flavor, so that one then washes out the mouth. Upon those who take it good and flavorsome, it produces a very good effect and relieves the stomach weakness because of its warmth. It marvelously assists digestion and is especially excellent for lightening and impeding the fumes that rise to the head. And for that reason it customarily is drunk immediately after the midday meal, when one feels full of too much wine; and drinking it after supper brings on sleep. In sum, the uses of drinking this *cha* are so many that one never enters a house without being offered it in a friendly way, out of good manners, as a matter of custom to honor the guest, as they do with wine in the regions of Flanders and Germany.

These people also have abundant wine made of rice, and they drink it and offer it to be drunk after first heating it at a fire until it is more than tepid. And with it they honor their friends, giving them each a cup, then one after the other making toasts, the head of the household beginning with the most honored stranger who has come to visit him. And in this matter they are most particular. The wine is made of

* Translator's note. Tea.

rice, which is cooked in the steam from water being boiled in a cauldron. After it is cooked, they mix into it flowers of ashes and let it stand that way until it becomes musty. This, the minor part, so to speak, they add to other rice cooked in the same way, but without the addition of ashes and not musty, and then place the entire mixture in a vat with water, where it ferments for some days. And then they filter it through certain cloth bags. In that way they make a strong and tasteful wine. And so as to give it more flavor, they add another sort of herb of great value. But that is not common to all, and is done only for the wine of the rich, who keep its secret for themselves. It is so volatile that it intoxicates very easily, and the wine can be kept for a long time. They also distill this same decoction in an alembic and produce a wine like *aqua vitae*, very good to taste.

But, to return to the abovementioned *cha*, besides the many special properties that they attribute to it, they say that the older the leaf is, the better it is. But they have great difficulty in preserving it for a long period and keeping it in its prime condition, as they do not find containers, not even of gold or silver or other metals, which are good for this purpose. It seems a superstition, and yet it is true, that it is preserved well only in the aforesaid vases made simply of a clay that has this virtue. But they are few and very well known to those people, who recognize them by certain signs and characters in antique lettering, which show them to be of ancient manufacture. They are not to be found today except as they were made many hundreds of years ago and are brought from the kingdoms of Cambodia and of Siam and Cochin China and from the islands, Philippine and other, of that sea. These vases generally are found among those which they have made at a value of three or four *soldi* each, and many merchants have become rich on them, especially those who have profited

from carrying some of the ones that have the virtue, or it may be a superstition, of preserving the *cha*. And it is the truth that the king of this Japan and all the other princes of the region have an infinite number of these vases, which they regard as their principal treasure, esteeming them more than anything else of value. And out of vainglory and for grandeur they make a contest of who possesses the larger quantity of them, displaying them to one another with the greatest satisfaction.

After those ministers of justice had made their search for these vases, we were immediately given a license permitting us to land. And we found a difference in reckoning the days between us, who had come from the city of Manila, and the Portuguese who had come from that of Macao, an island of China. Those Portuguese, having left Lisbon and navigated constantly eastward, had reached Japan as the farthest point of their journeying. During their voyage, the sun having risen for them constantly earlier, they had gained twelve hours of a natural day. We, on the contrary, having left the port of Sanlúcar de Barrameda in Spain and navigated steadily westward and having lost daylight constantly because the sun kept rising later, had lost twelve hours. So when we discussed it with them, we found that we had reached a difference of one day. And when they said that it was Sunday, we counted up to Saturday. Had I pursued my voyage around the entire world without having met those Portuguese, by the time of my arrival in Europe, whence I first had departed, I should have lost exactly a whole day of twenty-four hours.

For I, having moved constantly from the east toward the west, changing meridians and therefore making the day later for myself, would have encountered this difference of one day as caused, as I have said, by the later or earlier rising

and setting of the sun in the diverse meridians, which continue changing daily for those who navigate toward the east and toward the west. And it is true that in the Philippine Islands on that same day when the Spaniards and their Church are celebrating Holy Saturday, those who are in Japan—that is, the Portuguese and their Church—are eating meat, because for them it is the Day of the Resurrection. So that if they were moving swiftly enough to reach Manila the next day, as is said to have happened to some navigators, they would celebrate the same Easter or other solemnity twice. And if they were to arrive on the day when those people celebrate the feast, it would befall them to return on Holy Saturday. On the other hand, if those from Manila should set out on the day when they solemnize Christmas and reach the island of Macao, where the Portuguese are, they would find those others at the second feast of Saint Stephen, and thus would celebrate one and another solemnity on the same day. And if they were able to arrive on the day before Christmas by their count, they would be able to eat meat without having fasted on that preceding day.

And this suffices for knowledge of that occurrence, perhaps not better understood earlier because the world had not been circumnavigated in olden times as it now is traveled around by value and virtue of the two crowns of Castile and Portugal, who have showed the way, the former navigating toward the east and reaching China and Japan, the other toward the west and reaching these Philippine Islands, about one thousand miles from the island of Macao in China, the residence of the Portuguese. Together, those two crowns have come to make a circle around the whole world, a thing that certainly is worthy of being much exalted and praised in those two nations, with the languages of which, and by means of whose navigations, anyone can enter into that magnificent

enterprise and in less than four years go around the entire universe both by way of the East Indies and by way of the West, as I should have done had I not been held up in one place for a year and elsewhere for much more, in spite of which I did not use up more time than from the year 1594, when I left Spain, to that of 1602, when I reached Zeeland.

But whoever wishes to make this voyage more easily and safely should depart from Spain, embarking with the fleet that goes to the West Indies in the month of July. Thus he will reach the City of Mexico and thence go that same year to embark at the port of Acapulco on the ships that depart for the Philippine Islands in the month of March, having consumed nine months up to that time. Thence, if he has reached the aforesaid islands, he will be enabled in the May of the next year to embark for Japan, fourteen months of time having elapsed by then. Then, in October of that same year—or, at the latest, in the following March—he will be able to find passage for the island of Macao, Chinese land, on the ships of the Portuguese. And that will be five months or, at the most, ten. From Macao, by means of the same or other ships, one passes to East India in the month of November or December after the aforementioned October, and one arrives at Goa in the month of March of the next year, which would be five months more. Thence, in that same year, it is possible to go to Lisbon on the ships that come out from Portugal, which leave Goa in the month of December or January and arrive six months after their departure.

So that will in total be fifteen or sixteen months, which, if put together with the others—nine, fourteen, five, five, and sixteen—will make up the abovementioned four years. This is always supposing that the traveler finds the aforesaid accommodations of passage, as ordinarily he will. However,

anyone wanting to wait for a ship that will navigate the entire distance, passing through the Strait of Magellan, located in fifty-two degrees of the Antarctic part, will be able to make the voyage and circle the entire world in less than eighteen months. For from Spain to the Indies of Mexico one goes in three months, from Acapulco to the Philippines in another three months, from the Philippines to Japan in one month, from Japan to Macao in half a month, from Macao in China to Goa in three months, and from this Goa of the Indies to Lisbon in six months. So that in making this entire circle voyage, one does not put in more than sixteen and one-half months of sailing. And so much the less if one sets out to make the voyage direct—that is, from Spain by passing through the abovementioned Strait of Magellan and directing one's way toward the Moluccas, and from there navigating toward the Cape of Good Hope and thence to Spain, as was done by the ship *Victoria* of Ferdinand Magellan when he discovered that Strait in the year 1520.

But to return to the matter of our debarking at the city of Nagasaki, we went immediately to see the spectacle of those poor (as regards this world) six monks of Saint Francis, of the discalced Spanish order, who had been crucified with twenty other Japanese Christians—among them three who had donned the habit of the Jesuits—on the fifth of the month of February of that same year, 1597. They all remained whole up on the crosses placed on the top of a mountain that is an arquebus shot from the city. The crosses were made like that one on which our Redeemer was crucified, but each additionally had a piece of wood in the middle of the shaft or trunk and emerging from the back; the suffering one was placed astride this, which thus helped to hold up the body. At the feet, furthermore, there was a piece of wood across, resembling the crosspiece above, but not so large. And to it

the feet were fastened, with the legs apart. And instead of nails they used iron straps hammered into the wood and holding the wrists, the neck, and the legs close to the feet.

Or they bind the entire body with ropes and keep the cross on the ground while attaching the body to it in one manner or another, stretching the victim out over it. And once he has been settled there, they at once raise the cross, putting its foot into a specially dug hole, which they fill with earth and stones so that the cross will stand firm and solid. When that has been done, the judge—who in that country is by custom present at the carrying out of justice—orders the executioner to pierce the crucified victim. And the lance, being inserted through the right side and passing out through the left, transfixes the heart and emerges through the back of the left shoulder, passing through the entire body from side to side. Many times there are two executioners, each with a lance, one operating from one side, the other from the other. And their lances, crossing, emerge at the two shoulders simultaneously, and thus take away life instantly. But if, as sometimes happens, the victim does not die from those two first lincings, they return to wound him in the throat or, from behind, in the left side corresponding to the heart. And then he dies quickly.

That is the manner of crucifixion in Japan. But they also leave some alive on the crosses, to die by themselves of privation or hunger, and they do this according to the crimes. Also, they similarly crucify women with babies still nursing at their breasts, so that both the one and the other die of privation. A form of justice no less cruel than barbarian, it being their custom to punish for the misdeeds of one person all of the family in his house, and often also all of his relatives. And in some cases, such as that of a fire that destroys houses or other things or that of abominations, they

punish and inflict suffering upon the neighbors of whoever has committed the evil, these together with him. In my time they crucified many for the smallest things—for merely having stolen a root or some other like trifle certainly not worth the death of men—to which, in this case, they give no more thought than we give to killing flies. And along all the streets and roads in that country one sees nothing, on one side or the other, but crosses full of men, of women, or of children or even babies, not to mention those whose heads have been cut off, who make up an infinite number.

And upon the bodies, once they are dead, they test their scimitars, which they call *catane*. These they hold in such account and esteem that when they are discovered—as often happens—to be of the kind that can cut a man in two at one stroke or slice cleanly through a thigh or leg or arm, they have a high money value. To make these tests, those men go where justice has been visited upon someone. And as soon as the executioner has cut off the victim's head, they take the body and, undressing it, place it on a mound of heaped-up earth which is long and wide enough to accommodate the body, which they there stretch out on its side. And so that it will stay in place and not roll over, they put stakes around it on one side and the other, to hold it. And then the leader of those men, often the very one who has carried out the justice, having quickly drawn his sword from its sheath and grasped it in both hands, tests to discover whether or not in one blow—which he adjusts and arranges to deliver with all his force—he can cut right through that body. He succeeds in doing that only on the rarest occasions. Then, quickly examining the sword, they see whether or not it remains intact. And those scimitars are upbraided or praised according to the one condition or the other. And consequently many of them bring twenty or thirty thousand scudos

apiece. And many other men try them out, some on a thigh, some on a shin, some on an arm. So that in minutes the entire body has become shreds. And these are left there as food for dogs and birds. And thus that entertainment is over, which among us would be a cruelty to make one's hairs bristle. And yet they do it all for amusement without its seeming to them anything repugnant or at all debasing.

But to return to the monks and other Christians who were crucified in the way already described, for a better understanding of this deed it is necessary that I tell Your Serene Highness how those islands of Japan are the most easterly that are to be found on this globe of the world, being situated at the farthest end of Asia between the equinoctial line and the Arctic pole, in from thirty to thirty-six degrees of latitude. And it is said of them that in longitude they are more or less 900 miles across. The largest of all those islands has a length of 750 miles and a width of 180 miles, and it is said to be divided into fifty-five kingdoms or lordships. The other two islands contain eleven of these lordships, though all of them together have the name of kingdoms and are full of very large cities and unnumbered people.

It is a country pleasant to the sight and very fertile in rice, and also in wheat and every other sort of grain, and in vegetables and fruit native both to that region and to ours. Among these things are, in particular, citrus fruits like oranges, including those which are eaten with the whole skin like our lemons and are called *cunebes*, there is also another sort, so tiny that one can eat them in one mouthful, as one eats cherries, and these seem rather to be small lemons and are eaten similarly, with the rind, and they are delicious when prepared as sweetmeats. We, being in that country and writing to this one, sent hither seeds of those, as well as of others, so that they might be given to Your Serene Highness,

as was done. But later I learned that from among them only one has grown, the one planted by Francesco Capponi, and that from it other plants have been made, but that up to now no one has seen them produce any fruit. That is because the seed of citrus fruit is born wild and must be grafted with those of plants already producing.

They also have pears, almost all of one species, very good and heavy and juicy and having a skin so thin that to peel them is very difficult. And these too are prepared in conserves with sugar and are very good, as also are the peaches and apricots. The grape is seen but little, except for those seen as decoration on trellises or as the religious sometimes make a bit of wine for the service of their Masses. They also have melons, which have seeds like ours, but in all other ways are very different, both in shape and in skin, both in flavor and in quality. They almost can be eaten with their rind, which, when they are ripe, cracks open and is so thin that they can be cleaned and skinned like an onion. Instead of cutting them lengthwise in slices, they cut them across in small disks, as we cut cucumbers. And in that way they eat them with the seed and the flower, holding that otherwise they have no flavor, the taste being in the flower, which is of a sourness that tempers the rest of the melon, which in itself is insipid and tasteless.

All the other fruits—melons, cucumbers, and grapes excepted—they eat more willingly unripe than mature. And they prepare many of the green ones with salt, as we prepare olives, and they last throughout the year. That country entirely lacks olives, but has nearly all the sorts of vegetables that our country has, especially turnips and radishes of such marvelous size that three or four of them weigh a man down (and I have seen displayed, and have taken into my hands, some of them that were as thick as a man's thigh), and these

are of a very sweet flavor and tender. They make salads by breaking them up and by cutting them lengthwise very carefully. And they are very tasteful to eat. The leaves, put into salt and then taken out and dried, are used throughout the year, and particularly in winter, for making soups as mixed with many other kinds of vegetables which also are salted and dried. With these they prepare both fresh and dried fish, their common and usual food. And fish are so abundant as to be worth almost nothing, and they often eat them raw, passing them through vinegar first. They have certain large and very bloody fish, which are very good to eat but which cause many people in those countries to be sick with Saint Lazarus's Evil.*

They prepare various sorts of dishes from fish, which they flavor with a certain sauce of theirs which they call *misol*. It is made of a sort of bean that abounds in various localities, and which—cooked and mashed and mixed with a little of that rice from which they make the wine already mentioned, and then left to stand as packed into a tub—turns sour and all but decays, taking on a very sharp, piquant flavor. Using this a little at a time, they give flavor to their foods, and they call *shiro* what we would call a potage or gravy. They make this as I have said, of vegetables and fruit and fish all mixed together, and even of some game, and then eat it with rice, which serves them as bread and is cooked simply in water and served in certain wooden bowls lacquered with red lacquer, eating it very cleanly and never touching it with their hands.

For they eat everything by using two small sticks, made in a round shape and blunted, the length of a man's hand and as thick as a feather for writing. These are made of wood or

* Translator's note. Leprosy.

silver or gold, and they call them *fashe*. They take them in their hands between the thumb and the index finger, getting a grip first on one of the sticks with the end of the fourth or the middle finger, on the other stick with the aforesaid fingers. Then, by moving the latter, they adjust and put together the ends of the two sticks, with which they can pick up anything, no matter how tiny it is, very cleanly and without soiling their hands. For that reason they do not use tablecloths or napkins or even knives, as everything comes to the table minutely cut up and brought to them in certain square lacquered trays on which they put the plates and bowls full of food and of rice—which they call *mesbi* when it is cooked and *come* when it is raw.

When they want to eat it, they bring the bowl it is in close to their mouth and then, with those two sticks, are able to fill their mouth with marvelous agility and swiftness. They always drink the wine hot, whether in summer or in winter, taking it in small sips and enjoying it much more than we enjoy drinking a bowl of broth. And that wine often intoxicates them. They also have cattle, but among both the gentiles and the Christians they eat meat very little because of a certain superstition of theirs. Nor do they drink milk, feeling for it some of the disgust that we should feel upon drinking fresh blood. And they make use of cattle only for carrying loads of wood and other things. They have chickens like ours, and very cheap, they not being worth more than one or two *crazie* each. They also have both domesticated and wild swine, and the largest boar is worth no more than one scudo. The same value is put upon a goat, but neither the boar nor the goat is very good for eating. I think that this is because of the abundance of them and from not knowing how to take care of them. And there I also saw thrushes, which I ate at one *quattrino** each, but which I had neither

seen nor eaten earlier in other parts of the Indies. Similarly, I found very good pheasants. But their low price and the abundance of them made it seem to me that they were not as well esteemed as among us, they not being worth more than one *crazia* each. And often I bought seven or eight of them for a little piece of silver (of which they have very rich mines) of the weight and value of one *giulio*.

With this silver, without otherwise making it into money, but just by cutting it into pieces that they weigh out on certain scales made like steelyards, they buy whatever they need. True, they also have certain copper moneys, which they call *cash* and which are carried threaded onto a cord so that they can be spent with greater ease and comfort. And they give ten of these for a piece of silver weighing one *conderino*, of which it takes ten to make one *mais*. And ten *mais* make one *tael*, which about corresponds in value to eleven Spanish *reales*—let us say one Florentine *scudo*, or a little more. That same method of counting also serves them for measures, which they divide into *cash*, *conderino*, *mais*, and *tael*. Finally, those islands are very fertile in everything and have great quantities of domesticated and wild waterfowl and of every other kind of game bird, especially turtledoves like ours and of exquisite goodness. They also have a variety with yellow feathers, but these are not as good because of having flesh that is somewhat bitter in flavor. And they kill all these with the arquebus, getting each of them with a single ball, so that in this they can be called good marksmen.

One could pass one's life very happily and with very little expenditure in those islands, and he who has a thousand *scudos* there is better off than he can be in these regions with ten thousand. And if that land were cultivated as ours is, with

*Translator's note. A *quattrino*, so called because looked upon as equal to four *denari* or *piccioli*, was one-sixtieth of a Tuscan *lira*.

olives—a few of which the Jesuit Fathers have introduced, and which do well there—and if they would do the same with vines, which they have only as decoration on their trellises, life would be that much more abundant there. But those people, given over wholly to war, leave everything else to one side and provide themselves only with rice, which is their sustenance. And even though they have wheat, they do not make bread, though they eat it cooked into little cakes among the ashes and embers, as well as in various other ways. But most of it, made into flour by small wheels that they themselves turn with one hand, is sent out of the country, mostly being taken to be sold in the Philippine Islands, in the city of Manila, where Spaniards live who buy it to make it into bread.

At the time when I reached that kingdom, the universal overlord was Taico Sama,* who also was called Quam, Bacco, Dono, and—earlier, when he had been a soldier and a private—Fashiba. Later he became the tyrant of all that region, though he was not a born king or even of royal blood. He reached that position by violence of arms and by his own valor, having at another period been in a rustic state and a vile, poor condition. Then, having become a soldier, he reached a captaincy. Then, in the army of King Nobunanga, † he became the King's general. And when bad fortune and ruin befell his King, he took the remnants of the army and, guided by better fortune, turned his back upon those of the opposition party, who had seemed to be winning, and conquered them all. He alone remained as conqueror, and made

*Translator's note. This apparently is Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–1598), who took the title of Taiko in 1591, pretending to retire from power, but actually holding it until his death.

†Translator's note. Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582) was the acting shogun during the last fourteen years of his life. He destroyed the Buddhist power and was himself assassinated.

himself monarch of seventy-six kingdoms, all of which he reduced to his devotion and command, to obedience under his scepter. And he governed and stabilized them by employing various sorts of prudent tyranny.

First he ordered slain all those of the royal blood who could lay any claim to that monarchy. Also, he transferred almost all those lordships and kingdoms reciprocally, giving dominion over some to other lords, depriving some of their territories altogether in order to give the dominion to other men dependent upon him. But what was most helpful to him in benefitting and claiming the kingdom at the same time was that, using those very armaments and forces which had helped him to take over the King's empire, he sent them out of the kingdom to provoke a war—unjust and lacking any other cause or reason—in a peninsula that some say is joined to the mainland of China (others say that it is separated from China by a little arm of the sea which surrounds it entirely, passing between terra firma and this island). It is commonly called Korea, and the Chinese call it Chosen or even Fowshem. And it meets the mainland in the northwest, where lies the province of Pekin. The ocean is to the east of it, and on the south the islands of Japan are so near that from the last of them, called Goto, near which are also Ishu and Tsushima, one can reach it in little boats in a few hours.

At the war they always had an army of more than 300,000 men, partly on foot and partly on horseback. They mount their horses from the right side, placing the foot in a stirrup of strange shape on which they put the weight of the heel. And they hold the bridle with both hands in the manner of a halter, pulling first on one side and then on the other, the reins being made of a silk or cotton cord, with a very simple iron bit in the horse's mouth. When they are in com-

bat, they tie or attach the bridle to the breastband, and when they want to direct the horse, steer it here and there with their body, managing their weapons with their hands. The weapons are arquebuses, lances, bows and arrows, and scimitars, of which last they carry two or three at their belt, one of them larger and one smaller, in the manner of daggers.

And as in Japan it is the custom that the lords of the lands are obliged to the supreme king, to carry out his every command, to be ready and prepared with their vassals for every occurrence or need of war—the vassals in turn being obliged to these lords or, as we might say, rulers—he sent nearly all of them to the undertaking in Korea. They were given to understand that as soon as they had taken the first seacoast places and forced a free entry, he would come there in person with the rest of his people to drive ahead in victory and conquer by that route all the Great Kingdom of China. And through this invented story, which was believed, he destroyed that foreign land, entirely innocent of having offended him, and assured that his own country should remain pacified.

The region of Korea is divided into nine provinces. They are Chosen, capital of that kingdom and the name of the royal city, Kienkwi, Conluan, Honhei, Chiuala, Hientsion, Tionchion, Hankien, and the last, called Piankin. Out of these provinces—that is, of the more maritime ones—they brought an infinite number of men and women, boys and girls, of every age, and they all were sold as slaves at the very lowest prices. I bought five of them for little more than twelve scudos. Having had them baptized, I took them with me to Goa in India, and there set them free. I brought one of them with me to Florence, and I think that today he is to be found in Rome, where he is known as Antonio.

In that war, which lasted for many years, the Koreans did badly unless they were helped by the Chinese, to whom the

Koreans—though they have their own king—pay some tribute each year. Besides the uncounted numbers of people who were destroyed in one place or another, most of the Japanese lords and rulers were ruined. Many of them dying without children and without heirs, that king or tyrant confiscated their lands and estates. And from many others he confiscated their goods because of the smallest errors that they had committed in the war—for which reason he never would grant them the license that would enable them to return home, under pain of offense against his prerogative. And thus, as both the war and the lords of the land were outside the kingdom, the tyrant did what he wished, without any hindrance.

And at the time the conversion of new Christians advanced very slowly, this king having felt some vexation toward the Society of Jesus, members of which are found throughout all those kingdoms. From them especially he had taken the city of Nagasaki, which had been granted to them. And he had destroyed their church and taken its lumber, which was very well worked, for use in a building of his own. And, finally, he had prohibited that their Rule be preached any longer, finding it not appropriate in that region, it being neither fitting nor good for his vassals. However, this king did not believe in any sect, and he often used to say that laws and religions had been founded only to regulate men and force them to live with modesty and civility, and for no other purpose, he believing firmly that after the body's death there is no other spirit or life that is immortal or eternal. By now he will have become aware, though very late and past all remedy, of his barbarian bestiality, there in the Inferno, where he is at present to be found, having died later in that error.

Returning again to the matter of the Christians crucified at Nagasaki, I say that while the abovementioned king

reigned, at the very time of the war in Korea, there came from the Philippine Islands to that kingdom, in the year 1593, four monks of the order of Saint Francis, those who in Spain are called "discalced." They arrived as ambassadors that the city of Manila was sending to the King of Japan with letters from the governor of the Philippine Islands. This embassy having been brought to him and the aforementioned monks having presented to him what they had brought, they asked for permission to go elsewhere in the country, and especially to see the city of Miako,* the capital of all that kingdom. And that permission was granted to them. And, what was more, they were assigned a little house at court until they should depart, and provisions for living.

There they began to preach the Evangel and to baptize, giving no thought to returning to Manila, whence they had come for this purpose. Also, others of the same order came from the same place, having the same desire and zeal, and the will to establish their holy religion there and throughout the whole kingdom and to perpetuate there the name of the blessed Saint Francis. And when they had begun to preach, perhaps with more fervor than was fitting in that land, the people flocked to these new ministers of those Most Holy Mysteries and Sacraments, which they all celebrated with much charity and devotion. And they were prohibited from administering them under pain of excommunication, which the bishop of the Jesuit Fathers pronounced against them by virtue of a brief conceded to him by Pope Gregory XIII, which says that no one but the Jesuits can enter that kingdom to preach the Evangel, under the aforementioned pain of excommunication.

To that thing the good Fathers replied that they were not

* Translator's note. The ancient name of the imperial capital, later known as Kyoto.

subject, saying that they had another brief, from Sixtus V, which conceded to their religious the right to go anywhere throughout the world to preach Christ Crucified, and that it made no exception of one land or another. Therefore, and not feeling that their coming and going were subject to the aforesaid prohibition by Pope Gregory XIII, they went on with the prayers already begun and continued to teach that which Our Lord Jesus Christ taught and said with His mouth to His Apostles, who took it and taught it throughout the world. And though the King of Japan knew about all these travels by the monks, he nonetheless pretended not to. But the incident that occurred, involving the loss of a ship, made him do what, in the opinion of those whose passions are not involved in this, he would never have done otherwise.

The lost ship was coming from the Philippine Islands and going, as was usual, to New Spain loaded with rich merchandise from China and commanded and lorded over by Spaniards. Because of a contrary wind, and because, further, of having broken their rudder, they found themselves at the islands of Japan. And the ship was forced to save itself by approaching the land, having developed a list. And it came to shore on the island of Sicocco,* there where the famous city of Tossa† is. As soon as King Taico Sama learned of this, he at once decided upon the way to take possession of it, which he did with the authority of his laws, which condemn as lost everything on any ship that, by fortune of the sea, wanting to save those aboard or out of some other necessity, comes to grief or arrives crippled on the shores or in the harbors of his kingdom. But that law seemed very strange and rigorous to the Spaniards who were traveling on that ship,

* Translator's note. The modern Shikoku.

† Translator's note. The modern Kochi.

so that they could not rest under its application or accommodate themselves to losing such riches.

They therefore began taking their case to the Franciscan monks who were at the King's court in the city of Miaco, thinking of them as a possible means for moderating such an impiety. The monks, who believed themselves to have some friendship with the King—as, in fact, they did appear to have—gladly intervened, moved by charity and by love of their country and their nation, then found in that misery. And they began to pray for them, not failing to perform any good office whatsoever so that their things should not be confiscated. This was the beginning of their being persecuted to death. The King much disdained their saying that the merchandise belonged mostly to their brethren who were in the city of Manila, which they had said so as the better to support the cause. And the King became angry because of that, the reason being that they were asking for what he already counted upon as his own. And he became enraged, saying:

"How does it come about, then, that these monks, who say that they are so poor, now say that the stuff from this ship is theirs? Certainly I say that they must be men of evil affairs, false and deceitful. Further, I having commanded and prohibited their impertinent religion, I know perfectly well that, despite that, they have taught it and have converted many to Christianity. And they have stayed at this court and in everything acted contrarily. For that reason, they having acted contrary to my will, I now will and command that they be taken prisoners and crucified, together with all who have accepted their religion, in the city of Nagasaki."

To that sentence, which the King gave out of his own mouth, no one answered. And what he had commanded was carried out. Thus were put up on crosses the aforementioned six monks, with twenty Japanese who were

familiars of their House, among whom were three Brothers of the Society of Jesus (two of whom put on their habits at the hour when they were taken out to be crucified). And they all gave their lives together for love of Jesus Christ, in the first year of *keiko* on the twentieth of the eleventh moon, counting in the Japanese way. They divide the year into thirteen moons, beginning with the moon of March, so that this proved to be the fifth day of the month of February of the year 1597, when they were crucified. And though this event was accompanied by the occurrence of many other events and misfortunes that it would take too long to recount, nevertheless it was the most powerful cause of that persecution which almost extended to all that new Christianity of the Jesuits and to their own persons. But God later freed them from it in His Divine Wisdom, so that the fruits that they had created and were creating in that region might not be lost—the conversion of so many souls to Christ.

But in my time they all were fugitives and the churches all were closed. And with their habits exchanged for Japanese clothing, they were creeping around all the islands in an attempt to maintain and increase the number of Christians, who at that time numbered more than 300,000, with 25,000 or 30,000 more being baptized every year. Now that that region has been bathed in the blood of those religious and of other crucified Christians, that they will increase each day is not to be doubted. While I was in that city of Nagasaki, which was populated wholly by Japanese Christians and had a very few houses of Portuguese merchants, who were remaining there under the rule of that King, the sufferers were taken down from the crosses. And each of them was given a proper burial, even though from many of them—and especially from the religious—many of their members, and chiefly their heads, had been taken, this despite the fact that there had been

guards and despite the fact that prohibitions by the King and by the Jesuit bishop of those Christians had forbidden their being touched under grave penalty. But devotion was able to accomplish much more than the excommunications and punishments of the royal justice that had condemned them to death, and which could have been carried out if it had been desired. But all pretended not to see—it being the case in Japan that very few things can be done that remain unknown to the exquisite vigilance that rules throughout those cities.

The ends of the streets all are closed by gates. These being shut at night, they also have guards who let no one pass who will not give his name and tell where he is going and who is not well known to them. Further, each street has its captain—or, as we should say, elder—who is obliged to keep track of all the others who live in it. And if some misdeed is committed there, he must give the explanation and place any delinquent in the hands of justice. The nearest neighbors are required to do that also when some misdeed takes place near their houses. And all the houses of this city of Nagasaki are made of wood worked with such artifice that, because all the materials have been worked out to the design and measure first, a house can be erected in two days.

To hold up the timbers, they secure them at the bottom with large stones as a base, half being left underground and the rest left uncovered, so that the wood will not rot. Then they place the crossbeams, which are fitted into the aforesaid timbers. And on them they build the scaffolding to which they attach the walls of the rooms, which they then cover with a certain sort of wood that, like pine, can be split into pieces. Then they put these together with small nails so that they may serve instead of tiles and roofing when they are placed one on top of the other so that they cover the

chinks and no water can enter in. Of these living quarters, in the space of a single hall or room, they make other apartments by partitioning off and erecting a sort of large variety of pictures. Depicting various things, these open and shut like a fan in relation to folds and to the corners that they have when they are stood upright on the earth and opened.

At the corners these stand up, making a most beautiful sight. And if there are several people in a room, they have the virtue that, besides the pleasure that they give with the sight of various paintings of different birds and flowers and animals and other fantasies all gallantly colored in fresco and all decorated with gold, they also keep you from being seen by the others, as the pictures rise to a man's height. And these also are placed around the bed, where they have the same effect—that a man is not seen—and at the same time they ornament and delight, especially when the paintings are beautiful. Similarly, they can be used for ornamenting and decorating the walls of the rooms. And in that case they are pulled out and opened to their full expanse, being leaned against the walls, where they make an admirable and happy sight. The Japanese call these pictures *biobus*. They are made of many leaves compressed together, like cardboard, and are stuck together on wooden squares along the edges, so that the middles remain hollow. And the two sides are painted differently. And they may also be made of raw silk cloth, like veiling, so beautifully and richly worked that these often are each worth one hundred scudos, two hundred, and more. But the ordinary ones, which are very handsome as the common ornaments of their houses, are valued at from five to ten scudos each.

Because the houses are always in danger from fire, they have guards in all the streets. And these go about crying out

all night: "Be careful with fire!" And when fire attacks one house, it often burns up the whole city, as happened in Nagasaki, which was burned up all at once. And that king, Taico Sama, ordered in many places that the owner of the first house to be attacked by fire should be crucified together with all of his family. But that law is not kept now. The people live in these houses in a very clean way, covering the floors in all their rooms with certain straw pads two fingers thick, four arms long, and two arms wide, and covering these with mats of grass the color of fine straw, resembling that we use for making hats. This grass grows in the water, like rushes, and they call it *yo-yo*. And they make use of these pads and mats as beds, placing many of them one on top of the other for sleeping, until they become more or less an arm high. They use no other bedclothing. And instead of feather cushions and pillows, they place under their head a piece of wood or something else no less solid. When the pads, which they call *fatami*, are of the best sort, they may be valued at as much as one hundred or one hundred and fifty scudos each. But the ordinary ones can be found at all prices, as can the grass mats, and for as little as two *giulii* each.

And on them they sit like the Turks, and always walk on them without shoes, but with cloth slippers or with half-boots of goatskin, which they wear like gloves, with an opening between the two largest fingers of each foot. And these are worn by both men and women to reach halfway up the leg. When they enter rooms, they always leave their shoes at the house door if they are strangers. And the owners of the house leave theirs at the exits from their rooms or bedrooms and in the passageways. Their shoes are made entirely of a single straw sole of strands twined together, or perhaps of leather, with a thong fastened to the ends of both sides of the sole, which

comes up over the foot. And there is also another strand that is joined to the one first mentioned, but is fastened to the end of the sole a little inside, so that it may pass through the opening between the two large fingers of the foot. And thus that shoe or sole is held firmly on the foot. And when they want to remove it, they have only to raise their heel a little and shake the foot, which quickly slides out. And that is necessary because—in addition to the fact that they never walk in the house with shoes on—they remove them in the street whenever they meet any personage or foreigner to whom they owe honor or wish to show it.

And it happened to me that I was sitting on a bridge outside the city for my own amusement, and a peasant, passing that way and coming near me, began to shake his feet so much that his shoes came off. Then he took them in one hand and, with his body bowed somewhat, went by me saying: "*Guminari*," which means "Excuse me." But they make no use of this salutation among themselves, merely inclining the head and body a little, placing the palms of the hands on the thighs. And if they are sitting down, they usually do not rise, but only nod their head. And they do that also when they are called upon in their houses. In this way, instead of removing a hat—which they never wear—they honor one another in their own way, which is entirely different from ours.

And as their customs are no less strange than varied, and as they are opposite to us in the location of their land, I have made notes about them and contrasted them with ours in every way. But all that was lost with everything else of mine. But to report something that comes back to my memory: what greater strangeness could there be than their way of caring for the sick, whom they feed on fresh and salted fish, as well as on Tellinas and other marine shellfish, and on various

raw, sour, unripe fruits, and without ever letting blood, thus in everything doing the opposite of what we do?

The men of that land generally are very ingenious, daring, dissimulative, choleric, and given to torture in such cruel ways that, themselves having no fear of death, they often kill themselves in cold blood for different reasons and causes, slashing their bodies crosswise with a scimitar. Women also do that, they being not one whit less cruel than their own sons, whom they often kill still in the womb or newly born so as not to have the worry, particularly if they are poor, of bringing them up. And many others kill themselves at the command of the King or of their overlords. And women do that if their husbands tell them to. And the system of subjection is such that each one can kill someone because of his position, without danger of being questioned as to why, and superiors have that authority over their vassals, masters over their servants and slaves.

The commonest dress of the men is like that of the women, they being made almost alike. They vary only according to age, being long in the Turkish way, but without decoration and without buttons. One side of the garment is superimposed over the other, so that it is like a dressing gown that is worn in the house, with sleeves reaching halfway down the arms. And this is worn next to the skin, without any other shirt, and held closed with a cotton-stuffed silk cord at the waist. But the women make this knot much lower down and more slack. And the nobler they are, the lower down they tie this cord, which sometimes droops so down the thighs, and in so obscene a shape, that they scarcely can walk. And instead of raising their feet, they always drag them, as also do the men, who wrap their shameful parts in some cotton cloth. And the women do the same as soon as they reach the age of twelve or

fourteen years, when they wrap the body in a white cloth from the waist down to the knees.

The women are very beautiful and reasonably white, but have very tiny eyes, which they value among themselves as being much more beautiful than large eyes. Further, they have black teeth, made that way by the use of a varnish like ink, which causes their mouths to appear very strange. And the noblemen do the same as soon as they are fifteen or sixteen years old, the women doing it when they become nubile. They also tint their hair, but jet-black, which they find more attractive than if it were blond—just the opposite from us, as we want teeth of ivory white and golden hair such as is sung by the poets. They dress in silk substances painted with various colors, as cretonne and other sorts of cloth are painted among us. The dress of the poor is usually of a cotton cloth painted blue, red, and black. And when in mourning for the death of a relative, they customarily dress in white. They ordinarily quilt their clothes with cotton wadding mixed with a certain sort of down resembling silk, and this largely so as to keep warm during the winter, which in that region is no less full of rain, snow, and ice than it is among us, as I found out by experience when I was in Nagasaki.

These people, even those belonging to the gentry, ordinarily contract marriage with only one woman, and they deal very seriously with adultery, which they punish severely, with death to both parties if they are caught in the act or brought to judgment. Taking the adulterers, man and woman, they put them into a wagon and take them, bound and with their hands behind their backs, to the house of the husband. And in his presence they cut off the man's penis and take enough skin from his body to make a sort of cap, this to put on the head of the adulterous woman. And from near her shameful

part they cut a strip of flesh from around the vagina, making a garland of it to place on the head of the adulterous man. And thus ornamented and adorned with those members, they go naked through the city, making a miserable and shameful show of their bodies to all the people during the time when the flowing out of their blood from the wounded parts ends their lives. But they do not hold the honor of daughters or sisters in as much esteem, even not valuing it at all. And it often happens that a girl's father or mother or brother will discuss her price before she is married, this with no shame on anyone's part, selling her very easily for money, but driven by great poverty, which indeed is very great throughout all that area, and which explains why they enter into every sort of venereal dishonor in such a manner and in such diverse and unheard-of ways that it seems impossible.

The Portuguese are good witnesses of this, and especially those who come from China—that is, from the island of Macao—each year with one of their ships laden with silk either woven or to be woven, with pepper and cloves, which are used in dyestuffs, and with other sorts of merchandise to be sold in that region, for which they take silver in exchange, making their bargains in the city and port of Nagasaki, where they stay eight or nine months, it taking that long to dispose of the aforementioned goods. To these Portuguese, as soon as they have arrived, come the agents of the women, looking them up in the houses in which they are lodging for that length of time. And they ask them if they want to buy a virgin girl or have her in some other way that would please them more, and this for the time that they will be there, or just to have her for some nights or days or months or hours. And they make the arrangements with them.

Or, sometimes, the agreement is made with the parents,

they being paid the price. And if the men want them, they bring the girls to their houses to be seen for the first time; or, sometimes, the men go to their houses to see the girls. Many of the Portuguese find this Land of Cockaigne much to their liking—and, what is better, it costs them but little. And very often they are given a girl of fourteen or fifteen years, virgin and beautiful, for three or four scudos, more or less, according to the time they want to have her at their disposition, at the end of which they have only to return her to her home. Nor do they for having thus been used lose the occasion of marrying. But many of them never would be able to marry if they did not acquire a dowry in this way, putting together thirty or forty scudos, which very often are given to them by those Portuguese who have had them in their houses for seven or eight months together. And it happens very often that with that dowry they later get married.

But there also are women who go out by the day, and it is enough to give them any little amount whatsoever, and it never is necessary to discuss the consideration of the money, which is never refused by their parents, they being the ones to whom it usually is given, or by those who keep these women in their house for this reason—that is, as for sale, these latter being almost all slaves purchased for this purpose. There also are women who make arrangements through pimps, and it is enough to give them food and clothing, neither of which costs much, and the rest of whatever they earn stays with the pimps. Finally, in this sort of venereal pleasures that country is more abundant—as it is of every other sort of vice—than any other part of the world, and chiefly among the gentry, who perform the most abominable acts openly, like animals, not caring that they are seen.

The men take care of the hair on their heads rather than their beards, which few of them have. They wear the hair some-

what long, with that of the temples from the middle of the head down toward the nape of the neck and bound neatly together behind, so that it resembles a plume, and they trim the ends of this hair, which they comb and retie every morning, smoothing it out and oiling it very carefully so that it will shine. And for anyone else to touch that lock of hair which they wear thus bound together behind and near the nape of the neck is as much of an insult as among us it would be to touch the beard out of disrespect. The rest of the head, down to the forehead, all is shaved, and they do not wear a hat or any other covering. When they are young, they go out this way in the summer's sun and in the snow and cold of winter, always carrying a whisk or woman's fan, which they close and open to create a breeze and to keep off the sun when they go outdoors. But many carry an umbrella, which also protects them, if need be, from the rain. But when they grow old, they wear certain caps on their heads, made in the shape of small bags, and these they pad with cotton mixed with certain threads that they make from very large cocoons resembling silk. These cocoons grow from—or, to say it better, are made by—a certain kind of caterpillars like those which make silk in that country, and they are found after the moths have emerged from them. These supply a lot of warmth, being a soft and cottony substance, but with little weight. And one of those cocoons serves to make a cap, they being so large.

Very good business is done between that country and other lands. But there is a very great lack of vessels ready to make long voyages, though the Japanese make them in every way, and at much risk, to diverse places. That is, they go to the Philippine Islands, to which they take wheat flour and other sorts of provisions and merchandise, at a profit of from sixty to one hundred per cent. In a journey of from seven to eight

months, they go to the kingdom of Cochin China, traveling with certain copper moneys that they call *cash*, and which they carry strung by the hundreds and thousands on a string, so as to be able to count them more expeditiously. And with them they buy a great quantity of aloe-wood, which the Japanese call *gincò* and the Portuguese *agila*, and which they use for making perfumes and other medicaments, as we do, but much more for burning with the dead bodies of powerful and rich men.

Although this aloe-wood is found in the rivers of the kingdom of Cochin China, brought down by the currents in those waters from very distant places and regions, nonetheless nobody knows with any certainty on what sort of tree it grows. Similarly, they navigate as far as the kingdom of Siam and to that of Patani,* on the Malacca coast, and also to Cambodia, whence they bring a certain wood like that which is called sappan,† which they call *suò* and the Portuguese call *sapon*, and which is used for dyeing. And from the region of Chiampa,‡ they bring calambac, a wood very highly esteemed throughout East India because of its odor, which the Japanese call *shiratago*.

From the aforementioned regions of Patani and Siam they also bring many of those sharkskins which we call shagreen and they call *same*, and from which they make scabbards for their sidearms and other strange things. They also obtain very large numbers of buckskins, which they call *sichino cava*, and which they prepare in a curious manner, cunningly painting on them with various designs diverse pictures of ani-

* Translator's note. A former Malay state, now the Pattani province of Thailand.

† Translator's note. *Caesalpinia sappan*.

‡ Translator's note. Apparently a region at the borders of Cochin China and Cambodia, perhaps identified with the latter.

mals and other things. And they do this with the smoke from rice straw, which colors the entire skin except that part which has been covered with the form of the pictures, which remain impressed and delineated on the white, unsmoked part of the skin. They use these to make clothing in their own manner and also very handsome horse saddles, and the Spaniards use them to make very charming jerkins.

They also navigate to the islands of Liukiú,* of which there are two, and which are the most discussed and of the greatest repute among these people, neighbors to them at a distance of six hundred miles. And they go there often, taking with them the aforesaid copper money, as well as arms, in which the Japanese are perhaps richer than any other nation whatever in the world—and of all sorts, the offensive as well as the defensive. These include arquebuses, bows with arrows, and scimitars. And they have schools for teaching the handling of every sort of weapon. They exchange these things with the inhabitants of those islands, taking deerskins, which are innumerable there, and bees' honey, which those barbarians have in abundance.

And these latter, the men as well as the women, go about wholly naked and are very beautiful of body and stature, but are but little or not at all civil with respect to their neighbors with whom they have commerce, including the Chinese of the coast and province of Chineo, whence camphor comes, and who are only twenty-five or thirty miles from them. And this thing often has set me to marveling, to see both these island people and many of China's other neighbors remain in their barbarism and crudity though, as said, they have experience and commerce with people as civilized and well-informed as the Chinese and the Japanese, whom they see and

* Translator's note. Formosa?

deal with and talk with daily. That thing is very common throughout East India, in many parts of which, and in one and the same land or region, one often sees two sorts of men, very different in customs and in appearance, one being civilized and amenable, the other uncivilized and barbarian.

But be that as it may, and to return to the subject, Most Serene Prince, I say that Japan is one of the most beautiful and best and most suitable regions in the world for making profit by voyaging from one place to another. But one should go there in our sort of vessels and with sailors from our regions. And in that way one would very quickly make incredible wealth, and that because of their need of every sort of manufacture and their abundance of silver as of the provisions for living, as I already have said.

These people of Japan use letters and characters of their own, writing with them, but they also understand Chinese books—that is, those in which their laws and other sciences and the theology of their superstitions are written in common hieroglyphic characters, which they can understand just as can those who speak differently. The difference in what is spoken does not matter because each nation names in its own tongue the things that the hieroglyphs referred to signify. But in order to write down their letters and affairs, they have three or four kinds of alphabets, each with forty-two letters, and all of these are syllables except for the vowels. When they write, they put the line lengthwise on the sheet, beginning at the top on the right-hand side and moving toward the left. And when they reach the bottom of the page, they go back to the top to complete writing what they wish. As an example of these things, I shall put here below, for better understanding, one of their alphabets—that is, the pronunciation of it, as the characters were lost with all of my other things:

Beginning

A	Ja	Ra	To	Li	J'
Za	Ma	Mu	Fa	Si	Lo
Chi	Ke	V	De	Xu	Ja
Ju	Ju	J'	Zo	Yu	Ni
Ma	Co	No	Zu	O	fo
Mi	e	Vo	Ne	Pa	fe
Si	Je	Cu	Na	Ca	fo
Chi					
Si					

and these last two indicate "the end," and furthermore there are the characters for the numbers, the syllables for which, from one to ten, are as follows: *Jchi, Ni, Sa, Shi, Go, Locu, Sichi, Fachu, Cu*, and *Jiu*, this last meaning ten. As for the alphabet, it is read in the tone and pronunciation of verse by the children in the schools when they are learning, as follows:

I, Lo, Fa, Ni, Fo, Fay, To	First verse
Chi, Ri, Nu, Ru, O, Va, Ca	Second verse
Io, Ta, Ray, Zo, Zu, Nay, Na	Third verse
Ra, Mu, U, Y, No, Vo, Cu	Fourth verse
Ia, Ma, Kay, Fu, Co, Ay, Tay	Fifth verse
A, Za, Ki, lu, May, Mi, Shi	Final verse

All of these syllables are made up out of seventeen of our letters. They lack the letter B, in place of which they use the V. And instead of D they use the letter T, and in place of P they can use the letter F, and instead of Q the letter C—which letter C is used for both. And for the letter X they make use of the S. Thus their alphabet is perfect in all ways, and they

use it to express everything they wish, through diverse and numerous vocables that they depict with brushes, as well as in the writing of their tongue, which they commonly speak in different ways. For to speak one and the same concept, if speaking to a personage, to a plebeian, or to a woman—or, in fact, to honor or to belittle someone—they use different manners of speech, and these in a certain way seem to be several tongues, but nonetheless are a single one. For all that, the most polite is that which they call the tongue of the city of Miaco, which might be called the language of the court, of the capital of the largest island of Japan, which is called by the same name, and where the supreme king of all the kingdom makes his home, he who rules over all the other lords—who are called *tori*, a word commonly used for them all, whether they are kings, dukes, marquesses, or counts.

Furthermore, to return to the abovementioned letters or syllables, I say that these in themselves signify things. As for example, the letter *A*, when spoken, means yes, and *O* means the same. And the letter *J* refers to the straw that comes like rushes from the water, and with which they make the *fatami* with which they cover the floors in their houses. And the syllable *Fa* means tooth, *Jay* the hands, *May* the eyes; and *Mi* signifies I—and in this they are like the Lombards, who use *mi* in place of *io*. Also, the word *dono* resembles our *donno*, which in the Italian language as taken from the Latin means gentleman—as it does in Japanese with the difference in pronunciation caused by the one N less. It is the same with all the other letters and syllables of the aforementioned alphabet: the letter *U* means a sort of seabird as large as a goose and with a neck as long, black in color and having a very sharp beak. It has large eyes and short legs.* They use these birds in fishing, sending them under water attached to

* Translator's note. The cormorant.

a cord under their wings and emerging near the neck. Onto this cord is passed a piece of cane, and this slips toward the throat, to close it so that when they emerge from the water with the fish in their mouth, they cannot swallow it. When they are used for fishing in this manner, they acquire the name of *unotori*, and the principal lords of the country keep them for their amusement.

After having been in Japan from the month of June until that of March of the year 1598, we gave thought to leaving and going toward China. But because in that year there was no arrival of the Portuguese ships that usually come to Nagasaki, and so as not to be forced to wait for another year, as has been said, we embarked with our goods on a Japanese vessel that was going to the kingdom of Cochin China. And that ship made a landfall when passing by the abovementioned island of Macao, as I shall tell in the next chronicle.

SECOND CHRONICLE OF THE EAST INDIES

*In which is recounted the voyage made from Japan to China,
and of the things of that kingdom*



As I said yesterday at the end of that report to Your Serene Highness, when we desired to leave the islands of Japan to go to the kingdom of China, and that year there were no ships come with the Portuguese who live in Macao, an island of China, we were forced to embark on a craft built in the Japanese style. But it was commanded by a captain who was Portuguese by nationality, though born in Nagasaki of a Japanese mother. We departed in propitious weather, with the north wind blowing, on the third of the month of March of the year 1598, together with some religious of the Society of Jesus, and other merchants and Portuguese passengers. Between those merchants and the Japanese sailors who ran the ship—which they called *somma*—there sprang up a strange, frightening disagreement that might have resulted in the ruin of all those aboard the vessel.

It happened that a certain troublesome Portuguese, perhaps not aware of the Japanese nature and customs, that they not only do not bear any sort of insult, but also not even the smallest word that is lightly discourteous, came to quarreling with one of the aforesaid sailors. To show his scorn, he gave the man a kick—which among the Japanese is held to be one

Second Account: The East Indies

of the greatest affronts that they can receive from an enemy. And even though the sailor at that very instant turned upon the Portuguese and gave him a good blow over the head, nonetheless he felt that he had not been avenged for the kick that he had received. And so he retired back among his companions, and among them took counsel as to what they ought to do to avenge that insult, which by then had become common to them all.

They demanded that the Portuguese be handed over to them, to be punished in their way, a thing that seemed to all to be no less shameless than arrogant. Thereupon a struggle arose between one party and the other, and it came to a pass in which everyone—sailors, passengers, and merchants—had need to go about with arms at hand. And squads of combatants were formed, one in the poop, the other in the prow, with at least sixty men on each side. And it almost reached the point of our all joining the fight together, beginning with arquebus shots from us in the poop and arrows from those who were in the group in the prow. We might easily have cut each other to pieces, they using their scimitars and we our swords, with which we had armed ourselves—and what with the contention between one group and the other.

They wanted the Portuguese. We and our captain were demanding the Japanese in order to punish him for his insolence in returning to the attack on the Portuguese and also as the cause of this tumult and of the conspiracy against all of us others. Some of the Japanese were Christians and some gentiles, but all of them were firm in their desire to take up arms and fight against the Portuguese (perhaps also for the other purpose of mutinying and stealing, should they turn out to be the victors, as in fact they would have under this pretext of civil brawling) and to wish to die rather than ever to surrender the Japanese into our hands.

And it would have gone from bad to worse if the mercy of God had not been provided by means of those religious of the Society of Jesus who were aboard the ship. They, with their skill, began with good words to persuade those Japanese Christians that they might become the cause of the ruin and death of everyone, themselves included, and together with the loss of the vessel, of which at that time no one was taking any care, management of the rudder having been given up along with that of the sails. For more than an hour, everything was confusion and struggle and frightening tumult, as you can well imagine, thinking of a ship in mid-sea and on it a war between equal groups, which is what that struggle was coming to—and, what is more frightening still, with one of the groups formed of men so fierce and barbarian that many of them deny the immortality of the soul and have no care at all for the body, which, for the sake of their reputation or other worldly honor, they very often themselves cut open, as I have said elsewhere, with one of their smaller scimitars, making a cross on their belly with it, and then deepening the cross into the intestines. They hold that to be a very honorable sort of death. So blinded do they sometimes become with wrath concerning their honor that they go so far in that wrath, the poison of which is even in the boys, that they very often also give themselves that same sort of death when they think themselves injured or treated badly by their parents or by others in the various situations brought about by their indignation. And one friend will do the same for another friend who does not find within himself the spirit with which to commit suicide.

However, by means of those religious, God allowed everything to be arranged and pacified. And thus, continuing on with our voyage under a wind that blew strongly and with the sea rougher than the vessel could take—so that we had to

lighten it by throwing some things overboard—in twelve days we finally reached the island of Amacao, located nineteen degrees to the north, near Canton, terra firma and city of China, which gives its name to one of those provinces, and from which the island is distant seventy miles, more or less. On it is a small unwallled city without fortresses, but having a few houses of Portuguese, who call it the city of Nome de Deus. And though it is an island adjacent to China, nevertheless it is governed by a Portuguese captain who comes out there each year from Goa with a patent and royal provisions from the Crown of Portugal, to administer justice among the Portuguese living there. As a reward to this captain, both for this service and to recompense him for other services rendered to His Catholic Majesty in India in matters of war, he alone is for that reason empowered—as no others are for that year—to give orders to a ship to go to Japan to carry the merchandise sent by the inhabitants of the city, who twice a year go to buy in the city of Canton, where they give merchandise fairs of things taken to East India in the months of April and May. And these things are chiefly raw silk, of which they transport on each voyage 70,000 to 80,000 pounds of twenty ounces to the pound, which they call *catti*. They also carry quantities of diverse cloths, much lead—which is worth two and three scudos the hundred pounds of the sort mentioned—and quicksilver and red lead, as well as quantities of not very good musk in bladders, as is all of that consumed in those parts among those people.

Furthermore, they send there an infinite variety of other kinds of merchandise, such as dry groceries and porcelain plates of every kind, but of the thickest; and very often also they carry gold, on which profits of seventy and eighty per

cent have been made, especially in time of war, as the Japanese gentlemen and lords buy it gladly so as to have their property in more manageable shape if the need should arise to transport it from one place to another because of the fortunes of the war that they wage among themselves. In exchange for the gold they give bars of good silver, which is abundant because there are many mines of it in that country. From all the other goods mentioned, the same profit can be made there—sometimes a little more, sometimes a little less—and when liquidating it one pays the captain for the freight at the rate of ten per cent, so that he often takes in 40,000 or 50,000 scudos without having even risked anything but this ship, which bears the goods to Japan in twenty or twenty-five days. But the ship is not seen again for eight months, as it leaves China in the month of June and returns there in the month of March. But often the captain sees part of the returns in the month of October of that same year, for they dispatch Japanese vessels to pick up the merchandise that they send to East India during the fair given, as already said, at Canton during those months.

In the city of Amacao there is a bishop with his cathedral church. And there also are other churches and convents of Franciscan, Dominican, and Augustinian monks, but with a small number of monks because they all live on gifts that they receive daily from the few Portuguese there. Also there are religious of the Society of Jesus, who have a church that they call the College, where there are many Fathers and Brothers, and from which some of them pass secretly onto the terra firma of China and others are sent to Japan, where they have permission to do business, as the Portuguese do each year, for the maintenance of that Christianity upon which they expend large amounts, especially in Japan. When Father Alessandro Valignano* was visiting in that country,

he told me as the truth that each year they spent more than eight or nine thousand scudos on maintenance, beyond the expenses of the College of Amacao.

Having debarked secretly at midnight, we went to the College with those Jesuits who had come on the Japanese ship. And we took with us the money we had, to put it in safekeeping so that the Amacao authorities could not—as they later tried to—take it as confiscated, we having reached that country without a license and by way of the Philippine Islands, which was not permitted, as I have said elsewhere, because of the prohibition against any mixing by the Castilian and Portuguese nations in the territories they had acquired. And thus, the morning following the night of our landing, our arrival having become known, the rumor spread around that we had come there with hundreds of thousands of scudos to invest, after which we would return to Japan by way of the Philippine Islands, and that the Jesuits had this matter in hand and that we had deposited the money in their convent.

So it came about that, in order to control the disquiet of the people, it became necessary for the judge of such causes to command that we be arrested and imprisoned. At once we were questioned as to whence we came and what we were intending to do in that country and whether or not we were aware of the prescriptions and prohibitions of His Catholic Majesty. We replied that we had come from the Philippine Islands and those of Japan, and thence to Amacao, whence

* Translator's note. "Father Alessandro Valignani (1537-1606), of Chieti, Visitor and Provincial of the Oriental Missions from 1573, was the one who decided, despite the immense difficulties, to establish the Catholic Mission in China, and who sent the first three celebrated missionaries there: Father Pasio, Father Matteo Ricci, and Father Michele Ruggeri. He also went to Japan and accompanied the first embassy that, in 1582, was sent to Rome by three princes to render homage to the Pope."—G. Sgrilli: *Francesco Carletti, mercante e viaggiatore fiorentino*, p. 81.

it was our thought and desire to pass over to East India for our own amusement and curiosity, but for no other interests nor for anything that overlooked or contravened the royal orders of either the one crown or the other. Further, we said, we were of the Italian nations and came from a country that was independent, like Japan, and not subject to either one or another Spanish nation, and that moving about the world was a thing allowed to all the nations. Finally, at the end of three days, we were taken from the jail and fined two thousand scudos, being obliged to go to India at the first opportunity to present ourselves to the viceroy there so that he might dispose of us as seemed just to him. And in no way were we to be allowed to return to Japan. That voyage to India, however, was not, because of many unforeseen events, carried out with that strictness.

And first it pleased God to take to Himself Antonio Carletti, my father, who suffered four continuous months of the stone sickness, which ended by taking his life in the year 1598 on the twentieth of the month of July, he having first received all the Sacraments of the Church. Then, having had him buried with honorable exequies in the episcopal church of that city, and having chosen a post beyond the middle of that church and opposite the large altar where the Evangel is preached, I had that spot competently covered with a large, long stone. On it I had incised his name and country, age, and death, so that his memory may be kept green there as long as time may be pleased to preserve it. Then, left alone, and in so remote a region, opposite to our hemisphere, I gave myself over to considering the unimaginable affliction in which I found myself. But God succored me when I least thought of it, for it happened that when not eleven days yet had passed after the death of my father, there appeared in Amacao

Orazio Neretti,* brother of the very eminent advocate Messer Bernardino, who arrived from Goa on the ship of the captain who came there on his way to Japan, as happens each year, as I have mentioned. And this Neretti had an interest in the ship. I went at once to call upon him before he disembarked upon land. And if I was happy to see him, he also was happy, as it had been sixteen or eighteen years since he had seen a fellow countryman.† Nor had I, during all my travels, seen another Florentine.

So it may well be imagined what that meeting meant to me, and the more on that occasion. I embraced him tightly and with tears in my eyes as I recounted the death of my father. And we came to know one another, and in due course found mutual pleasure in being good and cordial friends for the space of seventeen months during which we were in the same city and almost living together, our houses being very close. For love of him I remained there that year instead of going on to India. I had the thought of making a voyage to Japan in his company, but that was prevented by the tragedy that befell the ship that had made that journey the year before. On its return voyage, it went down with all its men and all the silver that it was carrying. And no news of it ever was known. So that, lacking that means of transportation, the other merchants and Orazio Neretti were unable to load their ship for Japan. And he had to wait for another year and for the arrival of the capital and the profit from the merchandise that those same merchants sent to India. So that

*Translator's note. Neretti was a friend and fellow voyager of Filippo Sassetti (1540-1588), a Florentine writer and merchant who traveled in Spain, Portugal, and India and was the first European to describe the Sanskrit language. Neretti was with Sassetti when he died, and acted as his executor.

†Translator's note. Actually, it was only ten years since Neretti had been present at the death of his fellow Florentine, Sassetti.

I, who wanted desperately, as in due course will be seen, to return to Europe as quickly as possible, at last took thought of leaving him and going on to India.

To put this plan into effect, when the time arrived for the fair or market that is put on at Canton, whither the Portuguese go to buy the goods that they take on to India, I handed my money to the deputies. For that office are elected and nominated four or five merchants from among the citizens of Macao. And they go to Canton to buy for all the others, so that no change in the prices of the merchandise shall be brought about. The deputies are taken over to Canton in vessels belonging to the Chinese, together with the money that they have or wish to invest, which ordinarily amounts to from 250,000 to 300,000 scudos in *reales* or silver bars that come from Japan or India. The only Portuguese who leave the vessels—which are called *lantee* and which are propelled by oars in the manner of the Japanese *funee* (but which are much larger and very like our galleys, and very commodious)—are those who on a certain day are permitted to land and go to the city of Canton, there to negotiate and examine the merchandise and arrange the price, which they call “giving the blow.” And at that price thereafter each one can buy what he wishes, but before that arrangement has been made by the aforesaid merchants sent as deputies, no one can buy. Then, at night, they all return to the *lantee* to eat and sleep, and even while they are buying, the things are being loaded on the *lantee*, with which they take the merchandise either to the ships for India or, it may be, to Amacao, according to which better suits the Portuguese.

The varieties of merchandise are chiefly raw silk, which I bought for my own account at ninety *tael* the *picco*, which would be like saying at ninety golden scudos in money, and in silver weight one hundred pounds of twenty ounces to the

pound. But it was dear, as it usually was valued at seventy *tael* the *picco*. I bought another kind of silk twisted into thread for sewing, and the other variety, soft and beaten, that serves for needlework, all white, at 150 *tael* the *picco*, likewise very much higher than usual. The use of silk is so ancient in those countries that they say it has been worn for more than 4,250 years. One reasonably can believe, therefore, that it has passed from there to the rest of the world.

I bought a great quantity of musk at twelve *tael* the *catte*, which is like saying at twelve scudos the pound of twenty ounces. At one time I had bought more than three hundred pounds, of which the Dutchman who captured me got 1,600 ounces. Musk is not made in the manner that many have described, and I brought a whole skin of the entire animal to Your Highness, with its sac, which is nothing but the animal's umbilicus as it comes out under the body full of that odoriferous matter. In size and shape it is almost like one of our small foxes, and it has this sac full of musk, which Nature deposits there little by little. The Chinese dilute it by putting other mixtures into it, and from one sac they make three and four, using the animal's skin to form the others. And those false sacs they sell to the Indians of the region, selling the natural ones to the Portuguese—but even those are falsified in the contents, it being certain that one never finds the musk unadulterated or without admixture if it is not still affixed to the animal's skin.

For that reason, among the Chinese musk has its carats just as gold has among us, and when it is altogether good it reaches twelve carats, which they call *matte*, but one never sees or deals in that sort, as is true of twenty-four-carat gold. When musk reaches nine or ten *matte*s or carats, it is held to be mercantile and good. But at times it is so diluted with the mixture that they add to it that it does not reach to even

six or seven *matte*s. But it does not reach Europe, being consumed among the people of Japan, Siam, Cambodia, Sumatra, and the uncounted other places in India.

Similarly, I purchased gold, which in those regions is really a sort of merchandise and is used more for gilding one or another kind of furniture and other objects than as money. Also, it does not, as among us, set the values. Rather, like other merchandise, it rises or falls in price with the season and the situation. And I found myself able to buy as much as I wanted at from seventy to seventy-four *tael* the piece of ten golden *tael* at twenty-two and one-half carats, which would be like saying that one could buy twelve and one-half ounces of gold—corresponding to the ten *tael* mentioned—for seventy scudos. One also purchases other kinds of merchandise, such as sugar at two *tael* the *picco*, which amounts to two scudos the hundred pounds of twenty ounces each; and copper, lead, tin, brass, and iron, all at very low prices, and also quicksilver, which they still are trying to transform into true silver by the way of alchemy.

To that sort of thing those people are much inclined. And for that reason they spend time searching for things that they can swallow which will make them immortal. And they therefore easily believe in every vanity. They are no less given over to astrology, observing in all their actions each hour and detail as it is pronounced good or bad by the prognostications of astrology. And thus, too, they pay attention to physiognomy and signs on the hands or other parts of the body. And they even scan the soles of the feet, as one of them did to me when I was in Macao and wanted, out of curiosity, to experience it. And they also have other methods of prediction, such as by the appearance and posture of the body, by dreams, words, the flight and singing of birds, the encountering of one thing more than of another in the shadows

of the sun's rays, and infinite other manners, even to the point of having familiar spirits through which they do divining, conjuring them up to tell them what they wish to know.

But to return to the fair, I say that there one buys an infinite quantity of fabrics of white and colored cotton, in which the largest portion of the lowest class of people generally dresses, though it is not yet four hundred years since the seed of cotton was brought to them from India. And before that change everyone wore silk, for though they have all sorts of animals, they do not know the art of making cloth from wool, though they do make crude carpets of it. Nonetheless, they esteem European fabrics, and particularly those which are scarlet and other colors, even black for the use of Mandarins and other Chinese, who wear a long habit made in two pieces, one reaching from the waist to the feet, the other from the shoulders to mid-thigh, in the manner of a *sagum** with long wide sleeves like those worn by our monks. This habit opens in front and is put on and then fastened on the left side with ribbons against the skin—for they do not use any sort of undershirt.

On their heads they wear bonnets made of bristles or the manes or tails of horses, these tight against their hair, which they wear long, like women. And on top of that they wear another bonnet, of the same bristles, made in the shape of a very high hat without a crease, it being round or square in shape according to the rank and profession of the wearer. Those worn by the Mandarins and ministers of justice are different from those worn by the commonality, who do not wear a hat until they have reached the age of twenty. They use very long stockings made of felt and resembling boots, the feet being shaped so that these can be worn outside the shoes, which have vamps of silk or else cotton thread woven

* Translator's note. A Roman military and slave cloak.

together and leather soles. These can be put on as one pleases, without using one's hands to pull them to or ease them, as they are made like a wooden shoe, all in one piece. Before they don these boots, they bind their legs very tightly with a thong made of a cloth woven from a certain grass resembling flax (which they do not have). And that cloth they call *nono*, and with it they wind their legs about tightly with many turns so as to keep them fresh and clean and prevent sweating.

One also buys velvets made in our way, and for two or three *giulii* an arm's length; sarsenet, taffeta, satin, damasks of various sorts, and cloth of gold—all at such low prices that one cannot repeat them and hope to be believed. They weave those cloths of gold in very varied and beautiful and showy patterns, and instead of the silver and gold that go into them, they place there a certain thread of silvered and gilded paper which, cut very thin, they spin in the way that we make spun gold and silver. And instead of silk they use another thread that seems the same and has the same quality except that it must be protected from water and dust because water will destroy it and dust tarnish it. With it they also make very beautiful embroidery and other wonderful things.

And of the abovementioned silk—that is, of those twists, good for sewing and in all the colors that can be imagined, light as well as dark—I had them make a bed—the curtains, that is, with also all the accessories and furnishing for a room. This was made in the manner in which they work tapestry fabrics, showing the pattern from both the front and the back. And that design was of various fantastic animals, birds, and flowers, in which last those regions abound and which are esteemed more for the sight of them than for their odor, just as in Europe today they are appreciated for their beauty. And

they have a similar decoration of foliage, but all very natural. And because Your Highness's arms were embroidered on the canopy of those curtains, the Zeelanders who stole them from me along with all my other goods did not dare to sell them, but sent them as a gift to the Most Serene Queen of France, Maria de' Medici, together with the porcelain and various other curious things that I was bringing to present to Your Highness.

And of that porcelain, a merchant of Middelburg in Zeeland, where all my other things were sold, bought two large vases, perhaps the largest that ever have been brought to Europe from those lands. And that merchant sent them to Your Highness. I had bought them, together with three others, and all of them full of Chinese-made ginger, which is the best, being of the thickest and handsomest branches that grow anywhere in the world. And also good, large pieces of chinaroot,* which in those countries is not worth more than four or five scudos the hundred pounds of twenty ounces each, which comes to a little more than twelve *quattrini* the pound of twelve ounces.

And the quantity and quality of porcelain which I had found to purchase at very low prices—both the better and the very best, an assortment of between 650 and 700 pieces, large and small, of plates, bowls, and other luxuries, did not cost more than from twenty to twenty-two *tael*. The story that many have told of its being made from different things is all nonsense, for it is nothing but earth, of the quality that it has pleased God to create in that region of the *contrea di Chaïam*. This earth is taken from mines, to call them that, in abundance. And, as happens with that from which they make

* Translator's note. The root of the *Smilax china*, which long was in demand for preparing a tonic and as a cure for syphilis.

pottery at Montelupo* and elsewhere, it comes out finer or cruder according to the benefits given it and the quality of the earth. It comes in so many varieties that it scarcely is possible to enumerate them. And one could load, I do not say ships, but fleets, with them.

And of that which they call the flower of that earth, they say that it cannot leave that kingdom, but is used only for the service of the King and of those who govern the country. It also is made in yellow and green, which they say also is valued by the King of the Mogor. Others want it *pagonazza*, still others mixed and worked with gold. But the most beautiful is what one sees ordinarily, white and decorated in blue. The assortment that I purchased was of that kind, of the finest that it was possible to get with the help of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus, who also got the aforementioned five vases for me. And these latter cost me fourteen *tael* and eight *mais* and two *conderini*, that being about equal to fourteen gold scudos and nine *giulii*, it being the case that ten *conderini* make one *mais*, which is a little more or less than one *giulio*, and that ten *mais* make one *tael*, which by weight is eleven Spanish silver *reales*. And the *conderino* is broken up into ten *cash*, moneys of copper which are not weighed but are counted, being carried strung on a cord and going at ten for one of the abovementioned silver *conderini*, which they weigh by means of certain little weights that each of them always carries, ready for the buying of small things.

And this scale is rather convenient and is cunningly and neatly made and easy to use, it being furnished with a tongue that is nothing but a very fine silk thread. Taking it up with the fingers of the left hand, they let the arm of the scale hang down, it being made of ebony or ivory in a round shape.

* Translator's note. A village between Florence and Pisa in which earthenware still is made in large quantities.

And on top, with white or black points and lines, the *conderini*, *mais*, and *tael* are designated in even divisions. The testing balance moves along this arm, being fastened to a silk knot that is caused to move forward and return backward by raising and lowering the arm, turning it partway between the two fingers of the right hand. Underneath this a little balance is fastened, and into it are put the pieces of silver which they wish to weigh. In turn, the silver is cut with an iron instrument no less curious than handy, and somewhat in the style of a scissors that cuts on one side only. And the side that does not cut strikes the earth, and has the effect of cutting the silver, which remains in the hand with which the instrument is operated.

This is the money that circulates throughout all of China without being coined or having any mark other than that of pure silver, which is valued by being weighed and counted in bulk. In counting, and having reached ten and wanting to say eleven, they write thus—士, which means ten and one. And thus they go up to nineteen, by writing this way: 士九, the last of which means ten and then nine. Well, wanting to say twenty, they say two tens, placing two signs above, thus: 二十, and the ten below. And thus they count up to ninety, which they call nine tens. And they write one hundred thus: 百, but in speaking it they say ten tens. And wanting to say one thousand, they say ten hundreds, with this sign: 千, and ten thousand with this one: 萬. With all of which it is possible to count to infinity without other characters, multiplying any number whatever by tens. Thus, if they should want to say one hundred thousand, they will say ten times ten thousand, thus: 萬千, with the ten above and the ten thousand below. And saying a million, thus: 百萬, one hundred times ten thousand.

They buy and sell everything by weight, even live fowl—to

which, so that they may have good, if false, weight, they feed damp sand mixed with bran or something else. And one often finds stones in the bellies of fish, put there for the same purpose. Finally, they try to falsify everything and cheat everyone whenever and as much as they can, being better at that than gypsies. And they praise this deception, it being a skill among them, so that it is not shameful to know how to practice it well. And they do not punish thieves except for a second offense, so that he who knows how to carry on thievery as his trade will, it seems, be held a wise and subtle man. The punishment of anyone caught in fraud never is death, but is only that of having a sign in ink put on one arm. On the third offense, the sign is made on the face. On a fourth, the culprit is thrashed and condemned to prison.

For that reason, they station guards in all the streets of the city, so that the houses shall not be robbed. They are easy to enter because they all are low, built from timbers in the manner of columns, which support the crossbeams and the roof. The spaces between these then are filled with wooden boards or with bricks, with which they separate the rooms. And the houses have no upper floors because the people hold that climbing stairs, besides being inconvenient, is also dangerous. And they laugh at our custom, bragging that they are the wise men with two eyes, whereas the others have only one.

They believe themselves to be full of all knowledge, to have an abundance of everything good, and to have no need of anything. For that reason, they have made it unlawful for anyone to leave or to enter their country on pain of death. Exceptions are made for those who arrive as ambassadors from some nearby or tributary king, or who pretend to be carrying tribute or some other present, as many merchants do who go overland from east to west, traveling to India.

Others go under the name of philosophers and display a desire to learn one matter or another from them. And if they do business with the Portuguese and with the Castilians from the Philippine Islands, having given them permission to stop in Amacao and there build houses and churches, and even though they carry merchandise to them as far as the city of Manila, nevertheless what has led them to act this way and let the two peoples act this way is their hunger and thirst for silver, which they value for its essence and price higher than gold.

And from the two nations they take in silver each year more than 1,500,000 scudos, selling their own merchandise and never buying anything, so that whatever silver gets into their hands never leaves them again. And if it does happen that they buy something, they do so by exchanging for it either gold or some other merchandise, of which they have enough so that they could furnish the whole world with it. In my time they willingly purchased only glass objects, especially such as were in the shape of vases or plates with white stripes, as well as other sorts as long as they were not gilded, a thing that they do not like at all. They also bought lenses of all sorts, and especially colored ones. But above all things else they valued those triangular-shaped glasses which show the delights of various colors when one looks through them toward the open air in the country or elsewhere, and in which one sees the reflections of many things. And these were sold at up to five hundred ducats each, and such was the wonder with which they struck those people the first time that they saw them that they began to praise them aloud, saying that what one saw by means of them was the matter from which the heavens are made.

They also bought various other things from Europe and from India, particularly pepper, which I was told they do not

eat, but which they employ in medicine and in making a certain mixture that they use for plastering the walls of their houses so as to keep the rooms warm and prevent them from generating filth. They do this in the colder regions of that country and kingdom, which because of its hugeness shares in various climates, with airs that are hot, temperate, and cold. For it extends in latitude from south to north from twenty degrees at Canton (or Kwan Keu, or Cheu, in the Italian pronunciation) and going to forty-five degrees where its confines are and the walls near the mountains that separate it from Tartary. And in longitude it is known to be 2,850 Italian miles. And its circumference consequently is 9,000 miles according to measurements taken from their geographic tables, on which the whole country is designed within a mesh of certain lines drawn in the form of perfect quadrangles, each one of which contains the area of 500 *li-i*. Each of these *li-i* is measured across by the distance across which it is possible to hear one man calling another in his clear, quiet everyday voice. Ten of them form a *pu*, which amounts to three miles, so that each of the aforesaid quadrangles measures 150 Italian miles. The abovementioned table contains nineteen of these in order to present the fifteen provinces of China, each of which, in its hugeness and fertility, might better be called an entire kingdom.

To follow the order in the geographical books that I presented to Your Highness,* the first is called Peking, and it has its metropolitan city of the same name, as is the case with most of the other provinces—the syllable *fu*, meaning metropolitan, being added to that for the province. They also say "*Potole utò*" (this word *utò* means province). It is said

*Translator's note. Carletti acquired in Macao a Chinese geographical book, complete with map-tables. He succeeded in getting it to Florence, where it has been preserved in the Biblioteca Nazionale.

that eight cities are called *fu*—that is, metropolitan—and that the chief one is Shiamtiamfú. I do not know if this is the aforesaid Peking—which means Royal Court of the Northern Part, as Nankin is that of the Southern, where the king who drove the Tartars out of the kingdom used to live. A grandson of his later usurped it from that king's son and retired to Peking, there establishing his court and residence, which endures to this day.

And that place is located at forty degrees toward the north. And it is said that there is a royal temple there which has twelve miles of walls around it and which is made with five very large naves and is marvelous. So also, they say, is the royal palace, which is said to cover the whole city—that is, to stretch from one side to the other, beginning at the south and reaching to the north. And they say that within it there are all the delights of this world, and of the flesh in particular, as I shall relate in its place, and that in the hall in which the King grants audiences and in which they carry out the ceremonies for rendering thanks for the blessings they have received, thirty thousand men can be accommodated, so large and magnificent is it. And they say that this city of Peking is the one that in the time of the Tartars was called Cambalú by Marco Polo the Venetian.

Its walls are marvelous: they are made of stones and bricks, and twelve horses can run abreast on top of them, and they contain more than ten thousand bridges, large and small. The rest can better be imagined by each person than told by me. I only add to Your Highness that this province has, in addition to the cities mentioned, seventeen smaller cities of the kind that they call *ziú*, 115 of the others that they call *biam*, and that, further, it has an infinite number of those called *goi*, where the soldiers are. Because this province is on the frontier of Tartary, they say incredible things about it,

and that in its metropolitan city alone there always are more than 340,000 soldiers ready for every need, and an additional 52,300 horse. And it is said that the people of this province—that is, those who are on the tribute rolls—reach the number of 3,413,254, but nonetheless are few in comparison with those of other provinces, there being many soldiers in this one who pay no tribute.

Additionally, in the east there is Nankin, near the sea. Its chief city is called Hiemtiamfú, and I believe it to be that same Nankin where earlier, at the time when they drove out the Tartars, the court used to be. And some hold it to be the very celebrated city of the Kwinsai, as was told me by Father Lazzaro Cataneo,* a religious of the Society of Jesus, who had been there many years and had bought a house for that company there in the period when I found myself in China. Before that the house had been uninhabitable because of spirits, but the members of the Society lived in it calmly, a thing that seemed a marvel to all in that city.

And of that city, which the Father equated with the aforementioned Kwinsai, he said that it had more than four thousand bridges, most of them so high that masted vessels could sail under them. And he said that the city was enormous and that it stretched for more than twenty-five miles and that its royal palace was surrounded by three walls, in the manner of a fortress, with moats filled with water from the river that flows through the center of the city. And he said that those walls stretch five Italian miles, and that within them there are woods, lakes, and gardens. He also said that no kingdom called Cataio was to be found in all that region, but that what we call China is called Cataio in the Persian

*Translator's note. Father Lazzaro Cattanei (1560-1640) was a companion of Father Matteo Ricci and his collaborator in compiling the renowned *Vocabolario sinico-europeo*. He lived in China for forty-six years.

language. He said that the city of Nankin is located at thirty-two degrees toward the north, and I found in the aforementioned books that this province has fourteen metropolitan cities and thirteen of those which they call *ziú*, and eighty-seven of those called *biam*, in addition to an infinite number of garrisons spread throughout the province, which has 9,967,439 tributaries, each of whom pays the King three *giulii*. The principal city has a constant garrison of 28,900, divided between horse and foot soldiers. And outside it there are another 44,800.

Between these two provinces lies that of Shantun, the principal metropolis of which is Chelanfú, and which also has six other metropolitan cities, fifteen of those others called *ziú*, eighty-nine of those which are called *biam*, and seventeen of those called *goi*. The tributaries are 6,759,675, and they pay as above.

Toward the east there is Shensei, the metropolis of which is Taiguanfú, and it has four metropolitan cities, twenty of those called *ziú*, sixty-four of those called *biam*, and of those housing soldiers—called *goi*—fourteen. This province has 5,084,415 tributaries.

Next comes the province of Shiansé or Shiansi, and its principal city is called Shianfú, and it has eight of these, and twenty-one of the second category, and ninety-four of those others, and thirty-nine garrisons. The tributaries are 3,934,176.

Next, in the middle of the entire kingdom, comes the province of Halam, the metropolis of which is Chai Gonfú. And it has eight of these, twelve of the others called *ziú*, ninety-seven of those called *biam*, and fourteen of those others in which the soldiers are, called *goi*. In that province they register 5,105,107 tributaries, who pay as has been described.

Then comes the province of Chekiam, located near the sea on the east. Its chief city is Honchufú, and it has eleven

metropolitan cities, only one of the others, seventy-five of those called *biam*, and sixteen garrisons. The tributaries are 4,052,471.

More inland is Shansi, the province that has as its principal city Lanchihonfú, and which has thirteen metropolitan cities, one of those called *ziú*, seventy-nine of those others, and five garrisons. The tributaries are 7,925,185.

Next follows that of Ukwam, toward the north, the metropolis of which is Buchianfú. It has fifteen metropolitan cities, thirteen of the others, ninety-six of those called *biam*, and thirty-two of those in which the soldiers are. The tributaries number 4,335,590.

Nearby lies Sushuen, toward the west, and along the sea there is Fukian. The first has as its chief city Shianto-ufu; it has eight metropolitan cities, twenty of those other *ziú*, of *biam* one hundred, and of garrisons eighteen. The tributaries are 2,104,270. The other province has as its metropolis Hokwifú, and it has eight of these cities, one of the others, fifty-three of those which are called *biam*, and sixteen garrisons; its tributaries are 2,082,677.

Continuing along the coast, there is Canton. Its principal city at that time was called Conchifú, taking its name from that of the governor—which is to say viceroy—who was there. It has ten of these metropolitan cities, seven of the others, sixty-nine of those called *biam*, and fifteen garrisons; its tributaries are 1,978,022.

More inland are Cansei and, toward the west, Fonam, which the interpreter said was the province in which grow the animals that make musk. The first has as its principal city Kwidenfú, and of these it has eleven, of the others forty-six, of those called *biam* fifty-seven, and of garrisons ten; its tributaries number 1,054,767. The other province has as its metropolis a city with the same name as the province; and

of those called *fu* it has twenty-two, thirty-eight of the others, forty-four of the third kind, and no garrisons. Its tributaries are 1,433,110.

The last is called Kwichufú, near Cansei, at the border of the kingdom of Cochin China, toward the west, and to the east and south it has the sea, with an infinite number of islands affording protection for its mainland and defending it so well that to draw near it in ships is very difficult. Of the cities called *fu* it has eight, four of those called *ziú*, and none of those called *biam*, in place of which it has eighteen of those places called *goi*, which are garrisons of soldiery. It has not very many tributaries, they numbering only 512,288.

In the kingdom of Cochin China, which is included in the aforesaid books, and which is also called Anan, there are fourteen small provinces, regions in which are found the much-prized aloes-wood,* much gold, and many of the animals called rhinoceroses or *badà*, as well as elephants. And there also, according to what the Chinese wrote in the aforesaid books of geography, lives a certain sort of wild men who are hairy but of ordinary stature, and who have tails. And they say that these men speak a language of their own. And *zinzin* is what the Chinese call these men—if that is what, because of resemblances in certain parts, they should be called. And it is said that in order to capture them, they prepare and leave at the places where these *zinzin* often go many and varied things to eat and, particularly, much wine, so that with it the *zinzin* become drunk. And when that hour arrives, the Chinese fall upon them from behind and take them without difficulty.

And the sole reason for capturing these men—or animals,

* Translator's note. The shrub *Aquilaria agallocha*, not the West Indian "aloe-wood" (*Sebesten sebestena*). Burned, it supplies perfume, the Biblical "aloes."

if that is what they are—is to kill them and take their blood, which is used as ink, like kermes or purple, a color highly valued by the Chinese and the Cochin Chinese, and which never loses its beauty and is of great price. They say that when these *zinzin* have been captured, it is necessary to caress them and give them more wine to drink, after which they become good companions and are glad to give their blood lovingly, each of them then being asked for it by one of those who earlier had wanted to kill them. And it is said that if they are not treated that way, pleasantly, the captors do not obtain the aforementioned blood, which is what they desire from those beasts, or whatever they are, which ordinarily graze on various fruits in the fields. However that may be, the interpreter of these books of the geography of China certified to me that this story was written in them.

From which, turning back to description, I tell Your Highness that at the north lies Tartary, the king of which, that interpreter said, took this kingdom of China in the year 1206 and held it tyrannically until the year 1368, when he was driven out by the strength of a Chinese captain who, beginning as a simple soldier, because of his valor had become absolute master and then king. And from him are descended the kings who reign now. And for his excellence he was called *Humu-u*, which means brave captain, and later was named *Thamin*, which denotes the splendor of his reign.

Also on the borders, stretching west and north, is a very large, sandy desert, which the Chinese call Sa-bo.* And this desert in some places measures 800 *li-i*, which means at least 240 miles; and in length it extends more than 7,200 *li-i*, which would come to 2,160 miles.

All of these aforementioned things, with many others that it has not been possible to decipher, are found written in the

* Translator's note. That is, Shamo—Gobi.

aforesaid books of all the provinces of China, in which they enumerate 60,216,446 tributaries paying the King three *giulii* per person, not counting the women or the eunuchs, of which there always are more than 10,000 at the service of the King in his palace, nor counting the young men who have not yet reached the age of twenty years, nor the soldiers, nor the magistrates, nor other literary or philosophical men, nor even the relatives of the King, who number more than 60,000. None of the aforementioned pays tribute, and the King's relatives are fed from the royal treasury. They cannot be at court or leave the city to which each of them is assigned as a place to live, this under risk of committing lese majesty. Nor can they be governors in the commonwealth or possess goods of their own or any other property. They are, however, paid large annual pensions in moneys from the royal treasury, enough to cover all of their expenses, which are enormous because they are dealt with as though they were kings.

The rice that the landowners pay in is said to be more than 30,000,000 hundredweight of twenty ounces each, which in those regions is worth up to seven *giulii* per hundredweight. So that the income of this great monarch (who in the Chinese language is called *Hiancú*, which means Lord of the Universe or, to say it better, Lord of All That Is Beneath the Sky, and whom they also call Son of Heaven, the word being *Tiankú*) never can be calculated if one takes into consideration the other items, such as silk and salt, from which he receives indescribable treasure. But it is held that the whole amounts to more than 150,000,000 scudos annually, all of which is spent for the greatness of this kingdom, which for that reason is honored with various names, this out of adulation for the kings who govern it. Such names are *tham*, which means unbounded; at other times *riú*, which means rest, and *hia*, which means large, and also *shiamm*, meaning ornament, and

keú or *cheú*, meaning perfect, and *han*, the Milky Way in the sky. And in the time of this king it is called *thamin*, which indicates great brilliance or splendor.

The other kingdoms, near by and far away, also are named variously. And first those of Cochin China, from which the Portuguese have derived the name they have given to this kingdom, calling it China and then *Chiuú*, the Japanese *Tham*, the Tartars *Han*, and the Persians, as I have said, *Cataio*. And similar names are given to it by all those Saracens and Moors who travel there overland from the west. And the Chinese, in addition to all those names, also call it *Chiuncò* or *Chiumquo*, which means a kingdom, and therefore *Kiumbwà*, signifying the kingdom set at the center of the entire earth. Which is what the Chinese believe, thinking that the entire mass of the world is a large, beautiful plain, in the middle of which their kingdom is (though they believe the sky to be round), and that there is no land or kingdom other than theirs. And for that reason they call it *Tien Hia*, meaning everything good to be found under the sun, and call their king, as I have said, Lord of the Universe.

For that reason they have no desire to acquire other regions, but are content with their own, for the protection of which they always keep enlisted and at work in various fortresses and garrisons many millions of soldiers on foot and mounted. And these particularly are at the frontiers, where the walls are and the mountains that separate this country from the Tartars. In a space of 15,000 miles there are 1,043,141 soldiers and 487,471 horse, which they call *ma*, with this sign: 馬. Further, they have armed vessels all along the coasts of that sea, which form an infinite number of ships, which they call *bankoni*, with many soldiers, whom they call *kom* and represent by this sign: 船. And they have an uncounted number of other craft on which many men live with

their wives and children and animals such as fowl, swine, and ducks, which they send ashore during the day to feed in flocks and then call back to the boats in the evening by the sound of some iron or other things that they beat together.

Furthermore, these books show that in this kingdom there is a river that because of its great size is called *Jansú*,* which means Son of the Sea. From Shantun all the way to Peking, more than 12,145 very large boats navigate on it continuously, carrying in the service of the King's storehouses all the food that is needed, and which is taken as tribute from five provinces: Shansi, Chekiam, Nankin, Ukwam, and Shantun. More than a million in gold is spent on this river in keeping it navigable, and it is always muddy and thick. It does great damage and brings ruin by overflowing its banks, and the King undertakes to restore to the poor what they have lost. And it has happened that in this way he has disbursed more than one hundred thousand scudos after a single flood. The river furthermore is navigated by an infinite number of other ships carrying merchants and passengers. These take to Peking every sort of maintenance, it being in a sterile region producing nothing, so that everything is brought in from outside. In order to carry fresh things during the summer, they customarily mix them with ice, which they have stored at various spots along the way. They never use it for drinking, but only for keeping things fresh so that they do not go bad or dry on the way because of the length of the trip, which is of one month or two months. And all of this is told in the aforementioned books printed in China.

The art of printing and that of making artillery and gunpowder (from which they make appear ingenious and marvelous things such as trees adorned with fire and fruits of all sorts, combats and spinings of balls, and other things, all

* Translator's note. Yangtze.

in the air, and it would not be possible to say how much is used up in these sorts of things) are of such ancient invention in China that thousands of years have passed. And it is possible to believe beyond any doubt that all these things came from them. And I agree to the statement that not only these, but every invention for good or for evil, of beauty or of ugliness, must have come from that region, or at least it can be affirmed that they have in themselves the knowledge of everything, not having had it from us or from the Greeks or other nations who taught it to us, but from native creators in that huge and very ancient country which, as they say, predates by many millennia the creation of the world described by Moses, and this according to the belief that they hold, which is no less fabulous than false.

All things abound there, and all the mechanical and political arts, and they profess moral philosophy, mathematics, astrology, medicine, and other sciences, in which they hold themselves to be the first men of the world. And they do not think that there is any wisdom outside of their nation, for they believe all the others to be barbarians. They use up the larger part of their life in studies, and on them base all their substance, it being through study that they attain to grades of nobility by means of the management of justice and the administration of public affairs. And in order that this should be dealt with fully, it would have to be taken up in books and not simply in such a chronicle as this is intended to be. For I report all this somewhat confusedly, as it comes to memory.

And first, as for their writing, they write in the same way and order as the Japanese, on very delicate sheets made from cotton cloth and others of ground-up tree-bark. They start at the top and proceed downward with brushes that they rub on a stone on which the ink, which they carry in solid pieces, is dissolved in a little water as they rub it against that stone.

They form their letters with this brush, and they are hieroglyphic characters (and by each one of them they signify a thing summed up and pronounced in a single syllable) which are understood not only by them but also by their neighbors—that is, by the Cochin Chinese, Koreans, Japanese, and others, despite the fact that they all have different languages. Nonetheless, they all know the meaning of these letters, even though in their own countries each of them in his imagination knows things and calls them by name according to his own language. And even in China that is different from what is written and used for teaching the sciences, in which they consume many years.

And so I was told that among merchants they write with another sort of alphabet, of forty letters or a few less, as the Japanese do, and each one in the manner in which the speech is in his province. But the educated people speak a language that is called Mandarin—that is, of the educated men, or Mandarins, who speak it a great deal. It also is called *Kwonbwá*, which means language of the court—that is, of the magistrates and those who litigate. It is understood throughout all the provinces, just as among us the Latin tongue is understood in many kingdoms. And the magistrates and governors use it, they who hold the first place among all the others of the region. And they who know more and recognize a larger number of these characters, in which are written all their sciences and laws as established by their king, are the leaders of the entire kingdom, and the governing is placed in their hands.

These men are called *lowtsié*, which means master and father. It is a rule, however, that no native may have charge of the government in his own region unless he is in the militia. To the former it is prohibited because they should not have to respect either relatives or friends; it is permitted to

the others so that love of country may make them more vigilant in defending it. In the case of the death of their father or mother while they are occupying some government position, they are forced to leave it and return to their own home and region to carry out the mourning, to weep the dead, as they say, for three continuous years, dressing themselves in white canvas. During that period they abstain from talking to their mates, from sleeping in a bed, from sitting in a chair, from eating meat, from drinking wine, from going out to banquets or to other entertainments—all this in sign of grief. And at the end of three years they inter the dead outside the city, all the relatives accompanying the body with great pomp, so that it seems a feast or a triumph rather than a funeral. They place the cadaver in a wooden casket, the best and least corruptible that they can have. And to the dead person, so long as he remains in the house, they take wine and food to eat each day as though he remained alive.

After the educated men come the merchants, artisans, and soldiers. These last are not esteemed, for the Chinese abhor quarrels. They do not wish for revenge or carry arms in order to give wounds or to kill, a thing they hold to be horrible, so that to flee from such occasions is esteemed prudent and brave. When, however, nothing else is possible for them, striking a blow is the greatest excess to which they go. And if they see blood, they become terrified and weak. And no one but soldiers ever carries arms either in the cities or when on trips, so that the captains—that is, those who deal with them and know about them through study—go under the name of Mandarins, and consequently belong to the number of the educated nobles. And so as to govern the entire kingdom it is sufficient that they be philosophers, and it is not important that they know things by experience. But they must know

them theoretically and be able to treat of them in elegant writing.

And the King never does anything without consulting those in his government. Under their advice, which they give in writing, they place a one-syllable symbol, which is sounded as *xi* and means the same thing as *Fiat*. These philosophers are divided into six orders of educated administrators of justice. The first is called *Li-Pu*, meaning the tribunal made by a magistracy who names all the other magistrates, judges, and governors of the entire kingdom; the second *Ho-Pu*, magistracy of the treasury; the third *Lii-Pu*, they of the ceremonies—who have charge of the churches and the religious, who are subject to the secular courts, and of the feasts and sacrifices that must be looked after and carried out throughout the year, and of the King's marriages, and of answering his letters and receiving ambassadors, whom they precede in any place where they happen to find themselves together—this to demonstrate the reverence due the King from him who sends embassies to this kingdom. At the dinners or banquets that are given, they add, besides the cooked foods that are served, all sorts of raw meats, which the ambassadors are to take to their rooms, where they are housed with little comfort and less decorum, not much value being placed upon them.

In marrying, the King pays no attention to nobility of blood, but looks only for beauty of body, and marries one wife, who is held to be his legitimate and chief spouse. Then he marries another nine girls of less authority, and then another thirty-six, all of whom nonetheless enjoy the name of wife. But none of them is called Queen, a dignity and name that belong to the mother of the King, who is called Queen, it being held a very great sin by that nation generally not to obey one's mother and respect her and satisfy

her in everything that she wants. Further, he takes as concubines a large number of women, the most beautiful to be found in all the kingdom. But these are not called wives. And they all serve the first wife, who alone sits at the table with the King, and never any other. And if it should happen that one of those others becomes the first to have children, they inherit the kingdom but do not recognize or call mother the one who has borne them, but rather the above-mentioned first legitimate wife of the King, upon whose death, as also upon the death of his mother, if she has been the Queen, the whole kingdom goes into mourning, wearing it for a month, though in earlier times it used to last an entire year in the manner already mentioned, with rough white canvas. To see the whole populace thus roughly dressed must give a terrifying sensation of melancholy.

The other tribunals are called *Pimpú*, meaning council of war; *Compú*, meaning that of public buildings of whatever sort throughout the kingdom; and *Himpú*, that of the criminal and civil justice combined. But above all these magistracies there is another, of greater authority, called *Colaos*, and it is made up of the number of six principal philosophers who act as secretaries for all affairs of the kingdom, and who at all times and on all occasions work face to face with the King. There is still another tribunal, divided into two parts called *Colí* and *Faulí*, and these, in each magistracy, are more than sixty literary men and philosophers. And they act as syndics, informing this great monarch in writing of everything that is done in his kingdom, good or bad. And that also is lawful for any good vassal to do, by law of the country, which obligates him to act thus, alerting his superiors to anything that he finds against or damaging to the public weal.

And in that government all the magistrates usually become very rich despite the fact that the largest salary does not ex-

ceed one thousand scudos per year. But the presents that they receive, as well as the other enterprises that they know very well how to secure while they are ruling in the aforesaid ways, make them seem more masters than ministers. And in his office each of them is like a marquess, a count, or a duke in the management of public affairs and in the obedient and reverent attitude of the people toward him. In all that kingdom, however, there are no such titles or proprietorships, nor any other lordship or nobility than those constituted by way of education among the governing. And it is in that that they make this great wealth, in any legal or illegal way, though they have to be very stern in their office.

It very often happens that in one year more than four thousand of these officials are driven out of office, some of them for having exchanged justice for gifts, some for having been too stern in judgment and some too sweet and easy-going, and some for having been no less credulous than light in meting out sentences, and others for not having judged properly because of insufficient knowledge. But those in whom there is no conscious evil are demoted to minor offices; the old and unwell are sent home to rest; and those who live without any shame whatever, whether they live so themselves or their families, and those who do not observe or keep the decorum proper to their tasks, are cut off. This examination is made solemnly at least once each five years.

The other order is that of the peasants. They cultivate the land diligently for all the kinds of fruit we have except olives and almonds, which are said not to be found anywhere in that country. They grow all sorts of grain, but rice more than any other, it generally being their ordinary sustenance. With it they also make wine, distilling its substance. And they drink it after heating it over fire, putting a tin flask full of this wine into boiling water. And although they also have

wheat, they make no bread, but eat it in various other ways as one more food, often as an accompaniment to rice, which, when there are many dishes, often is the last to be eaten, cooked simply in water as the Japanese do it.

Throughout the year, many varying fruits abound, especially oranges, which are better and of more sorts than ours, among them being one larger than a football. But the rare part of it is the stuff inside, all red like scarlet and of admirable flavor, and having a rind two fingers thick. They also have ordinary oranges, sweet and having a very thin skin and no seeds. Nothing better of this sort could be wished for for the sick, nor anything adapted better to quenching thirst, given that the flavor and juice of these are admirable. The other fruits native to the region are infinite in number. But the best in the view of many are those which are called *mangas* all through India and also by the Portuguese. These have a much-prized and savory flavor and odor, and also are healthful.

These are no larger than the largest pears, but are made in the shape of a fresh almond, with a green skin, smooth and not hairy, and have that same reddish color. The fruit tends a little toward the aromatic. And when it is not yet ripe, it is eaten like green almonds, tender in its skin, and it has the same somewhat acid flavor and taste. From it they make various good condiments for foods, using it instead of verjuice to give them a similar flavor. And when they are ripe, they are peeled like our figs, but what then remains is a yellow thing, almost like a quince in color and flavor, but much more tender, and having a nut in its flesh, from which it is not free, but to which it remains clinging. They have another fruit that they call *lechia*,* very pleasant both in flavor and in healthfulness, as are many of the fruits in those regions, which can be eaten

* Translator's note. Clearly the litchi or leechee.

in any quantity desired, as they do not cloy or produce bad results. These are about the size of plums, but have a solid, rough skin with a texture like that of the fruit of the strawberry tree,* red and green in color. And they are easy to peel. What is inside is a thing like a grape, not very sweet in flavor, watery, as refreshing and pleasing as possible.

These produce a very smooth wine. In the center they have a seed as large as an olive, but with a coating and pith almost like those of an acorn, and of a dark tawny color. I bought a large quantity of these in the hope of growing such a fine tree and fruit in this region, especially as, growing in bunches on the branches of their trees, they make a fine appearance and a beautiful sight. Finally, they have figs, pears, plums, peaches—all of which, when unripe, make admirable sweetmeats, which they do particularly with the pears and peaches. Although they do not make grapes into wine, they eat them, keeping them prepared and dried throughout the year. And everywhere in those fields, which they till mostly by using buffalo and horses, there are many sorts of trees. But I shall tell you of only one, which was on the plaza where stood the church of the Jesuits in Amacao. I saw that tree lose all of its leaves in one morning, and at that instant the new foliage opened out, it having grown to some size before the old foliage fell, but curled up in such a manner and position that it was not visible, so that at one moment it seemed as tender and fresh as though it had been created and budded on that very day on which it all uncurled at one moment.

All sorts of meat abound, furthermore, but the most prized among them is that of swine, which many fatten by giving them grain to eat. And they also offer them in their sacrifices to their idols, together with other sorts of meat and other things to eat, such as rice, fruit, wine, chickens, geese, and

* Translator's note. *Arbutus unedo*.

ducks, of which there are so many that they are sold exclusively by weight. And the chickens are not worth more than two or three *conderini* each, the ducks one or two *conderini*. All of these items, together with other sorts of birds having beautiful plumage and better meat—in particular, certain kinds of partridge, very different in every way from ours in plumage and size, but much the same in flesh and flavor, they take to their churches prepared, skinned, and cleaned. And after having offered them to the idols by placing them on an altar or table, which they often carry there with them, they then take them back and carry them to their houses after having spoken and made many ceremonies.

At home they have little more to do to them than to set to cooking them, almost sanctified by that offering, which they make the first day of the new moon of each month, which they call *gua* and represent by this character: 月. And the sun they call *gier*, with this other character: 日. And the stars, *sen*, in this way: 星. And the sky *fohon*, in this manner: 天. And when they offer the abovementioned things during some solemn feast, they eat them near the idol, as I saw them do in Amacao, out in the countryside, in a certain place dedicated to their idol. Some huge stones were there, with golden characters carved into them, a simulacrum of that idol, which is called *Ama*. And thus the name of the island, Amacao, which means place of the idol *Ama*. And that feast is made the first day of the new moon of March, which is their new year, and is celebrated throughout that kingdom as its most important festival.

They make the year of twelve moons, and every three years they add a moon, so that the third year comes to have thirteen moons. They divide the year, as we do, into four seasons, calling the spring *zohon*, represented by this character: 春; the summer, *ab*, by this one: 夏; the autumn,

chiuh, with this one: 秋; and the winter, *tonh*, with this other one: 冬.

Besides the idols, they also have two other sorts of religions, that is, the one of Pythagoras,* which has no less authority than the others. It is said that there are more than three thousand priests—or, to say it better, ministers—of this religion, not to mention the monasteries of women, like nuns among us. They all lead a sterile life, in imitation of the founder, who introduced it. They say of him that he never ate anything but cooked rice, and sometimes raw rice, and that to do greater penitence he always wore an iron chain tight against his flesh, where it had made such a sore that it became putrid, generating and nourishing a quantity of worms. And if one of those worms happened to fall to the ground, he would pick it up lovingly and with charity and put it back in the sore, saying: "Why are you fleeing? Are you perhaps lacking something to eat?"

And after his death, they built him a temple (as is the custom of that country to do for all such men as have done good in their own way or some public way). There they preserve his body like that of a sainted man. There are more than a thousand religious there under a rule of life like that of monks. And from all over the kingdom the people who belong to this sect go there on pilgrimages of devotion. The other sect is that of those who adore the lord of the heavens and the earth, and nearly all the educated men and philosophers profess it.† In their houses they prepare certain chapels with open roofs so that they can see the sky, which they adore as a simulacrum of God, who has made it, along with everything else. They believe that no one should adore or

* Translator's note. Buddhism.

† Translator's note. Shinto.

render honor to idols, who are men like ourselves, but who are regarded as they are because they were presented that way by a usage invented by some ancient philosophers who judged it impossible to introduce religion and ways of prayer among the multitudes of ignorant men without some simulacra or images, which always are made to represent people, never animals.

No one is forced to believe in or profess belief in these images, nor in any other religious sect, but each one follows whatever way pleases him most. They also say that by observing all three one can form a single perfect one. They also make use of five elements—that is, earth, which they call *to-uch* and represent by this character: 土; water, called *zuii*, with this one: 水; fire, called *hab*, with this one: 火; and instead of air they place all sorts of metals, which they represent with this character: 金, calling it *kien*. For the final element they add together all the kinds of trees, calling it *boch*, with this other character: 木. Further, they show rain, thunder, and lightning with these three characters: the first they call *vu*, 雨; the second *duii*, 雷; and the third *bzi*, 電.

They eat all sorts of animals, even dogs, which they hold to be a healthful, good meat, as also that of horses, mules, and asses, though they also have all the other varieties that we have. But cattle and buffalo they kill very unwillingly because of religion and because they serve agriculture. They are not very cleanly, though they also usually eat with the two sticks, like the Japanese. They sit on chairs and benches in their houses and at their tables. Without tablecloths or napkins, they put the foods on the table by carrying them in earthenware plates and bowls called porcelain. And they drink various sorts of adulterated wines in little bowls, sipping them hot. I tasted a certain one that was given to me by

the aforementioned Jesuit Father Lazzaro Cataneo, who had brought it in an earthenware vase from the city of Peking.

It was very good, and he asserted that it was made from sixty-six different ingredients. And it truly was a delicate drink, having various flavors. They also use *cha*, not powdered as the Japanese use it, nor having that superstition about the vases for preserving it, but cooking the leaf in water and then drinking that decoction hot. They have an abundance of fresh-water and salt-water fish, those from lakes (some of them so large as to seem seas) as well as those from streams and rivers, of which the entire country is full. And one can go almost everywhere by river, so that they travel very little overland on horses, which they do not shoe and nearly all of which are gelded. They also make use of certain carts with a single wheel, and these are pushed from behind by a single man, and thus they proceed through the countryside, which is flat.

There are also quantities of oysters, and especially of a variety so large that each one of them weighs more than two pounds. Finally, they have an abundance of every kind of good for the body, to which they seek to give every sort of pleasure and the amusement of festivals and comedies, which they very often perform in the public streets, where they erect platforms and magnificently decorated scenery. In the recital of a single history they often go on for fifteen and twenty successive days, never closing up day or night. And while one group of the actors is reciting, the other group is resting, eating, and sleeping so as to be able to proceed with the festival, which they present sung in verse, as is their custom.

Anyone who knows something of music understands better what is being said, as they have so many speeches, tones, and accents that use the same word for setting forth different

meanings that these are better understood when written than as spoken. And for that reason, each person tries to express his ideas by writing them, and embassies by word of mouth are but rarely sent, they nearly always being in writing, so that writing is used more in that country than elsewhere in the world, and perhaps is most ancient there. And these comedies are presented in the manner of those in which the characters appear on the stage in masks and superbly dressed, but without speaking at all, accompanying only with motions of the hands and of the body the words being spoken in the theater.

They do not lack musical instruments of their own sort, or intermezzos pleasing, ridiculous, and beautiful, with costumes no less sumptuous than strange in shape, which scarcely are to be comprehended as one sees them, not to mention describing them. Further, they add pantomime, which many of them do miraculously with the body and by dexterity of the hands and feet. But all these things are placed after the pleasures to be found with one or another Venus. And although they take only one legitimate wife, with whom they make their life, having been selected by their parents when still children of the same age, so that later it would be possible for them to consummate the marriage, but never having been asked for their own agreement to the match—besides this wife, with whom they much desire to have children because of the horror that they feel over not having heirs and children to carry on their family, they nonetheless have many other women, who are represented by this character: 𠄎. These are called *du*, and are kept as concubines in various locations where the men think that they may have to be on business. These women they buy and sell as it pleases them.

Such men as are poor or otherwise have not the habit of buying women—all the artisans and other little people—go to

be with those who have many slaves. And they take one of them for wife, given to them by her owner, to whom all the couple's children will belong. But an owner is obliged to release a slave, male or female, if at any time he or she is able to restore to him the price he has paid. These artisans and other little people, driven by poverty, are the ones who sell their children for two or three ducats each. Others of them, apparently feeling greater pity, drown their children as soon as they are born, particularly if they are females, not wanting to be forced to see them living in dishonor. Those who act in this latter way are of the Pythagorean sect, and they hold that by causing them to die in that way they assure the return of their spirits, which will be reborn in other bodies of higher fortune. This, which with us would be an impiety, seems to them—as, indeed, they must hold it to be—a religious piety. But I do not understand how, in doing this, they get around the precept of their sect of not killing any living thing. It is said, too, that many of them commit suicide for the same reason: to escape from misery and exchange this evil state for another, better one. Perhaps some interpretation of their belief permits them to commit this act for a good purpose.

However that may be, I go back to talk of their marriages. The man always gives a dowry to his first wife, and this is called *cam*, and with this character: 𠄎. And they do not avoid marrying close relatives, it being sufficient that they not be from the same household, a thing that they avoid even if they are not related. With this order, I believe—but do not know it for certain—that a brother and sister can marry though born of the same mother, but not if they have the same father. On the other hand, cousins born of two brothers cannot marry, nor can others of much more remote relationships, as I have said, if they come from the same family or

household. So I conclude that the male is the one who determines blood affinity and relationship, not the female.

The women are said to be very beautiful and well made, but all have the small eyes that are most prized among them. The men are so jealous of these women that they never allow them to see anyone, not even their close relatives. And when they go out, they are carried in closed chairs and never make use of coaches or carriages, which are prohibited by law of the country and are not seen. Nor can these women walk very much, as they have their feet bound from the time when they are tiny, so that the feet cannot grow. They bind them up with very tight strips, and they do this saying that women should be attached to the household affairs and should not go outside to seek amusement. Adultery is punished both in them and in the men, who are not very handsome of face, having tiny eyes and a flattened nose. They have either no beard at all or a small one consisting of thirty or thirty-five black hairs, sparse, long, and uneven, and hanging from the chin and the upper lip in an ugly fashion.

Although they do not take the trouble to comb these beards, on the other hand they comb the hair on their heads every day, as the women do, after which, rolling it together, they wind it around their head. And at the end of it they stick a silver stiletto, so that the braid that they have made of the hair may not come unwound. And they never remove these except when they go to sleep. Meeting one another on the street, they give greeting by making a fist with the left hand, the nails of which—that is, the nails of three fingers, the middle, ring, and little finger—they allow to grow until they touch the wrist. And holding them motionless as though they were crippled, they cannot unfold them. And by this they demonstrate themselves to be persons well off and ennobled by the dignity of letters, persons having to perform

no mechanical duties or other manual acts so as to live. They move the left-hand fist to the right hand and then move the two together to the chest or raise both arms in a semicircle toward the person whom they are saluting. And the more they raise their arms and move their head forward, the more honor they show. In their hand they always carry a fan, as women do among us in the summer. But they do it the whole year round. And it serves them to create a breeze, to keep off the sun, and as an ornament, as gloves serve us. And these fans are so abundant that they often reach Europe. And they could be used for loading ships with very good and very cheap merchandise, as the material of which they are made is nothing but cane and painted and gilded leaves.

They play various games on checkerboards almost like ours, and also one of another kind, with a large number of pieces that make up a large army. To play one of these games through takes many hours, as it does the games of cards, which are different from ours, and of dice, which are like ours. Playing with these last, they pick them up with the points of their fingers and throw them into a porcelain bowl, six at a time, casting them down with an effect and efficacy quite out of the ordinary, and a great waste of time. But time rather than materials would be lacking for me to discourse on the innumerable and varied matters of such huge provinces, of which I perhaps have spoken at too great length. That has happened because I have put into this, my own simple chronicle, part of the things that are found written in the abovementioned books of the geography of China. Of them, together with the things that I have not had time to interpret, Your Highness one day will be able to make an orderly volume to contain them, taking advantage of the occasion when some religious may arrive from those parts and know and understand those hieroglyphic characters.

To bring this chronicle to an end, I say that over that sea during some years there reign through the summer certain winds that the Portuguese call *tuffoni*,* and which are a fury of winds that blow from all parts of the horizon and in less than twenty-four hours run through all the winds of the compass. Now one, now another, they blow with such vehemence that they uproot large trees, ruin houses, capsize all the ships in the harbors, and drive those which are at sea wherever the force of wind and waves wishes, without sails and without helm. And in the end, most of the ships go irretrievably under, as has happened often. And in the year 1599, on the twenty-eighth of July, while I was in the city of Macao, I saw more than ten or twelve houses ruined by the water and the force of the typhoon wind, which the Castilians in the Philippine Islands call *buracán*.

The houses, though formed of earth and quicklime mixed together, nevertheless are fortified every arm's length or so with partitions of stone set in lime. And the walls are plastered with this, inside and out, and then are covered with tiles completely, in the Spanish manner. The wind, having blown with such fury that it was impossible to walk in the streets or even to show one's face, and having run around the entire circuit of the compass of the winds, settled into that of the north. Thus it continued for two days, during which, in addition to causing great damage and capsizing vessels all along that coast and in the harbors of China, it also brought about the loss of a fleet that had reached the harbor of Amacao from the kingdom of Siam. It was loaded with the wood commonly called red dyewood, which in their country they call *sapan*.†

The Siamese sailors escaped from that fleet with great dif-

*Translator's note. Typhoons, from the Portuguese *tufao*.

†Translator's note. Sapanwood, *Caesalpinia sappan*, sometimes called brazilwood.

ficulty, and with their women, whom they are used to taking with them when they set out on long voyages. Among all other nations, only this nation can come to China with ships. And these are very large, and are called *junks*, and they use them to carry their merchandise to be sold to the Chinese, which consists of quantities of goat leather, in which their country abounds, as it does in the aforesaid red dyewood. And they also carry many nose-horns of the rhinoceros, an animal of which their region is full. And they believe that if they make a vase from one of these horns and then drink from it, it has the virtue of purifying—or, to say it better, of overcoming the force of the poison that may be in—the drink, so that poison loses its power. In exchange for these and other items, they buy from the Chinese cotton cloths and silken materials and musk and porcelain earthenware, that of the heaviest sort, and endless other merchandise that they take back to their country, most of it, as I understood, being for the account of their king.

In my time, I was told of that king by those vassals of his that he had had almost all of his concubines, of whom he had had a great number, fried in oil in copper pots because it had been discovered and found out that they were pleasuring themselves with certain appropriate fruits. And this is not to be marveled at for other reasons, but in particular because the women of that kingdom are accustomed to taking pleasure with their men by the use of no less peculiar things, a custom that they have taken from the people of Pegú, a kingdom now destroyed by the King of Siam, as in its place I shall relate to Your Highness.

Those people, using an ancient invention designed by a queen to rule out and render impossible the practicing of venery in illicit parts of the body even with men, ordered that each man must have stitched between the skin and the

flesh of his member two or three rattles as large as large hazelnuts, these made in round or oval shape. And in these rattles—which I have seen made of gold—there is a pellet of iron. When these rattles are moved, they give off a dull sound because they are without holes, being like two shells fastened together delicately and masterfully. And they have this little pellet inside, and are called rattles because they make this sound.

And these rattles, placed, as I have said, under the skin, which then is sewed together and allowed to heal, have the result of enlarging the member, as anyone can imagine. And the women desire them for these reasons and others that are to be thought of rather than spoken, as being helpful to pleasure. And that this is an invention by women is proved particularly by the fact that women are the masters of placing and adjusting these rattles. And this is confirmed by Nicolò de' Conti, who, during his voyages, which he described in the year 1444 by command of Pope Eugenius IV,* says that in the kingdom of Pegú, in the city of Hava,† certain old women had no other calling than that of selling these rattles, which were of gold, silver, or gilded copper and were as small as small nuts. (I said that they were large because that was true of those which I saw, but perhaps in those earlier times they were content with these small ones or, as he says, placed a number of them, up to ten or twelve, inside the member, a thing that does not seem possible.)

And this was done when the youth was at the age to be able to indulge in venery or to marry, performed by the

* Translator's note. Niccolò dei Conti, a Venetian noble, traveled in the East Indies from 1419 to 1444. The story of his wanderings—which he was ordered to write by Eugenius IV as penance for his earlier forced abjuration of Christianity—were published in 1723 as *Historiae de Varietate Fortunae*.

† Translator's note. Now the ruined city of Ava, on the Irawaddy River in Upper Burma, this was the capital of Burma as late as 1837.

hands of the aforesaid women, who placed these rattles between the flesh and the skin, they being made of gold or of other metals according to the man's station. And without them a man would be rejected, but with them he would be accepted in marriage and to the women's intimacy. The women much fondled men thus equipped, but the contrary with others. And the aforementioned Nicolò says that he was asked if he wished to be equipped with these rattles, but answered that he had no desire to do harm to himself so as to be able to give pleasure to others. And also with regard to this being desired by the women, Amerigo Vespucci, who discovered Brazil, wrote in one of his letters to Piero Soderini that the women of that country, being extremely concupiscent, give the men a certain herb juice to drink so as to increase the size of their members, and that if that juice does not succeed, they had the member bitten or stung by poisonous animals. But I brought some of these rattles as proof, and they also have been taken to Holland by those who travel in those regions. And it is a certain thing and absolutely true that this diabolic invention was made and is used by the women of that country.

Leaving that subject, I return to that of China, and thus bring an end to this chronicle. And I say that while I was there, I noted a great eclipse, which occurred in the year 1599, on the sixth of August. On that Friday evening I saw the moon blotted out almost entirely, it having been full when it appeared over the horizon. And this lasted about two hours. It was of a reddish color, much inflamed, and the little of it that remained clear was on the northern side. In that same year, in the month of December, the time having come round for the departure of the ships that go from China to Goa, I took thought of embarking on one of them, loading

on two ships that departed that year the goods that I had bought, and myself embarking on one of them for the journey to India, as I shall recount to Your Highness during the next chronicle of this voyaging, but I shall now bring this one to its conclusion if you do not order me otherwise.

THIRD CHRONICLE OF THE EAST INDIES

Which treats of the voyage made from the island of Macao in China to Malacca and thence to Goa, and of what occurred during that voyage



At the end of yesterday's chronicle, I told Your Highness briefly of how I embarked on a ship leaving China for India. And that was at the period of weather which is called the monsoon, which is a path of wind that continues to blow for three or four months unceasingly, never letting up or changing. And because of it one navigates according to the season—toward the south, as it happens, from the month of April to that of July, and at the other time toward the north, as it happens, from the month of December up to that of March. In that season of the year 1599 two Portuguese ships were being loaded which had reached Macao from Goa, as takes place each year. They were commanded by a Portuguese captain, pilot, coxswain, mate, and other officers, but were manned by Arab, Indian, Turkish, and Bengali sailors, who gladly serve for so much per month, taking care of their own expenses under the rule of their head man, who commands them and whom they call their *saranghi*,* and who

* Translator's note. Up to the twentieth century, Anglo-Indians referred to an East Indian skipper or boatswain as a serang, from the Persian word *sarhang*, meaning commander.

also belongs to one of the aforementioned nations. They make their understandings with him, recognize and obey him, so that even the Portuguese captain, the master and pilot of the ship, is commanded by this *saranghi*.

And they all embark with their wives or concubines, which as a sight is no less indecent than filthy and unseemly, and which causes such confusions as it is impossible to make clear. This in addition to the discomfort of the whole ship, and particularly of the passengers, to whom this evil example causes no little scandal, and especially to new Christians, who see this offense done to God while they are navigating at such great peril through those seas and who so recently have learned that one should behave otherwise. But the need in that region for men ready for that activity forces the owners of those ships to make use of these men and to permit them these disgraceful things, they being unable to do anything else.

And similarly I was forced to embark on one of those ships, on which I loaded half of my possessions, placing the rest on the other ship, which left soon after the one on which I embarked, but then for lack of wind remained in Malacca and moved no farther forward that year or until the monsoon of the next year. We reached this Malacca after twenty days of prosperous navigation, having passed on our right hand the coast of the kingdom of Cochin China, those of Champa* and Cambodia and Siam and Patani, and other maritime lands and places along that coast and continent, until we reached the peninsula that the ancients called Aurea Chersonesso.† There the city of Malacca lies, two degrees and a

* Translator's note. The ancient kingdom (third century to late fifteenth century) of the Chams, the modern south Annam.

† Translator's note. Chersonesus Aurea was an ancient name for the Malay Peninsula.

half toward the north. And from Macao, whence we had departed, it is at a distance of 1,500 miles.

During that voyage nothing to report occurred except that, we having passed the Strait of Singapore, located at one degree and a half between terra firma and various islets close to Sumatra, in a channel so narrow that one could leap from the ship to the land and that branches of trees on either side touched us, our ship ran aground. But as the bottom was muddy, no harm was done. And by pulling the ship backward by using capstans fastened to the anchor lines—which for that purpose were cast from the poop—we removed it from the beach of terra firma. Then, having left the island of Sumatra on our left hand, we continued our voyage. And we reached the fortress of Malacca, hard by the very large river that surrounds it on one side.

All the merchants and passengers aboard the ship went ashore, and I with the others, to feast on good hens and pullets, both of which have an exquisite flavor in that land. And we further ate very good and varied fruit, among which was the *durione*,* which is the product of a huge tree and is a much-prized fruit in that land and very much celebrated in such other lands as do not have it. And to me it seemed at first—as it seems to everyone the first time that it is eaten—to have an unpleasant smell very much like that of onions. I did not care for it, and it seemed to me laughable to have heard it earlier, and to be hearing it then, so praised by those who were accustomed to eating it. Additionally, it is not very pleasant to the touch or to the eye, it having a prickly rind, bumpy like a pine cone, and very pungent.

The inner pulp is almost liquid in substance and is white, but very delightful to the taste of those who first have become

* Translator's note. The durian or durion, *Durio zibethinus*.

inured to its smell. And once I had become accustomed to it, I ate this fruit and found it very pleasant. And I confirmed what the others said, that one cannot enjoy any simple, natural thing that seems more made up and artificial than this fruit. For each person who eats it finds in it different flavors and odors. Thus what seemed to me to be the odor of onions seemed to others to be something else—just as later, with habit, it came to seem to me a very different, very pleasant thing. However, during the twenty days that I remained in that place I did not eat many of them, as I had not a single day of good health, this because of the inclemency of that sky and the pestiferousness of that air for all those arriving there newly, that land lying so close to the equinoctial line as to have continual rain accompanied by a burning sun.

And the season remains the same, even throughout the entire year. And this keeps the fields always green and producing the many exquisite fruits, which are much better, even when they are of the same species, than in the other parts of India. This is especially true of those which they call *ananas* and which the Castilians in the West Indies call *piñas*.^{*} This fruit is as large as a large pine cone, and of the same shape. It is produced by a plant in the way the artichoke is produced, with curly leaves, hard and very green and full of thorns. When the skin of this fruit—which, like its leaves, is rough and pungent (but nevertheless is tender and easily peeled off with a knife)—has been removed very artfully, what is left is cut across in wheel-shaped slices. And these fruits are of a bittersweet flavor that is extremely delicate. And so that they may be less harmful for their heat, these wheel slices are washed first in fresh water, after which a little salt is sprinkled over them. And in this way they can be

^{*} Translator's note. Pineapples.

eaten with better flavor and less harm, the fact being that if they are eaten otherwise, they are likely to generate malign fevers and fluxes of the blood, their juice being so heating and corrosive that one very often has the experience with the knives used to cut this fruit that, having left them uncleaned, one shortly afterward finds them eaten away with rust. And I have seen preserves of this fruit in Your Highness's pantry.

In that place is to be found a native fruit that they call *jambos*,^{*} which now also are to be found in Goa. One could call this fruit a joke on Nature's part, it wanting to counterfeit and to demonstrate how a woman's complexion ought to be. For this fruit is of a pink color mixed with milky white, and it has a very lustrous skin, as delicate as could be desired. It is of a size like that of our eggplant and has an odor like that of a rose, so that if one eats it without peeling it, its juice seems to have been flavored with rose water. And it delights the taste, being of a bittersweetness that never sates or nauseates one even if one devotes an entire day to eating it. And touching it also provides not a little delight, for one cannot touch anything more delicate or softer. And as for looking at it, there is no other mixture of white and pink which brings more delight to the eyes or is more like the flesh of a beautiful woman's face—more likely made up, as most of them are in our time, than natural. So that while enjoying this fruit and discarding a seed that is inside it, one comes to the extreme delight of four of our senses at one and the same time.

In Malacca there are also many other fruits, such as the *mangostani*,[†] extremely good for satisfying thirst, and furthermore of a similarly admirable taste and savor. Wanting to

^{*} Translator's note. The rose apple (*Eugenia jambos* or *Syzygium jambos*), actually a large berry.

[†] Translator's note. The mangosteen, *Garcinia mangostana*.

compare it, I find this not possible, as I can find no resemblances appropriate to it. And for this reason it is impossible for me to carry out my wish to describe many sorts of fruits found in that country, but so different from ours.

But that land is, above all, noblest for the traffic in spices and all other sorts of dry groceries, which grow there all through the Molucca Islands, five of which supply cloves—that is, Ferrenate, Fidor, Mottin, Machian, and Bacchin,* located between the two degrees north of the equinoctial line, within a space of about eight miles. One of them can be seen from the other, and none of them measures more than eighteen or twenty miles around. From other nearby places comes pepper, brought thither by people from Pacén, Pedir, Acén, and Andregghi,† places on the island of Sumatra, which is enormous, a trip around it measuring two thousand miles.

There they use a certain sort of oared vessel that I think should be mentioned, even if only as a curiosity. They call these *caracolí*,‡ and we should call them brigantines with reference to their shape and size, though they are very different in the way they are furnished with oars. For though there are three or four persons on each bench, each one manages his own oar, which is made like a wooden shovel and which they dip into the water straight down, in the way one uses a spade. And they sit on certain mats that project beyond the vessel itself, one next to the other, with their faces toward the vessel's poop. And they make the vessel move swiftly by all thrusting their poles into the water at the same time, singing

* Translator's note. Seemingly Ternate, Tidore, Morotai, Makian, and Batjan.

† Translator's note. The first, third, and fourth of these places may be Padang, Atjeh, and Inderagiri; it appears impossible even to guess at the identity of the second.

‡ Translator's note. Perhaps carracks or caracks, from the Arabic *qarāqir* the plural of *qarqār*, meaning merchant ship.

as is their way. The vessels are in strange shapes, such as those of fantastic animals and birds that never have been seen, beautifully carved, and so light that they seem to fly over those seas. And the counterweight of the people—that is, of those who row—makes it difficult for them to capsize, as the people, resting on the mats that project beyond the vessel, balance it.

Pepper also comes from the region of Giambi,* on the coast opposite Malacca, and also from Sunda and other islands and places in which the plant that produces it is cultivated abundantly. It grows near a tree, to which the plant clings as peas do, though these grow much larger and have leaves very like those of our beans, but more round. The grains of pepper grow attached to the stalk, like bunches of small grapes, in two orders or rows of grains, and they remain green until they are fully ripe, which they become in the month of January. Then they turn black, though another sort always stays white, and that is the variety most prized by those Indians. While still green, both kinds are fixed in vinegar with salt and eaten as we eat capers, to whet the appetite. And they also have an admirable effect in comforting and warming the stomach. Cloves also reach there, brought from the Moluccas, where they grow, and from Gilolo,† and though the trees of the clove are found in many other places, nonetheless they say that they bear fruit only in the above-mentioned islands.

The tree resembles that of our bay laurel and produces a great abundance of flowers, which are the cloves themselves, on the ends of the branches. These, which have a very smooth odor, are white at first, then become green, and soon turn tawny. Finally, hardened by time, they turn dark, almost

* Translator's note. Djambi, on the Sumatran coast.

† Translator's note. The present-day Halmahera.

wholly black, as one ordinarily sees them in Europe. The people collect them there, knocking them off the trees in September, and up to January and February. Without being cultivated, the trees sprout from cloves that fall to the ground wild and in the space of eight or ten years, assisted by the abundance of rain and heat, they quickly grow large and produce the fruits. And they last for a hundred years and more.

Thus also, from the island of Banda, which gives its name to the other four islands near it, all located within five degrees from the equinoctial line in the direction of the Antarctic pole, come nutmeg and mace, which grow there on a single tree. It produces this nut, which is covered with a shell as hard as that produced by our walnuts, but is thicker and rounder. With that husk still on it (that part which we call the shell), and while the nuts still are unripe, the whole thing is made into a conserve with sugar. And this is much prized, and is made out of the whole thing complete, with the husk, the mace, and the nut. Inside the husk one finds first a white coating that covers the nut, which is red until it is very dry, when it becomes gold-colored—and that is what is called mace or *massa*. And all this is brought thither by those Indians from Java, dealers in all the other varieties of spices and dry groceries and in many other kinds of merchandise in such great abundance that all the streets and houses of Malacca are full of these things, having a fragrance and an odor of aromatic things which offends the brain of anyone not inured to it, to whom it is very bothersome.

From those spices, dry groceries, and many other sorts of merchandise, the captain-governor of Malacca, a Portuguese gentleman sent out for three years by the King of Spain, makes an incredible profit, given the fact that no one but this cap-

tain can buy these spices from the Indians who bring them there. Most of them, as I have said, are from the island of Java. They come from the port of Baton* with an infinite number of their vessels, loaded and with so large a number of men that they raise the suspicions of the Portuguese living in Malacca. And for that reason the Portuguese do not allow them to enter the circuit of their little walled city, with its good fortress, lest they rise up against them, as they well may be burning to do, they being not only very numerous but also for the most part of the Mohammedan religion, as courageous and bellicose as whatsoever other Indian nation, and by nature treacherous and scornful of death, to which they pay small heed. For that reason, with great care and order, the Portuguese citizens of Malacca stand at the gates of the city, with vigilance making very sure that the aforesaid young men do not enter in, but only some of their chiefs to carry on the dealings for all the others, and they accompanied by a few others among them, but with no arms other than a small dagger that they call *cris*.†

These daggers are made in various charming shapes, with blades of exquisite temper, of iron worked in a wavy form, and most of them are dipped into poisonous herbs, so that if blood is drawn, one dies rabid no matter how small the wound. They carry these in wooden sheaths prettily worked and painted on the outside with beautiful and attractive designs, all decorated with the finest gold, of which they also make the pommel, which is encrusted with precious stones. And these Javanese remain on the outskirts of the city all day, there where many houses have been delightfully located in the fresh air among the trees. These are built of wood, as

* Translator's note. Bandung.

† Translator's note. The creese (from the Malay word *kris*), a short dagger with a serpentine blade.

also are the houses inside the city. And then at night they return to their vessels, on board which the abovementioned Portuguese captain sends his men to buy the spices, which for the most part are cloves, nutmeg, and mace. They pay for them at the going prices, giving certain kinds of cotton cloths painted in various colors, these being of the sort that those Indians use for their clothing. No sooner has the captain concluded this transaction than he returns to sell to the Portuguese merchants at a higher price all the spices that he has bought, taking in exchange those cotton cloths which those merchants bring thither from India—that is, from the coast of São Tomé* and Coromandel—and which he uses, as told above, to trade with the Javanese.

And thus he makes a gain of from seventy to eighty per cent over the first purchase made from the Javanese through his authority or, to say it better, through his power and absolute command, and up to the sale that he then makes to the aforementioned Portuguese merchants. So that without any capital and without any risk whatever, but with the merchandise of others, by buying at sea and selling on land, he makes the abovementioned profit all at once, putting into this dealing nothing but words. And very often while his term lasts (which, as I have said, is for three years, granted to him by the grace and mercy of the King as repayment for the services which such gentlemen have given during the wars in India, either themselves or in the persons of their ancestors), one of them becomes rich, taking away more than 250,000 or 300,000 scudos and returning with them to India and thence to rest in Lisbon, if only fortune allows him to be able to enjoy his riches in his own country. But very often when they wish to go home they are swallowed up by the

* Translator's note. São Tomé was a Portuguese fortified place on the Coromandel Coast of India. It now is within the city limits of Madras.

sea or robbed by corsairs, as befell me, as I shall recount to Your Serene Highness at the proper place.

Many bezoar stones* are offered for sale in Malacca, and I bought among others one of good quality and size, at Your Serene Highness's request, as I also did a so-called "porcupine stone" or "Malacca stone," it not being found anywhere but there, in the province of Pan. These stones are of marvelous efficacy against all varieties of poison, and most particularly against that sickness which in India itself they call *mordiscin*.† This is a species of colic which comes on with such violence that it kills in a few hours unless some remedy is found to make the sick man evacuate, either by vomiting or by anal secretion. Otherwise one is rent by pain, though for this evil they also have an herb, which they call by the same name, *mordiscin*.

The abovementioned stone is also good for the ailments of women's wombs, and thus for malign fevers. And for all these evils it is applied by being placed in ordinary water. Being left there for two Credos, it gives the water a bitter taste, so that when it is drunk it improves the patients admirably. This stone, improperly so called, resembles a bitumen—or, to say it better, it rather resembles a ball of soap, being soft. And it is consumed if it is left in water. Most of these stones are of a dark yellow color and a bitterish flavor, which one feels immediately upon touching one of them with the tip of one's tongue. And they say that it comes from the porcupine's bile. It is greatly prized among the Indians because the stones are seen only rarely and are very few in number.

* Translator's note. Solid concretions found in the alimentary canals of some ruminant mammals, and formerly believed to have important medicinal properties.

† Translator's note. Asiatic cholera, also called mordisheen.

And the one that I bought, which weighed only one quarter of an ounce, cost me eighty gold scudos, and I got it as a favor. I bought the bezoar stone for the same amount of money, and it weighed two ounces. Those Indians use the bezoars without breaking them up or pulverizing them, but merely by rubbing them on a stone moistened with a little water. Then they remove little pieces in the manner that, by order of Your Highness, I showed to your physicians and then ordered in that gallery that the abovementioned stone be broken up where the bezoar should be. And then they drink that water, incorporated into which remains that which has been taken from the stone without ruining it—and then, once the stone has been weighed, one easily determines how much of it has been used up. Thus what remains can be kept whole and not be broken. And it is consumed only little by little in the quantity desired, and according to the need.

Finally, there are many other kinds of medicinal drugs and marvelous antidotes, of roots and seeds and herbs, all of which turn up in that place, which is a receiving point for the whole austral Orient. Stops are made there by all the ships that go to and come from China, Japan, the Moluccas, and other places and islands, beginning at India and going up to the aforementioned Malacca, where, whether one unloads merchandise or not, one nevertheless pays a passage customs to the King of Spain, at the rate of seven per cent. And that we did, on everything on our ship, as it came from China and was proceeding to Goa. Having taken care of that, we returned to the ship and re-embarked, turning our way toward the Nicobar Islands, coasting Sumatra, and passing between the extreme tip of it and the islands mentioned (from which many barbarians came out in boats, bringing refreshments of fruits, beans, and other things to sell us, as well as some pieces of amber which were not very good, but were

falsified. And they exchanged all of this gladly for money or for other merchandise as it suited us, but everything in small quantities).

And passing into open water from those islands, we directed the prow toward the island of Ceylon, famous both for its mines of rubies, sapphires, and other precious gems and for cinnamon, which grows there abundantly on the trunk of a tree that has leaves like those of the peach tree. And very often when I found myself in a grove where there were such trees, I ate the leaf with pleasure as having the same flavor and odor as the bark of the cinnamon—which, when it is still green, can be distilled to produce a perfect liquor, as can the flowers of the said tree.

On the island, which is 240 miles long and 140 miles wide, but more than 700 miles in circumference, and which is located between the sixth and tenth degrees north of the equinoctial line, and which is very fertile in all good things, great quantities of elephants grow perfectly. And throughout India they are vaunted as the best, both in the calling of war and in the services of business and labor, in which they must use judgment, which is to be seen in them more than in any other animals. They seem to lack nothing but speech to become reasonable—or, to say it better, miraculous—animals, so well does one see by experience that they understand very well. For they do whatever they are commanded to do by whoever is managing and guiding them. A man, being on the back of one of them with a club in hand, in the end of which is a piece of iron fitted in the manner of a hook with which to touch the animal, now on the head, now on one jaw, and now on the other, can make it turn and go where he wishes, with the greatest obedience and fear, but accompanied by incredible intelligence and caution.

I have seen this often in the city of Goa, where some of

them always are in the service of that arsenal of the King, kept there at royal expense, being fed on cooked rice, but also feeding by pulling up and uprooting grass with their proboscis and then shaking it to free it of earth before putting it into their mouth and eating. But they eat more eagerly than anything else the cane from which sugar is made. And further, they eat many other fruits, picking them all with their proboscis, which the Portuguese call *tromba* and which serves them as hands. With it, in addition to putting whatever they wish into their mouth with agility and ease, they pick up from the ground whatever they want or are ordered to pick up. And anyone wanting to have them carry casks of wine, pieces of artillery, or other similar heavy objects, has only to tie up the thing with rope, which the elephant will take in its trunk and place in his mouth, between his teeth. Then, raising his head, he raises the greatest weight from the ground and carries it where it is wanted as he is guided by whoever is on his back.

The elephants also can be used for launching a ship into the water, making use of their strength to lean against it and push it. And it is not true that they have legs of one piece, without joints. Nor are the many other fables that have been written about them true, especially those concerning the way of capturing them. This is done simply, by gathering together a large quantity of people, surrounding the place where the elephants are, and thus taking them, alive or dead. And others of them are brought to the city by already domesticated female elephants. These, sent out into the forest, are followed by the males as they return home. And the males go right up to their stalls, where they then are locked up in a small space. And by means of beatings, shouts, and hunger, they are dominated and rendered docile. In this way they are freed of all ferocity, which is intolerable in them because of their

jealousy, which is so furious that their escape outside would be very evil. But this passion is cured marvelously by not giving them anything to eat.

Finally, continuing our voyage, we coasted the aforementioned island, of which we saw a good part. It proved to be a delicious country, well formed of smiling, completely green hills that make as attractive a sight as that of any country that I ever have seen. And leaving the coast of that island, we turned our way toward Cape Comorin, the famous promontory of the whole continent of the terra firma of India, which it divides into two coasts bathed by the sea—that is, the one that is toward the west, where Goa is, and the other, called that of São Tomé, toward the east. When it is summer on the former, there is winter on the other, which is full of many places and kingdoms as distant as Bengal, after which this gulf is named. Near that cape is the island of Manar,* and sea-pearls are fished from there to the aforementioned Comorin all along that coast for what could be the space of about fifty miles.

These pearls come precisely during the months of March and April in oysters that are taken by men who go down in water as much as fifteen or twenty sailors' arms deep, local men expert at this and under some suspicion of being great sorcerers because of the way they defend themselves from sharks, who do not touch or do any harm to those pearl fishers, whereas anyone else scarcely enters the water before they seize him. The oysters then are all placed together on the shore and the sand of the sea. And there, in the burning sun, they are left to die so that they can be opened more easily later. This occurs when the fishing is over. Removing the oysters, by then rotten, they take the pearls—which are found inside of the muscles to which the main flesh of the

* Translator's note. Mannar, an island at the Ceylon end of Adam's Bridge.

oyster is attached and which are continually moving as long as the oysters are alive. And I believe that this is the reason why the pearls, being turned round and round in there, become round. Then they are winnowed, assorted by size, quality, and every kind of perfection. And there always are Portuguese merchants there to buy the most beautiful and the best of them. The poorer ones are bought by the natives of the country.

The promontory is eight degrees north of the equinoctial line, and lies 1,300 miles from Malacca and 150 from Cochin, at which in the month of March of that same year 1599 we arrived, disembarking and remaining in that said Cochin some days so as to put on land that merchandise which was to be unloaded there. Then we re-embarked, and in a few days reached the island on which Goa is, 360 miles from Cochin, 2,000 from Malacca, and 3,500 miles from China, whence we had set out. And I shall save, for dealing with tomorrow, if it so please Your Serene Highness, that city of Goa and all the other particulars that come to my mind about India.

FOURTH CHRONICLE OF THE EAST INDIES

Dealing with the debarking and stay made in the city of Goa, up to embarking for Lisbon, and with all other particulars of the matters of India



Most Serene Lord, having dealt in the preceding chronicle, that of yesterday, with the voyage from China and up to the arrival at the city of Goa, now it is necessary that I take up that chronicle again and complete it by telling how I disembarked in that city, which is the metropolis and principal place of all those parts of the Orient which belong to the Portuguese. The viceroy resides there, sent from Portugal to govern those subject peoples for that crown, they themselves being also Portuguese and inhabiting all those coastlands and fortresses of the coast of India, beginning at the Cape of Good Hope and ending at China and Japan, with the islands called Moluccas and others spread throughout those seas, this according to the division of the world made by Pope Alexander VI, who divided it between the Castilians and the Portuguese by a line of latitude circling the whole earth from south to north, beginning 1,080 miles from the Cape Verde Islands on the west—and this is the part belonging to the Castilians, as discovered by the Genoese Christopher Columbus in the year 1491, whence he returned with a display of the things of that region in the year 1492, the

rulers then being Don Ferdinand and Doña Isabella, Kings of Castile. And the other part, toward the east, belongs to the Portuguese, having been discovered by them by sea in the year 1497, when the King Dom Manoel was ruling, and first by land by the King Dom João, his predecessor, both of them having been rulers of Portugal.

In the city of Goa, which is located on an islet not more than fifteen miles in circumference and at sixteen degrees of latitude toward the north, I took a house. The houses there are very comfortable and good to look at, as also are the churches, particularly those of the Jesuits, of which there are three. These are that of the Novitiate, which they also call Our Lady of the Rosary, a monastery called The Jesus, and a college called Saint Paul's. In my time, at least, they kept the blessed corpse of their Father Francis Xavier, one of the first religious of the Society of Jesus to go to preach the Holy Evangel in that Orient of China and Japan.

It was necessary for me to remain in this city longer than I had thought when leaving China, and the reason was that other ship, which, as I told Your Highness, was unable to pass Malacca because of the unfavorable weather, so that in those twenty months during which I remained there awaiting the rest of my merchandise, which I had loaded on that ship and left behind, I resolved to sell all the silk that I had brought from China with me. And I sent it to Cambay, where it was sold and earned me seventy per cent and more of what it had cost me in China. From Cambay I had them send me, by way of a merchant of the Gujarati nation with whom I had correspondence, an equal quantity of linen cloths of the sorts that they call *canichini*, *boffettani*, *semiane*, and other sorts good for Portugal, and various other manufactures of cotton, such as bedcovers embroidered with curious, very beautiful designs in workmanship of a fineness rarely seen,

which they also work on silk fabric. And I also had them send me a goodly quantity of things made of mountain crystal and other varieties of stones, such as blood agate, milk agate, and the like.

All this came from Cambay, a city located on the bank of the Indus River, in a latitude of twenty-three degrees north, it being about 450 miles distant from Goa. It is a land and region subject to the Great Mogul, monarch of the best and largest part of all that India, his dominion stretching even to Bengal, where the Ganges River is, and inland to the regions of Russia. And that is the king who buys all the balas rubies that are taken from all parts of the world to India, where they are sold to the great gain of those who sent or brought them there. He is so great a king that when he moves from one city to another, as happened in 1608—when he went from that of Lahore to that of Agra—it requires more than 200,000 men, 200,000 horses, and 6,000 elephants (which they also use for riding through the city, remaining seated on top with their feet folded under in the Moorish style, on rugs), and more than 40,000 camels, as well as oxen, which they use for carrying burdens, and almost innumerable other animals. And throughout the entire trip he always is housed in pavilions that are erected each evening and which, taken all together, make up an enormous city. I learned all this from a letter sent by a Jesuit who went on that voyage.

From Cambay the merchants of that country come to Goa each year with their merchandise in their own ships, and they all are gentle men, mostly Gujarati and Brahmins of that group that live according to the rules of Pythagoras and do not eat anything that lives or has the appearance of blood. They also carry a large quantity of diamonds, among which, Most Serene Lord, I saw one that was brought to Goa by an ambassador of the abovementioned Mogul king. It was

in the shape of a pyramid, and it weighed 160 *mangelini*, which is equal to two hundred carats, as the *mangelino* is the same as five of our grains, or one carat and a quarter. And from that diamond he wanted to have removed certain of their letters which were carved into it, so that it then could serve on the headguard of the king's horse. All the abovementioned merchandise is bought by the Portuguese, to be sent to Lisbon on the ships that go out from Goa and Cochin each year loaded, for the most part, with spices and drysaltery of all sorts. Pepper, on the other hand, is the King's or belongs to him who has a contract with His Catholic Majesty. And that pepper is taken from that coast of Calicut, Cananor, Mangalor, Onor, Barzalor,* and Cochin, cities to which the merchants from Cambay also go with the same goods for sale.

In Goa they have their houses and shops in a section of the city apart from the rest, and they live very civilly, and above all with much religion, feeling the greatest scruple about killing even a flea or any other viler little animal that there may be. And it is said that in Cambay they have a hospital made for this, where they take in and care for all sorts of sick animals, and that the old cattle and oxen wander through the streets, and that they are given things to eat out of charity, and that among the great lords of that region a festival is held upon the marriage of a cow with a bull, animals that those people hold in the greatest veneration, and that upon such feasts they spend thousands of scudos in order to regale their guests. But I know with certainty that in Goa I have seen them ransom from the hands of Portuguese boys birds, dogs, and cats that the boys, so as to extract money from them, had pretended to want to kill. And they gave such money

*Translator's note. Calicut, Cannanore, and Mangalore are easy to identify, but "Onor" and "Barzalor" defy identification.

gladly, and with a certain charity and unbelievable compassion they placed those beasts in safe freedom.

I also know, from long practice in dealing with this sort of men, that in carrying on business with them it is a marvelous thing to see how they cling to reality and are faithful in all their actions. And in buying and selling they are most truthful, and in every way they keep their word and supply what they promise. Finally, they are renowned for extreme moral virtue in everything that they do, so that it would take a long time to tell about it. I shall tell only of the strange way in which their merchants behave when buying and selling goods. They do not speak aloud. But a middleman, who must work out the price of the things desired, takes one hand of the selling merchant and covers it up with his garment (they wear it long, of white cotton cloth, almost in the Turkish style), and without saying a word or giving any other sign, he presses the fingers of this hand, and this in a way to refer to hundreds or thousands, it being agreed that each finger means one hundred or one thousand, and similarly, by the same arrangement, tens or even units. So that if the merchant wants to ask for 155 ducats for his goods from this middleman, he squeezes first a single finger of the hand, and by that action will say "hundred." Then he will take all the five fingers and, pressing them all at once, will say "five tens." Then, giving another squeeze to the five fingers, he will wish to say "five," and thus will have asked 155 ducats for his stuff without having spoken to the middleman. And then this latter, turning toward the buyer, takes his hand, and in the same manner and form tells him how much the seller is asking for his merchandise. If the buyer then wishes him to make an offer of 130 ducats, he takes one finger of the middleman's hand and, squeezing it, means: "I will give one hundred ducats," and then he squeezes three others together, and thus says

"and three tens more," the sum of which makes up the 130. And thus—now with the buyer and now with the seller doing as I have described—the deal is consummated without a word being spoken. Then what has been agreed to by this dumb show is spoken aloud. And what the middleman says is inviolably observed. And he, if not in accord with the sale, is not required to say anything about either the asking price or the offer made for the merchandise, so that under such circumstances nothing at all is known, and thus the negotiations are disclosed only to the three of them—seller, middleman, and buyer—and in that manner the goods keeps its reputation better and is easier to sell to another merchant.

In addition to the observance of their religion, they also are very moral, and do not permit the taking of more than one wife. And they keep their wives delightfully, highly adorned with jewels of all kinds and with gold, with which some of them are so weighed down as to be immobilized. And they are very careful not to have anything to do with other women, and never eat outside their own houses—that is, with strangers or with any people not of their religion, which they esteem to be the best of all. But they do not for that reason damn that of the Christians. Also, one of them, my great friend and a very rich and talented person, often said to me: "The Christians too, if they would live morally and civilly, would save their souls," it being his idea that to be a good man and to do to others what you would wish to have done to yourself is sufficient, under whatever religion, to earn a place of repose after death. But I, as much as was possible, tried to show him the contrary—that there was no other way but baptism for anyone wishing to enjoy the glory of God in the other life.

But let us go back to the Portuguese, who live very lavishly and comfortably in Goa, going about constantly on horse-

back (the horses being brought from Persia with the ships from Ormuz,* and from Arabia, and they give them as feed a certain variety of small beans, but cooked). And when they ride out they have before and behind them goodly troupes of slaves, including one slave carrying a club in his hand in the manner of a mace, opening up the way; one with an umbrella, without which they never leave the house, one who drives off the flies with a red-and-white horse's tail; and one who acts as a footman and one as a page. And in that style they go all over the city as if in triumph. And the city is made up of good houses and is well decorated.

From China comes everything good and beautiful which could be desired in the way of very rich adornments of gold and silk, beds, chests, tables, cabinets, and chairs, all gilded and with a black varnish that is made from a substance taken from the bark of a tree that grows in China and which at first flows like pitch, but then becomes so hard that it repels water and so shiny that one can use it as a mirror. And all this is very beautifully decorated. With these things, and with others from various parts of this India, they adorn their houses, in which they spend most of their time, the great heat allowing them to go out only during a few hours of each day—in the morning and in the late afternoon.

They eat everything from Chinese porcelain and, what is better, their foods are entirely made of exquisitely flavored birds. The country abounds in fowl, of which one sort has flesh—that is, skin and sinews—all black, and this is much more savory than the others. Of all the sorts they make an endless number of varied and excellent dishes, even to preserving them in sugar and to cooking them whole, boiled and roasted, without the bones, a thing no less marvelous than

* Translator's note. Hormuz or Ormuz, the ancient Harmozia, is on the Iranian coast near Bandar Abbas.

flavorful. My servant knew how to prepare them in this way and other ways never used in Europe, but native to that region. It also abounds in all kinds of domesticated and wild birds, all of them very cheap. From Ormuz come certain rock partridges that resemble hens, being very large, but having the same plumage and shape as ours.

And they eat everything with rice cooked simply in water, though they do not lack wheat for making bread, which can always be found for sale by anyone who wants to buy it. But in hot countries rice pleases more and is more easily eaten than bread. They also have an abundance of various sugar conserves of local fruit, very delicate and good—and what is best about them is that they cost practically nothing, as for one *giulio* one can get sixteen ounces of whatever fruit confection he may desire. These are the fruits already mentioned in these descriptions of the Orient, and they are sold in the streets by the slaves, who are no less beautiful than they are fervent and loving with themselves as merchandise, so that they rarely sell one without selling the other.

Furthermore, they are very devoted to their wives. And when they get married, they have the most sumptuous weddings, with large cavalcades and corteges of women to accompany the couple to the church when the ring is given and matrimony is contracted by the priest's words. And they make similar festivities of cavalcades and corteges at the baptisms of their children, who in this are more like princes than like private men. But these ostentations cost very little, as each one helps out the other as a mark of courtesy.

Today the wives are mostly those born there of Portuguese fathers and Chinese, Japanese, Javanese, Moluccan, and Bengali mothers, and even mothers from Pegú and various other nations of that region. These matches produce a somewhat brunette strain, but most of the women turn out to be

very beautiful, and in particular well-formed as to person, and especially those who are born of the Bengali nation. These women are the best shaped and largest in body of all Indian women, and their members are so rounded as to seem to have been formed on a lathe. The face is rather round than long, and is fully fleshed, and the complexion tends rather to the brunette than to the white. But when it is mixed with the Portuguese, it acquires some whiteness and perfection of style, so that those born of these Bengali women turn out to be beautiful women, and they commonly are called *mestiças*, which means mixed-breeds.

They are the most desirous creatures imaginable. And further, because of this intensity of their love, they are very jealous of their husbands, as the Portuguese men are of their wives. But the women are that much more jealous of their lovers, of whom, whether married or unmarried, each of them professes to have one—but only one. And to him they give themselves as slaves for and in everything. And they pretend that this lover is as faithful to them as they profess to be to those upon whom they have settled their love. And for that reason it is necessary to be extremely careful that they not discover even a suspicion on which to become jealous. For when they feel themselves disdained, their vengeance is nothing less than poisoning their lover, using the cooked foods or sugar conserves that in that region they constantly give one another while eating their own table foods, sending them to friends and relatives.

And one often hears it said: "So and so is dead from having eaten such and such a thing given to him by his woman," who often is not found out or even identified, being a married woman. Women also do this to their husbands, it being a custom of that region. And it is said that it was to remedy that corruption that the law was made among the Indians that

wives should be burned alive with the bodies of their dead husbands, so that then the women would not cause their husbands' death for the reason already mentioned or out of a capricious desire to marry some other man, a thing that is not allowed. And in many parts of India, women losing their husbands must observe that law unless they wish to be held to be infamous and shameless. And later this custom itself fell into such abuse that when some great personage or a king died—such as the King of Narsinga—all his wives and concubines and male and female servants, together making up a very large number of people, were burned with his body so that they might make a handsome entrance into the Inferno with their master.

But to speak further of the desirousness of the *mestiças* of Goa, they say that all of them want to have a lover because, it seems, that sky thus inclines each of the women, the lubricity of whom is owing not a little to the continuous heat, rather excessive than moderate, of the region that gave birth to their Indian mothers, who by nature are the most lascivious throughout that Orient or, to say it better, all that part of eastern Asia. And the Portuguese nation is not much behind nor much less desirous of Venus than she is of Love, both of whom seem to have their home particularly in Goa. And there, truly, are the elements essential to maintaining and increasing that kingdom: the lubricity and idleness of those soldiers, most of whom are unmarried gentlemen with no belongings but cloak and sword, and those along with youth, which they use up in that pastime, especially as during four months of the year they cannot sally forth in their ships because of the rains that, as I have said elsewhere, come during the months of May, June, July, and August.

During that period it is not possible to leave or enter any port of that entire coast of India with any vessel, no matter

how small. This is because of the outside wind, which blows furiously in the south and southwest, and which lifts and moves so much sand with the heavy sea that it closes the mouths of those harbors. Later, in the month of September, the ships emerge from there, one going toward Cape Comorin, the other toward Cambay. And by patrolling those two coasts in oared ships in the style of galiots that they call galleys, they keep that sea free of the corsairs of the Indies. These, called Malabari, cruise about everywhere, seeking to harm anyone whatever, and especially the Portuguese merchants. And these latter also exist in that same idleness, and almost never have anything to do except when loading the ships for Lisbon. During the rest of the year, they devote themselves to their pastimes and to enjoying the love, the kindness, the cleanliness, and the prettiness of their wives or mistresses, of whom it never would be possible to say enough to explain how amorous, kind, attractive, and clean they really are—except by saying that in every way they lead all the women who have been or are endowed with similar graces, if not everywhere in the world, at least among those women whom I have seen and experienced in circumnavigating the world completely.

And to begin with, the disposition of their living and their lascivious, not to say shameless, costume, in the style of the Indian women of the Malabar region, which accompanies the very graceful motions that they make as they walk around in their houses, will give you good testimony, or rather, to say it better, knowledge of the charms of these women. The dress is only a very fine cotton cloth six arms long and two wide, entirely painted with various designs and embroidered with great artistry in gold thread. In it they wrap the body from the waist down to the insteps of the feet, which they always show naked in a low, heelless black velvet slipper. And that

cloth does no more than just cover up their members, which can be seen sculptured and in relief, in such a way that the eye can judge exactly how they are made, for it clings to and becomes one with the aforesaid members as if it were wet—this because of its fineness and because of the tightness with which they wrap themselves in it.

The rest of the body is covered, from the waistline up, in a bodice with very tight, long sleeves. This also serves them as a chemise, being of very fine and transparent cotton fabric woven thinner than any sort of veiling. And it is closed as far as the breasts, which are covered by the translucent bodice. At the neck this gives the effect of being a man's shirt with a collar, but is pleated—as also is the rest of the shirt—in the manner in which surplices and other garments of the religious are pleated, without starch, as the water and burning sun of that region are enough to hold those pleats and keep them stiff.

This is the costume that they wear in their houses, so that one could say that they are naked from the waist up, as one sees all of the shoulders, the breasts, and the arms through the transparent bodice—and from the waist down one sees but little less, as they display the outlines of the entire body, which is made up of very well-proportioned members. And one rarely sees women with sagging breasts or with any of the other imperfections that fall upon our women after they have given birth. And I think—and even hold it to be certain—that few European women would be discovered to have such members that they would look well in this costume. One sees this in those women who come out from Portugal. Wanting to dress themselves in that manner, they are not successful, but lose a great deal because of the defects of their bodies.

As for ornamentation with jewels, the women wear on their

arms bracelets with many thick, heavy golden bells. Each one of these weighs enough to be worth fifteen or twenty scudos, and they put ten or twelve of them on each arm. They wear many rings on their fingers, and pendants of two sorts in their ears. One sort they wear by piercing the ear, but much farther down than usual, and there placing a diamond or ruby jewel; the other sort, worn as among us, is a similar one or a pearl pendant. And they wear pearl ornaments, golden chains, and other similar things at the neck. They arrange their hair simply, pulling all the strands back equally and then forming many little curls without any other shaping. This is the way in which they get themselves up in their houses.

But when they are outside, they go about dressed in the Portuguese style, always carried in certain litters called palanquins, each borne by two or four male slaves. They sit in these with the thighs and legs extended, as if on a bed, and with cushions at the back and rugs beneath them. And they are covered with a mat that protects them from sun and rain, and also so that they may not be seen. And it also is customary for the men to go about in these litters, but they may not go covered up. The women never are to be seen going about in the streets on foot except for that short space which, having alighted from the palanquin, they must cross to enter the church. And it provides a good means of going wherever they wish without being either seen or recognized.

In those regions it is a very common thing for a woman to go in search of a man by that means, either because women are not held in as much honor as among us or, perhaps, because shame does not blot out desire, as it does in our women. I know that a certain married woman went one evening to seek a friend of mine at his house, making use of one of those palanquins. But my friend did not welcome her very well, this because of the danger in which that woman was placing her-

self and his interests. For if they had been discovered and then judged according to the laws observed among the Portuguese, they would have lost nothing less than their lives and property. And when he had told her that, she answered that man without fear that if she was risking her life and honor out of love for him, he well could do the same for her, that she had come there to stay with him for as much time as was granted her. And that action serves to testify to the second quality of the love that rules those women, it being at times so strong that it partakes more of the bestial than of the human, and they seem rather to wish to lose their lives than to take pleasure in that act.

Husbands kill their wives every day, which they can do freely because it is permitted by the laws of the Portuguese, which in this respect are most severe against the poor women, who very frequently die unjustly. This happened in my time to a young wife of only a few months, killed by her husband because of jealousy that he felt of a man who had fallen in love with her when she had been a girl, but who continued to pass through the street in which she lived with her husband. But in this matter the Portuguese nation is rather rash than jealous. Nor does even that fact succeed in placing any rein on the unrestrained desires of their women. And as for the kindness of these women, in that respect they also go to excesses, never stopping the giving of very noble gifts to the rich while at the same time giving to the poor everything necessary. And they vie with one another to see who can be the best in these matters.

In their gifts of things to eat, furthermore, they study night and day to make exquisite new dishes, which should be restorative above all. Nor do their slaves behave otherwise (they have large numbers of them in their service, and many of them have forty or fifty slaves of various nations, and most

of them beautiful) as they precede and follow them with these dishes. From among these I shall tell you of only one, which is called "royal food," and which they prepare from the flesh of capons that have first been boiled or roasted. This they shred very fine and then mix and crush with almonds, sugar, amber, musk, ground-up pearls, rose water, and egg yolks, a mixture that restores and, while doing that, incites the lovers to indulge once more in the delights of venery. These gifts, besides being accompanied by beautiful and amorous ambassadors, also are sent with letters composed of amorous and graceful conceits never made use of among us, so that it is amusing to hear them because of what is in those rigmroles. The slaves are so faithful that very often they have borne or bear insults and injuries to cover up for their mistresses when the latter are discovered in an error or are suspected by their spouses.

And this happened to a friend of mine who was surprised by the husband of a woman who had him come to her there so that she could delight herself with him while she was in the bath, which in that region they are accustomed to enter each evening before going to bed. And the door of the house was opened to him so that he could flee, this by a female slave who had been waiting to do exactly that. Then the slave, kneeling before the master—who was chasing my friend—begged forgiveness for a fault that she had not committed. For she pretended that the man had come on her account. And by the many blows that she accepted for this, she freed her mistress from the suspicion that the husband otherwise would have had of her. The mistress likewise went on scolding her, the better to make herself look innocent of this matter, which was entirely her fault and scheming, and not that of the slave girl. And the slave later was well repaid by both

the mistress and her lover when they found themselves together again on a better occasion.

If I were to retell all the occurrences and cases that came to my notice during the twenty-one months when I was in Goa and to describe the ardor that those women have for putting them into effect, I never would reach the end of this chronicle, and would wrong the tales of Boccaccio. But, to return to the other quality of those women—that is, their cleanliness, in this they truly shame and outdistance all other women of the world of whatsoever nation, and this even though their habits come to them from the Indian women of Malabar. Both groups of women always wash themselves immediately with water after taking care of their natural needs, and most often with scented water. And they do this with the left hand only, because the right hand is used when eating and they therefore have the custom of never touching with it anything that can be considered dirty. And when they disport themselves with their husbands or lovers, they wash immediately afterwards, doing this as many times as they are made use of. And each evening before going to bed, as I have said, they enter the bath and wash the entire body. Then, all perfumed, they wrap themselves up in certain very fine cloths, also of cotton. These they suddenly let fall to the ground, thus remaining entirely naked.

Then they dally for a while to chew the leaf of the *betre*, which they also do in the daytime, and which they almost always have in their mouths. And this is the very same as that which in the Philippine Islands they call *buyo*, and which they mix with that fruit which they call *bonga* and those here in India call *arecca*, and which is a fruit as large as a walnut and is produced by a tree the shape of a palm as regards its trunk and leaves, but much smaller. It is of an astringent and rough flavor, which they mitigate with a lime made of marine

shells. And the fruit having first been slaked with that, they rub it when they want to put it in their mouth. And it has the effects that I wrote about in my chronicle of the Philippine Islands. Further, I say that the smell of this leaf when it is being chewed resembles that of our tarragon and brings on a breath that greatly incites sexual desire and has that effect even more strongly on those who chew it, whom it also restores and strengthens and again invites to the pleasures of venery.

And also because of the great heat the Portuguese remain most of the time indoors, in shirt and white trousers, which they wear long enough to reach the insteps of their feet, and without stockings, but very abundant and wide, putting into each pair of them more than twelve arms of cloth as wide as a bolt of silk. They wear trousers in the same design to go out into the city. And as for the rest, they use a jacket and coat and overcoat in the Spanish style, but without lining. Likewise, they enjoy everything good and beautiful that is found throughout all those Indies, importing them from Bengal, whither each year they send their ships to take on rice, which is the best in the entire Orient, where there are more varieties and qualities of it than there are of grain among us.

From that region also they import an infinite variety of cotton cloths, some of them so fine that one can conceal many arms' lengths of them in the fist of a single hand. And I have had, and still have, shirts—as I have demonstrated to Your Serene Highness—that fit into the fist of my hand. Additionally, from that region come many other manufactures, such as the truly superb bedcovers and canopies, also of cotton, embroidered on cloth with the greatest lightness and beauty of workmanship, showing animals and other figures and adornments, in a certain grass the color of straw. This

they spin out to a fineness more exquisite than that of silk, as well as being of greater strength and more lustrous and of much finer appearance. Further, from the coast of São Tomé, called Manipore and Coromandel, they get those beautiful fabrics in which, as I have said, their women dress or, to say it better, wrap up their members from the waist down, as do all the other women native to that region. And then from the kingdom of Pegú, which borders upon Bengal, they have huge quantities of gold and rubies and many other sorts of jewels. But now that kingdom has been destroyed, and all its mines are lost, having been destroyed and ruined by the King of Siam, as I pointed out to Your Serene Highness in the second chronicle.

The King of Siam, they say, undertook war against this King of Pegú in contention over a white elephant that the King of Pegú had. And he, knowing that this King of Siam had entered his country with an innumerable army, resolved that he did not wish to fight or to stand in the Siamese King's way. He decided to remain firm in his principal city with his great treasure, spending his time in various pleasures with his wives and uncounted concubines. And he ordered that no one ever should speak to him of the war or of what the enemy was doing, who thus came upon him without his knowing it. And he thought that he had remedied everything by having issued an edict throughout the country that his people should not sow the rice that they had been accustomed to sow.

And thereafter his people all perished of famine, a disaster that he either had not considered or that he did not mind so long as it also brought death to the enemy army. But the enemy, having heard of this barbarous decision, came with provisions and overran the whole country in a flash. He was able to do that easily because of the abundance of ele-

phants and because those people require nothing more for life than a little rice and water. And rice is easy to carry, whereas water and other things could be found in the fields. But the people of Pegú were reduced to eating human flesh and, most of them, to dying of hunger. And they would have bought, and did buy, rice at the cost of gold when they could get it from the Portuguese who went there in some ships laden with the said rice. But they could not supply it to so large a number of people, who wholly died out, so that today it is very difficult to know where their great cities were which were destroyed with sword and fire by the King of Siam.

And in addition to the deaths that he had brought about, that King carried off a very great treasure in gold, rubies, and other jewels. It is said that the viceroy who then was governing India and who left for Lisbon in the year 1600 had wanted to license four or five hundred Portuguese to go to the kingdom of Pegú, because if they had sought it, it would have fallen into their hands for the same reason—that the King of Pegú, not wishing that anyone speak to him of war, would not have known of their coming, just as he did not wish to know about or to resist that King of Siam except in the manner mentioned above.

But, to return to the matter of the Portuguese, I say in a single word that one can describe as very happy the island, called Fizzuarin, on which the city of Goa is, and which is not longer than nine miles or wider than three. And though there is nothing more on that island than many of those palms which produce the nuts called cocos (cultivated by the natives living there, who are called Kanarese, lowly folk who go about almost naked and are rather black in color than merely brunette), nonetheless it overflows with every delight and every kind of goods, which are brought there from all sections of those Indies and Oriental regions of which (that

is, of whose harbors and traffic) the Portuguese are in control, though many years ago the Dutch and the English and the French took away from them, one could say, the traffic of the Moluccas, whence come cloves, nutmeg, mace, pepper, and other sorts of merchandise of those regions.

Also ruined is the traffic with China, to which they go constantly, meaning to enter with their ships and have commerce there, as they have had in the Moluccas, from which nonetheless almost exactly the same things continue to reach Goa each year by way of Malacca, but not at such favorable prices as formerly, this because of the abovementioned Hollanders and others. These, having gone there with their multitudes of ships, have reduced everything to lower prices, buying with money of account those things which the Portuguese bought at a profit in exchange for cotton cloths from Negopatan,* Manipore, and Coromandel. From those places they brought each year huge quantities by their ships to Malacca and the Moluccas. Also, they have suffered in their trade with Portugal because the aforesaid Hollanders and others interfere with it by preying upon the carracks that ply to and from Lisbon in that trade, which is the splendor of all that Orient and which caused and still causes the whole world to marvel and is the greatest thing of usefulness accomplished by the Portuguese. For on the *reales* that come solely from Lisbon they earn more than fifty per cent, it happening that the *real* of eight *reales*,† which is worth 320 *reis* in Portugal, is worth 480 and 484 *reis* in India. And thus similarly with other things brought from there to India, such as wines, oil, coral, glass, cats'-eyes, balas rubies, emeralds, large pearls, and various other goods. And on those items incredible profits were and still are made by means of the merchandise that

* Translator's note. The modern Negapatam.

† Translator's note. The renowned "pieces of eight."

they send from Goa to Portugal on the aforementioned carracks, which ordinarily leave in the month of December, as also in that of January.

[The Hollanders] infest those seas and keep them in continuous fear. And they are the reason why it now is with such small safety that they carry on, as they formerly carried on, the trade with Zoffala* and Mozambique, of great value for the captain who goes there to govern that region. For in three years he takes out more than 100,000 scudos, having from His Catholic Majesty the sole privilege of selling to the Negroes of that region the stuffs that are taken there, which are cotton fabrics—which are exchanged for gold, in which those areas abound, and also for amber and ivory and other strange goods and things, such as the tooth of the sea horse and that of the marvelous woman-fish, thus called because these animals resemble women so closely that it is said that the Negroes of the region, fishing in those seas, use them carnally as if they were in truth women. It is said that there is only one tooth that has the marvelous power to stanch the flow of blood, though they make crowns and rosaries and rings of them all, indifferently, as they do of the tooth of the hippopotamus, or sea horse, to which they attribute the same property, though it is not held in as great esteem.

Similarly, they have frightened those who trade through Ormuz, an island located at the entrance of the Persian Gulf, to which each year several ships from Goa go to bring back Persian and Arabian horses, merchandise in which much is earned because they are bought by the King of Mogor and the King of Narsinga, and by others throughout all of India, and at high prices, often reaching and surpassing a thousand scudos each. They also transport sugar and pearls, which are

* Translator's note. The modern Sofala, a seaport in southeastern Mozambique.

the largest and most beautiful fished anywhere in India, though the better and larger part of them are brought there by Persian, Turkish, and Hebrew merchants, who take them, together with other merchandise, in caravans leaving from Basra by the Euphrates River and going to Baghdad and then with the aforesaid caravans of camels overland to Aleppo and thence to Constantinople.

The Portuguese likewise go, with no less risk and fear, to China, whence they return with the abovementioned goods at a great profit. They leave Goa in the month of April, China in the month of December. And at the same time there goes thither the ship that passes from China to Japan with the same goods, this to the profit of the Portuguese inhabitants of Macao and of the captain to whom this voyage is conceded, along with the government of Macao for a year, by His Majesty, who thus remunerates him for services connected with war matériels in India. From this voyage, only from the freight, he takes out forty or fifty thousand scudos, he himself being paid by the merchants at the rate of ten per cent of the total amount of the loading and transporting of the merchandise that the ship carries to Japan.

To go back to questions concerning India, I say that they live, for all these reasons, in great trouble and fear for the causes already mentioned in this chronicle, but that otherwise there is no other region in the world in which it is possible to live better and more lavishly, and particularly in the city of Goa, in which there are many businesses that, without any loss on exchange in going and returning, earn from twenty-five to thirty per cent at the beginning of each year or, to say it better, at the end of each of the voyages I have named—to Zoffala, Mozambique, Ormuz, China, and the Moluccas, and also to Bengal—they giving to the captain of the ship or to other merchants their funds, this at the risk of the vessel and

the goods both on the outward journey there and on the return voyage.

All of these voyages are made in less than one year, while the merchant is at his ease in the city, always engaged in festivities, songs, music, games, and balls in the houses in which many have their music privately performed with the greatest attention to the rules by both men and women. And in the plazas and streets nothing is mentioned but pleasant things, loves and lovers, and there are female musicians and actresses and female dancers who go about to give pleasure to whoever wishes it, almost all of them being women so gracious and well-favored in their persons and appearance that no gentleman can be ashamed to welcome them to his home and to enjoy, in addition to the games that they play with great skill, their love-games. In these latter they are so lascivious and potent in promoting the effects that it is said that the King of Narsinga has employed more than six thousand of these dancers, sending them out with his army when it goes to war. And he does that so as to keep his soldiers in continuous happiness and pleasure. And it is a certain thing that they greatly enamor men by their curious, shameless movements, made with their bodies and accompanied with song and music that are no less gracious. But, not to become bogged down in these lubricities (of which it would be possible to tell many others, as it would also be possible to tell more of the customs of those people and others in that India; but I did not penetrate inland—nor is it the custom among the Portuguese to penetrate inland—and so did not experience them in a way to understand and see them, so that even if I desired to deal with them, it would all be by hearsay; and as much as I have been able, in these my chronicles I have claimed to tell Your Serene Highness only those things which I simply have seen and done), I shall tell you some

other things that remain to be said of the fruit and tree of that palm which produces the nuts that the Portuguese call *cocos*.

As I have said, there are many of these on Goa's island, and they make it cool and delightful there. But there are, beyond any comparison, more of them on the uncounted islets of the Maldives, all of which are located to the south of Goa, beginning at one degree and stretching to eight degrees on the southern hand. And the nearest of them are 240 miles from Cape Comorin and 480 from Goa. On those islets, the Indian natives live by means of, dress from, and take all their needs from those trees, from which they make their houses and their boats. And each year they come to Goa with loads of merchandise made entirely from those palms—that is, wines, which they make in the manner I have described in my discourse on the Philippine Islands; oil, which they extract from the pit inside the nuts; vinegar, from the substance from which the wine also is made; cordage, which they make from the husk that covers the said nut, it being a stupose thing and being prepared as hemp is made ready. And they make cables and ropes and rigging for servicing their ships, they being stronger and more resistant to rot the longer they remain in the water. And they also make mats, and from the leaves of the palms the sails for their vessels as well as covering for their houses. They also bring many of the fruits—that is, *cocos* or nuts—still green, with their pith inside, which is white.

And these nuts have their own milk, which is removed by breaking open the nuts, crushing them, and squeezing them, and which is good for cooking rice, and is excellent and of great substance and nourishment. They also eat the aforesaid pith, from which they also make bread and various other things, as has been mentioned elsewhere. From this plant,

finally, not having any other, they extract all that they need for living in the way to which those people are used to live in this world, having no thought for any other delicacies.

From the abovementioned islands they bring another sort of nut, called Maldivian coconuts, which are not found elsewhere. They grow in the depths of the sea off those islands, and from there are thrown up on the shore, where they are found. In shape, they are two nuts joined together, and they are longer by two times than the black *cocos*, but more solid. Inside, they have a pith that, though it looks the same, is very different in flavor and not at all good to eat, though it is excellent against poison and malignant fevers. It is held in great esteem among those Maldivian people, and much more by their king, who does not permit it to be taken from his country. And for that reason very few of these come out, and they never are seen whole, though pieces of the pith are brought stealthily. I bought six ounces of these so-called Maldivian coconuts in Goa, and I still have a little of them left. I have experimented with it, and have found it of good effect. I removed fragments of it by rubbing it on a stone with a little water—as I have said that they do with everything similar, instead of crushing it—in the Indian way.

There too, in addition to the many other marvelous things, grows a tree not very robust or large, but delicate and much resembling the elderberry in the color of its trunk, but having very different flowers with an odor and a shape much like the jessamine except that the little stem on which the flower emerges from the plant is of a yellow color and serves in place of saffron to give color to foods. This flower always remains closed, shut in upon itself, during the day, so that one scarcely notices it. But as evening comes on, it opens. And before the next morning sun comes, one finds the flowers all fallen to the ground. And for that reason they have been

given the name of "sad flowers"—that is, melancholy—and everyone goes out to collect them, making use of them for their odor and, like saffron, for their color. Many of these plants grow in the cemetery of the Goa cathedral, a very appropriate place for that flower, which produces the effect that here goes with the cypress.

But to bring this chronicle to an end, I say that, having spent twenty-one enjoyable months in that city, and the ship that had remained behind in Malacca having arrived, and I having received the rest of my goods, which I had loaded upon it, I gave thought to embarking with it and with the investment that I had made, after liquidating the silks I had sold, in diamonds and various sorts of cotton cloths, on the flagship galleon called the *Saint James*, which then was preparing to depart for Lisbon, as it did on the day of Christmas, 1601. Of that embarkation and of what followed thereafter during the entire voyage until arrival in Zeeland, I reserve the telling until tomorrow, for the next chronicle, if it thus please Your Serene Highness.

FIFTH CHRONICLE OF THE SECOND
ORIENTAL ACCOUNT

Which deals with the departure from Goa en route for Lisbon and with what happened on that voyage up to arrival in Zeeland



In my chronicle of yesterday I left untold to Your Serene Highness the manner of embarking on the ships that leave India for Lisbon, and how the merchandise is loaded onto them. Because Your Serene Highness should know that each year one of the ships that comes from Portugal stops in Goa; the other ships continue on to the city of Cochin, and those usually are three or four, though in the year when I embarked on the one that stopped at Goa, they were only two. And first they go along the coast to Calicut to load pepper for His Majesty's account or that of the contractors. Then they take on the rest of the cargo in Cochin, it consisting of all the sorts of merchandise mentioned already. And thence they depart during the month of January, returning to rejoin their flagship at the island of Saint Helena, where they take on fresh water and then, huddled together in convoy, go to Portugal, if good fortune thus allows them.

That flagship likewise departs with its cargo of pepper for the same account (and with the rest made up of other goods) at the end of the month of December, as it did the year when I embarked, when it sailed on the morning of Christmas in the year 1601. I made an agreement with the

pilot of that ship, who had sailed around the Cape of Good Hope eighteen or twenty times, and promised to give him one thousand *xerafines*, a Goa money worth seven and one-half *giulii*, with the agreement that this should cover my expenses for the whole voyage up to arrival at Lisbon for me and the three servants I was taking with me: one of the Japanese nation, a Korean, and the other a Mozambique Negro. And further, he was to provide me with space in the poop where I could set up a bedroom or living quarter, in which a bed was to be placed for sleeping indoors. And it was agreed that each day when meat was eaten, a hen was to be cooked for me, as enough hens were carried in the coops, in addition to which I myself also was taking along one hundred of them which were excellent in every way. Similarly, I bought from that pilot and other officers of the ship the space for stowing my merchandise, which I had mostly in large cases. That space is conceded by the King, once his pepper has been loaded, to each officer and sailor, so many arms to each, to this one more and to that one less according to the duty and office of each. And the captain of the ship has the largest part, so that the freight is paid to these captains, officers, and sailors, and not to the King, though the vessels are his. Many of these spaces are available, and on everything that can be accommodated in them no customs are paid either in India or in Lisbon. And these are called the "graces of liberty," and are granted by the same King to those officers so that they, not having money with which to fill them with their own goods, can sell them to whoever wishes to buy them.

Finally embarked, we unfurled our sails to the wind, directing the prow toward the land and coast of Arabia. And as we picked up that coast by night, it was no small good fortune that we did not run aground on it, and that because of the beneficent light of the moon which was shining on the

white sand of that coast. Turning the prow toward the island of San Lorenzo,* we left there and passed between that and the terra firma in view of Mozambique, with a fresh and somewhat tempestuous wind. Having left that behind, we pursued our way with a very good and beneficial wind toward the Good Hope promontory, which is located at thirty-five degrees of the Antarctic part and is 4,200 miles distant from Goa. Reaching there, and having confirmed our location well, we took a sounding of fifteen mariners' arms. And during that interval we caught good large fish. Then we continued on our way toward the island of Saint Helena, despite the fact that all the passengers besought the captain (who was called Antonio de Melo de Castro, knight of the Cloak of Christ) to bypass that island and not go there under any condition.

We had no need either of water or of firewood or of anything else, we having everything in abundance. Not doubting that some English or Dutch vessel would be there, we all would have desired to flee from that island, which later on proved to be our ruin. But the captain never wished to listen to anything, saying that he could do nothing but what he had been ordered to do by His Majesty in the instructions that he had, which bade him go to Saint Helena, there to await the other ships under his command, which were coming on from Cochin. Thus we navigated prosperously from December 25 to March 14. On that latter day, with the day advanced toward evening, we ran into an uncountable number of that sort of fish which, in another chronicle, I told Your Serene Highness is taken while navigating.

And we each took the whole quantity that he wanted, and there was not a ship's boy who did not fish to his full pleasure, though with a bent key instead of a hook. And it really seemed as if those fish wanted to jump onto the ship of their own

* Translator's note. The modern Madagascar.

accord. They almost did not let the hook enter the water before they became caught on it. But it is a remarkable fact, to be noted, that of so many fish, not even one was eaten. And the noise and shouting that went on during that fishing truly seemed a battle, and all over the ship and even on the sea one saw nothing but blood and dead fish—which, because it was as if all the circumstances that this event foretold to them were present, many threw back into the sea without knowing why. And those who were visited by this caprice were perhaps not without some mysterious foreknowledge of what was to happen the next day.

It was on a Friday morning, at the appearance of the sun on the said March 14, that we sighted the island of Saint Helena, located in the midst of that sea at sixteen degrees on the austral side, 1,600 miles distant from the Cape of Good Hope and 5,000 from Goa. Beating up close to it to discover if the harbor was free, we discovered three vessels there. And so, suddenly furling our sails, we took counsel as to what we ought to do. And so that the misfortune might reach its conclusion in conformity with what His Majesty had ordered in his instructions, which for us were destruction, it was resolved to anchor at one tip of that island. For the order in that instruction said: "Having arrived at the island of Saint Helena, should you see that enemy ships were in that harbor, you would anchor at the point of the Paraveles, which is upwind from the harbor, from which the ships there would be unable to proceed because they would have a contrary wind."

But scarcely had we cast anchor at that point, where there was a small cove big enough for one or two ships, when we saw two of the ships that were there in the harbor raising their sails. And they, tacking back and forth, first toward the sea and then toward the island, in a few hours and turnings about placed themselves not only abreast of us but also up-

wind from our ships. And how vain was the advice quoted above, Your Serene Highness can consider from the wholly contrary result. For from the two ships rapidly was sent toward us a boat containing a bugler who, having approached us and come as close to us as seemed to him necessary in order to be heard, said, with the salute used at sea: "A good voyage. What ship?"

The salute was returned by our men, who replied: "A good voyage. A ship from India which is proceeding to Portugal," and added: "And you, what ship are you?" They answered: "From Zeeland. We are coming from the Moluccas. Friends, friends, do you lack nothing? What do you wish us to tell our captain?" No answer whatever was given to this last proposal and question, for by then the mistrust felt by our men would not permit them to decide correctly what was most appropriate. And therefore, confusedly some said: "These ships come to fight," others: "Do you see that they have taken steps to board us? There is no more time left for remaining here to find out. To arms! To arms!" while others added, making a great uproar: "They have displayed their colors. Their dressing and banners are set. We hear their trumpets and drums reverberating, and they finally are disposed in combat order. What are we to do?"

In this babble of talk by everyone, with no direction or sense of what with some reasonableness could be done (notwithstanding the fact that the ships came more in a display of war than one of peace), the captain of our ship rose up, took a taper in his hand, and by means of it set flame to a piece of artillery that was directed toward the two ships, which were bearing down upon us under sail. With that piece, it later was said, a sailor was killed, but this was neither verified nor believed. When the ships heard that salute, they decided to wait no longer, for it seemed to them only too cer-

tainly an invitation in response to the desire that they had, which was to fight. And perhaps beyond doubt they had set about stirring things up that way so as to have an occasion to seize upon. As it turned out, they were not slow in returning the salute, at the ration of one hundred to one, as throughout that day first one ship and then the other did nothing but discharge its artillery all toward our ship. And this made an uproar and din over the island to describe which one would wish to have a poetic spirit like that of Andrea Salvadori,* and not merely that of my simple chronicling.

And things proceeded in that manner until night closed down, they having ruined our entire superstructure and a large part of the rigging suspended on the spars, into which a few balls also had entered. Then, having anchored close by our ship, they fell silent. And we, more disquieted than ever, took counsel anew as to what we ought to do that night. And it was resolved that we should slip away from there and depart. But by then it was late, and we should have left earlier and followed our course when we saw the ships in the harbor, as they then could not have overtaken us easily, as I shall make clear. But when a mistake is made in the beginning, no good end may be reached, as shortly will be made clear about that decision to depart. Once our anchor cables had been cut to allow us to do things more quickly and so that they should not hear the noise that is made when the anchor is weighed, the yards were set out very quietly and the sails unfurled to the wind. And we set our course toward Lisbon.

But the enemy ships, which had thoughts different from ours—but which we had doubted would follow us—weighed their anchors with great ease and followed after us, together

* Translator's footnote. Salvadori was a Florentine playwright of the early 1600s.

with that other Dutch ship which had stayed in the harbor motionless, the very fact that had inspired those who had urged our departure by saying: "Perhaps they have not taken on the water for their voyage. Perhaps they are waiting for other ships of their fleet, as we wanted to do." What gave backing to that talk was our seeing that that Dutch ship had not moved and perhaps was in some need of repair. And they had the firm hope that that was the way things would turn out.

But it was in vain—as the Spaniards say, it was "for our sins"—as that ship had nothing to do with the other two, which, when the new day came (and oh, how much better for us it would have been could it always have remained night!), began to belabor us with their accursed artillery, one from one side and the other from the other. And that Dutch ship did nothing but stay where it was, to watch. In a few shots they killed one of our bombardiers, a man of Italian nationality from Genoa, a person well experienced in that calling who was exercising the office of constable of artillery on this galleon, though he was said to be a cobbler at home. And no other remained who was at all experienced in managing those instruments which the enemy was using so well that there was no letup and we were receiving and not giving back.

Thus they were able to do in safety exactly as they wished, thanks to the good order of officers that they have in Portugal when they staff these ships or carracks which go to India! It is from them that these positions as constable and bombardier are bought. And whoever will pay the most obtains them whether or not he is of that profession, and such men obtain their papers after a superficial examination, as if they never would have to fight. But very often they are duly punished, though not so much as was merited by all those who had had a part in that disorder which was the

reason why we were unable to bombard the ships that were doing so much damage to us and to our vessel, which that day was stripped of its sails, its masts, its cables, and its superstructure. And we lost more than fifty men and had many miserably wounded by the artillery by the time when, night having fallen, it fell silent.

And there, without moving, eating, or sleeping, we waited for the day fated to be our ruin. And even though the nights there were of twelve hours, nonetheless it seemed to us that the dawn appeared too early on that Saturday, a day that in Goa was a festive one for the Portuguese in memory of the capture of a famous Mohammedan corsair called the Cunyale, who had been on the Calicut coast. He was taken by them on March 16, 1600, and I found myself in Goa and was present when he was brought to justice by having his head cut off, after which he was quartered and the parts of his body were stuck up on the city gates.

But, to turn back to our subject here, on that Saturday they began again to bombard us with their artillery. But whereas earlier they always had shot with the aim of ruining the masts, the shrouds, and the sails with chained balls, and amidships, so as both to frighten and to kill the men, on that day, having changed their minds upon seeing that they could not have us otherwise, they began to aim below the water line, seeking the time when the ship was lifted up, shaking, out of the water. And it, being without its helm, moved in its own way, and so they struck at it in accord with the plan that they had formed of forcing us to surrender it if we did not want to go to the bottom with it and all perish miserably. In a few hours they achieved what they had designed, the poor ship by then having been so reduced that it might go to the bottom at any moment. And if we had waited for another broadside,

I should not have been able to recite these chronicles to Your Serene Highness, as we should have been sunk irretrievably.

Instead, being unable to withstand the water that was entering through those holes, we made a signal to the enemy ships with a white rag, that they should stop firing and understand that we were suing for mercy. First we had asked our captain to surrender the ship under some reasonable and honorable agreement. But he, led to his words more by passion than by reason, had answered that he desired not to agree to give up without a fight the ship that his king had assigned to him. To that we all had answered that there was no more time to fight or to defend the ship, which was about to go to the bottom, and that he must think of saving the lives of those who already had proved their steadfastness in defending the ship for their king and for the interest that many of them had in it, saying that nothing was to be accomplished by that way of fighting against the artillery; that if the enemy ships had come close to take it by the courage of their persons, we in turn should have been able to demonstrate the courage and the desire that we had to fight until dead for the King and in the common defense, but that we were close to death without being able to fight.

For such was the evil fortune of all those who, by bad fortune, had been forced to go to Saint Helena. And worse still had been the departure from there, because they could have landed with the most valuable things (which of jewels alone were calculated at more than 300,000 scudos on that car-rack). Or, remaining motionless in the ship, they could have made it into a fortress, as there where the sea did not move the ship, neither lowering nor raising it, the enemy artillery could not have damaged it sufficiently to be able to sink it. And further, if our ship had remained at anchor, the enemy would have been able to bring his artillery to bear from only

one side, whereas out in the sea under sail, he had been able to be first on one side and then on the other, so that he could hit practically everywhere at one time. Further, the Zeelanders, who were ragged sailors drained by a long voyage, could not have competed with the valor of the Portuguese, and especially with these, who, besides being in the goodly number of nearly five hundred, also were for the most part old soldiers and noble personages who had served in the militia in India for a long time and now were returning to Portugal to be rewarded by their king according to the custom of that crown.

While these arguments and confused discussions were going on, lo and behold, there came the boat sent from the two Zeelandish ships, which had understood the signal made to them. Some of their officers came, and among them was the mate of their flagship, who spoke Italian, whereas all the others spoke the Spanish language, very common among the Flemish nation. Having boarded what once had been our ship, they made a ceremony of consoling us for what had happened, saying that they were sorry about it and putting the blame for it upon us, who had been the first to provoke it by the artillery shot set off by the captain of our ship. They added that in no way had they come with the intention of fighting with us, just as the ship from Holland had not. Nor could they have done so, they said, because their instructions from the owners and from the license of the States General of the United Provinces of the Low Countries of southern Germany, together with that of Count Maurice of Nassau—their captain general on land and admiral at sea—did not extend to that except in case of necessity or unless an obstacle or other impediment was put in their way to prevent them from being able to carry on their voyage, whether on the way to or the way from the Molucca Islands or other

places in India, whither they said that they went to carry on mercantile negotiations, and not for pillage.

But, they said, our having treated them as enemies by shooting our artillery had been the cause of their fighting or, to say it better, the pretext for their destruction of us. Finally, reaching the question of an agreement, they promised that if our vessel—or, to say it better, the lost carrack, which we strongly feared would sink to the bottom that night—were saved, they would give us one of their ships, on which all our people could be embarked so as to go with it to Lisbon or to the land of Brazil in America. For that reason they exhorted the Portuguese to take care that the carrack should not sink, this by constantly pumping out the water that still was coming in, but was being bailed out with kettles and other utensils from the hold because the pumps or bilge-removers could no longer be used, having become clogged by the pepper floating on the water and entering into them.

Well, when that agreement had been reached, they asked that all the jewels be brought to them. And that was carried out at once with a good part of the diamonds and pearls. And with those they went back in their boat, not allowing anyone to debark that evening except our captain and his son. They promised, however, that in the morning they would send some of their sailors and captains to mend the carrack and remove the Portuguese to their ships. And that was done. But in the interim I had made an arrangement with that mate who spoke the Italian language, and had asked him to take me with him that evening to his ship. To facilitate that, I told him that I had many jewels and much other stuff ready to hand which we could carry with us, thus removing it from that danger—and, in particular, more than 2,000 ounces of musk (of which 1,600 were mine) and the little structure

in which the bed was, with other curious things that I was bringing to Your Serene Highness.

And that was allowed me, and so I boarded their boat, escaping the danger and the agony in which all the others remained. And though the Zeelanders said, holding it to be almost certain, that the carrack would sink that night, and that it was not possible to succeed in bailing out the water that was entering it, the good care of the Portuguese who remained aboard and the pity of God, who wished to help them, did not allow so many men to perish so miserably. When the new day came—seeming to all those who had remained aboard to be the day of their birth, many of them having inured themselves to the idea that they were going to die by drowning during the night—they made signs that the others should come to give them aid and that the carrack was shipping less water than earlier because the pepper was interfering with the force of water entering through the holes.

The captains of the two Zeelandish ships quickly sent many of their sailors in two boats, and among them many calkers and carpenters, with all the tools needed to patch up the damaged carrack. And they fell to, and in a few hours put it into a safe condition, having covered those gaping holes with good leaden plates, which they let down outside and then, going under the water, hammered on. And for this one needed nothing less than the Zeelandish sailors' bravery. They also rebuilt the mast, which, after having been ruined by the artillery, had been cut off completely because, with the ship wallowing, it no longer could be held up. When the carrack had been repaired, they turned their hands to taking off all the Portuguese, but in such a way that many of them perished, some because they did not know how to swim, some from other misfortunes and the inhumanity of those Zeeland sailors, who never wanted to approach the carrack in order

to take off the said Portuguese, fearing that the crowding of them would sink their boats. Therefore, standing a little distance off, they called out to the Portuguese to jump in and swim, that then they would take them on board.

However, they waited there with naked swords in hand. And when more than they wanted drew near or were holding on to the boats with their hands, they did not hesitate to cut them off or give the men some other mortal blow. But whoever was clever, whoever was able, in the midst of those dangers, to place a chain of gold or pearls around his neck or carry in his hands some cluster of diamonds, was received graciously by them, so that they could take all the things that he was carrying. And many saved themselves thus who would not otherwise have been saved. But one of my servants, of the Korean nation, played a trick on them despite the fact that he did not know how to swim and was aware that they were not accepting servants or slaves like himself. Around his neck he hung two of my little pictures, one on which was painted a crucified Christ, whereas the other was an *Ecce homo*, and both of them on copper. I still have them, and value them highly because they were made by good artists in Japan, as well as because of the trick carried out by that servant of mine. Wearing them, he plunged into the sea and was quickly picked up by those sailors, who thought that he had something of great value to them. And when they saw what the things were, they gave them back to him, and as he already was in their boat, let him remain there, and thus took him to their ship, where he saved those pictures for me with very little difficulty because they, being mostly heretical Calvinists, did not wish to see paintings either of the saints or even of God Himself crucified.

Returning to the debarkation of the Portuguese, I saw that they were divided between the two ships and then all sent to

remain below, under cover. And I was on the flagship, in the place called the hutch, below the poop, where the heaviest artillery was. About fifty persons were there, and among them titled gentlemen who were undergoing the same fortune, the Zeelanders having made no distinctions (and in this they behaved discourteously). And it was impossible to remain there in any position except seated, in a shirt and white pants. And it was necessary to sleep that way, leaning one against another, without being able to stretch out. We were not allowed to go outside at all except for our needs, and then one at a time, and not more. At the door of that cabin a guard stood constantly with a naked half-sword in hand.

And thus we were for twenty-three days, precisely at the time of Lent and penitence, which I was able to observe solemnly because for our food we had nothing more than a little rice boiled in water, the most stinking and horrible that can be imagined, so that I believe that to prepare it that way deliberately would be impossible. And to make that appear good to us, they never gave us enough to drink to take care of our needs, but kept us short of everything, giving us a bit of biscuit which was all putrid, decayed, and full of worms, did not taste at all like bread, and lacked any substance. So that, reduced to a bad end, four or five of us who least could bear such hardship died there without any pity from those good persons who were happily enjoying the many gifts they had found on the carrack. And what we felt with not a little passion was the knowledge that those things were being eaten even by our slaves, who had been set free by the Zeelanders, while we ourselves were on the verge of starvation.

I would have been in a bad way if good luck had not helped me by making me have with me one of those porcelain vases full of pears preserved in China, it having been among the many vases containing conserves which I had turned over

to the Zeeland captain. And that vase did me a good turn, and with it I also maintained two titled gentlemen by giving each of them one pear a day for all the time that we sailed to the islet of Fernando de Noronha. We reached there on Holy Saturday, and in that year the Easter of Resurrection was on April 6 in that same year 1602. That island is distant from that of Saint Helena by 1,350 miles and lies between the fourth and fifth degrees south. There they anchored, together with the carrack, and remained for thirty days, during which the Zeelanders restored that carrack very well, so as to be able to sail it to Zeeland. And they also built a large boat to give to the Portuguese instead of the ship that they had promised them when they had made the agreement, exhorting them with the assurance that some of them could go to Brazil in it, which was about three hundred miles distant from that islet, there to tell of their misfortune and ask for vessels from the governor to take them to Lisbon—which, I understand, is what happened.

On that unpopulated desert island they found nothing but a little water, not really good, but brackish. And the aforesaid Zeelanders left them a little rice and some of that rotted biscuit. However, there was a very great quantity of seabirds of various sorts and so stupid at seeing men that, having no fear and coming to roost in the evening, they let themselves be captured with the hands, without flying off or even moving, as many of them as were wanted. At that time I tried to show the Zeelanders how they should cook them so as to be able to eat them with less repugnance, given that they tasted very strongly of fish. Well, I made them leave them in sea water, and then I took only the breasts, which were very fleshy and large. Cutting those into very thin slices, I put them to fry lightly in the salted butter that they carried with them. And with very considerable spice, of which we had plenty of all

kinds—those ships being loaded with them—and by adding vinegar, we made a sauce good enough so that they licked their fingers (and before, they had not been able to eat them). And as long as we stayed on that island, it fell to me, evening and morning, to prepare that dish, which was the best that we had, and which I also had to eat. Because after the Portuguese had been landed, I remained free, and that was on the very day of Easter.

They were landed all naked, carrying with them only one shirt and a pair of white pants. And they were searched to discover if they had any jewels, which many of them had swallowed, especially pearls, and some diamonds and rubies. Many made little bunches of them and hid them in their lowest organs. As there were female slaves, their owners had them hide jewels inside themselves, which perhaps was more convenient, but also was less secure. For one of them, as she came down from the ship to enter the boat that was to carry her ashore, stretched out her legs more than was convenient on that occasion, and dropped—or, to say it better, there came out from underneath—a bunch of diamonds, which quickly was recovered by one of those sailors. I was assigned a place to sleep by the captain of the ship. And he also had many of my clothes restored to me, and cloths and shirts and other haberdashery, always having me at his table as his friend. And they all displayed kindnesses toward me because, when seeking to have them allow me to stay on the ship and go with it to Zeeland and thence to Italy, I had backed up my reasons to induce them to do me that service and kindness by saying that they would recall the courteous treatment and kindness that Your Serene Highness constantly accords to them when they come to your port of Leghorn. And they, being very mindful of that thing, favored me and agreed, as it turned out, to satisfy me.

When the Portuguese ship had been repaired completely, we left that island on May 2, leaving there those poor unfortunate Portuguese, who, seeing that I was remaining on that ship, could not bear it, and said to me—particularly the captain: “You are placing yourself in great peril. Watch out. They will throw you into the sea.” And I said: “May the will of God be done. Where my goods go, I want to go with my body, come what may.” And when I had reached Zeeland, I found those to say: “Why did you bring this man to this country? Why did you not throw him into the sea?”

Having raised our sails all together with the other ship from Holland, which though it had not fought because it could not, nonetheless had collected a large booty in merchandise and various things that had been thrown into the sea in order to lighten the carrack when it had been in danger of going to the bottom (the sea having been all covered with silk in skeins and in cloths, with carpetings and infinite other goods, of which that ship, with little trouble, was able to re-collect as much as it wanted), we reached Zeeland. And that was two months after our departure, with prosperous sailing for over 3,500 miles, and it was the seventh of the month of July, 1602. And traveling with that nation is so safe that I hold shipwreck to be impossible. Besides being excellent sailors, they go with their ships in excellent state, just the opposite of what happens on the Portuguese ships and carracks, which it is an anguish to think about, not to mention saying it.

And anyone who has not seen it never would believe it, for it exceeds human judgment and partakes of the barbarous—that thing of going to sea in that condition, loaded to the gunwales, and with the entire deck or topside of the ship obstructed with huge cases and other bales of merchandise, in such a way that it is impossible to carry out the services that become necessary later in order to protect oneself from the for-

tunes of the sea and to manage the sails according to the blowing of the winds, with the result that when some storm comes, it is necessary to throw the merchandise into the sea, in the evident danger of things turning out badly, as often happens.

To return to the arrival of these ships in Zeeland, having first entered the channel that divides Friesland from the island of England, but without first having seen either the one or the other (by virtue of the experienced and very excellent pilot), and having gone through it, we anchored at Middelburg, a city on Valcheren, one of the chief islands of Zeeland, located fifty-two degrees toward our Arctic pole. The Portuguese carrack remained behind because it could not go that far, being more heavily loaded and less in order, but the most important and precious things had been removed from it and put on their two ships. But twenty days after our arrival, it also reached Middelburg, where they had it unloaded of everything, discovering much more wealth than they had thought or could think, and that though more than one-fourth of it had been lost, for sure, and especially of the jewels, two-thirds of which had been stolen by whoever wanted them and by the very captains and other officers of the ships that had captured it. And if I had not been so frightened and out of my mind through the passion that I experienced because of my misfortune, it is a certain thing that I should have been able to save my jewels, which I voluntarily gave to the Zeelandish captain, as well as those of the others, which were offered to me, but which I did not want, for many thousands of scudos more than my entire interest. But this is not the first time that, in my misfortune, fortune has offered me the reward and I not known how to receive it. Also, I was forced to leave behind what I had thought to save, which was

a good quantity of very beautiful pearls which I had thought of swallowing.

But it was not possible for me to pass more than five of them into my stomach because of the dryness in my throat, which was weakened by the pain caused by thirst in those days when they kept us belowdecks. And those jewels were changing hands during those days, a good part of them going to those who had lost nothing and had had no part in that misfortune. And many who had been poor became rich, whereas the rich became beggars. Of that wealth, this is to say, of the stuff that was saved, they say that they earned more than 600,000 scudos. And they broke the carrack up entirely, selling all the timbers and hardware, which weighed many thousands of pounds.

And I, who was there to see all these things, meanwhile was going about thinking of a way by which I could recover my possessions through friendship. And I therefore began to cultivate familiarity with merchants interested in those ships, wanting to ferret out their attitudes toward me, which, as they were many, were as various as the ways in which they spoke. But all of them seemed inclined to say that this cause might be won by the route of justice, as indeed it turned out. And instead of an agent, I made myself into the accused, as they wanted me to be the defender of my merchandise, which they pretended to have acquired legally in the capture, as tomorrow, in the last chronicle of these my discourses, I shall recount to Your Serene Highness.

SIXTH AND FINAL CHRONICLE OF THE EAST INDIES

*Dealing with the long stay and the litigation carried on in Zeeland,
and with the return to Florence*



Yesterday's chronicle ended, Most Serene Lord, with my going about thinking of a way of recovering the things that I had aboard the carrack that was taken as a prize by the two ships of the Zeeland merchants, who had been sent to India to trade for spices in the Molucca Islands, and not to act as corsairs. But chance gave birth to the situation that these ships from Zeeland should fight and that this carrack should be the Portuguese ship to be seized, as I have told, by these men from the United Provinces of the Low Countries of southern Germany.

Well, in addition to the understandings that yesterday I mentioned having entered into (but with little result) with these interested merchants—that is, with the administrators for the East India dealers—so that they might be willing to restore my stuffs and merchandise to me amicably, I also sought to learn if in that city of Middelburg any Italians lived from whom I might inform myself of the conditions in this hemisphere, a place little or no less novel to me than the other one had been on my arrival in the Indies. And on that whole island—on which, furthermore, there are four cities: Middelburg, the chief one, and then Fresilinguen, Canfer,

Second Account: The East Indies

and Armuia—not more than one Florentine was to be found. He was called Paolo Franceschi and had come from Antwerp to Middelburg by chance to take care of some of his affairs. And he gave me sufficient information and detail about what I had wanted and needed to know, and especially about the well-being of Your Serene Highness, on which I had based all my hopes.

For I wrote at once here to Florence, letters to Giovanni Macinghi, telling what had happened to me and asking him to give Your Serene Highness an account of my misfortune, to relieve me from which I begged and besought letters in my favor to the Count Maurice of Nassau, general of the armies and admiral of the sea for those States General of the United Provinces against His Catholic Majesty, so that he might be favorable toward restoring to me both my things and the curiosities that I was bringing to Your Serene Highness. And those letters, of the tenor that I desired, were sent to me at once. And with them I left Middelburg on September 7 of that same year 1602. And I went to present them to Count Maurice, who at that time was with the army at the siege of the city of Grave, in the province of Gelderland.

Having given me a good welcome on the spot, he told me that out of love for Your Serene Highness he would not fail to favor me with everything possible to him, but that he could do very little because this was a concern of the merchants, over whom he exercised no command. With that reply I returned to Middelburg to carry on the litigation already begun there as forced by those deputy administrators for the Company of Merchants Dealing with East India, which had had me cited before that Council of the Sea which they call the Admiralty. There I was required to defend my merchandise as it had been found on the Portuguese carrack taken by their two ships. That carrack, upon its arrival, had

been declared confiscated together with everything that was found on it, as a prize in good and legal war (with reservation by my defense) by sentence of the Admiralty, notwithstanding the fact that I first had entered a plea and presented it on the twelfth of that month in that year to the administrators resident in Middelburg and gathered together there in council, this to the effect that out of friendship, and not as a matter of justice, they might be willing to restore my merchandise to me.

In that plea in substance I told how I had left Spain in the year 1594 in the company of my father, and how, earlier, in the year 1591, I had left Florence alone, and how from Seville we had gone, partly out of curiosity to see the world and partly because of our interest in business, to the Cape Verde Islands to buy black slaves from Ethiopia and take them to Cartagena in West India; and how, having sold them there, we had gone on with other merchandise to the city of Nombre de Dios, located on the same continent of that coast, which is called *terra firma* to distinguish it from the many islands that were seen first when those Indies were discovered; and how from there we went on, partly by sea, partly on a river called the Chagres, and partly overland, to the city and port of Panamá, on the other coast from the city of Nombre de Dios; and how from that Panamá we went by sea to Lima, a city of the province of Peru, and thence by that same sea to the port of Acapulco in the province of New Spain, whence we proceeded overland to the City of Mexico, capital of that province as Lima is of Peru; and how from that City of Mexico we returned anew to Acapulco, where we embarked for the Philippine Islands, where we landed on the one of them called Luzon or Luconia, where the city of Manila is; how from that place we continued on to the islands of Japan and reached them where there is the city

of Nagasaki; and how later we passed on to China, to the island of Amacao, where my father passed on to a better life in the city of Nome de Deus, where the Portuguese live and whence I departed and went on to Malacca and, in the same ship, which belonged to the Portuguese, went on to Cochin, a city on the coast of East India, and thence to Goa, where, so as to return to my country, I had to embark with all my belongings on that carrack which their two ships had taken prize and fought with at the island of Saint Helena, the fact being that in that region there was no other accommodation for returning to Europe.

For all those reasons, I begged Their Lordships to kindly give back my merchandise to me together with some curious things that I was bringing to Your Serene Highness, adding as a principal reason that I was the most humble vassal of a prince not at war with their states and that their captains who had taken the carrack as a prize had dealt with me as a friend, they having taken me in and saved my life on their ship and showed me every sort of friendliness, knowing that I was a vassal of a neutral prince who was rather a friend than an enemy of these countries and unquestionably friendly to all the men from their states who had come to his country, and especially to the port of Leghorn. I said further that it was a reasonable thing to be fair with merchants, the more so when they are not vassals of an enemy prince, and that for that reason they should restore my goods, acquired by trading and with much labor at such peril as could be judged by the very long and wearisome journey that I had made. I foresaw that a similar misfortune could befall anyone, and that Your Serene Highness would be in a position to act reciprocally and, furthermore, that it would be most welcome news to you to hear of good treatment that Their Lordships had dealt out to me as one of

your least vassals. And I made endless other arguments and prayers, all designed to move them to pity for so miserable and piteous a case as mine.

But they, making no response to my suit, went all about the city saying that they could do no less than bring that suit to a just end, but that nevertheless that would have certain consequences not to be entertained—that if they restored my things to me, they would have to restore their things to all the others who, also being neutrals, had had interest in that carrack. But then they said that, taking justice into consideration first, they would have to do something generous for me. And thus the litigation went on, dragging out to August 12 of the next year, 1603, on which day there was handed down by the Council of the Sea the decision written out below, as translated from the Flemish:

“In the cause pending before the Most Illustrious and Generous Prince and Lord Maurice, born Prince of Orange, Count of Nassau, and Admiral General of the Sea, and the commissioner-councilors of the Admiralty of Zeeland resident in Middelburg, between, on the one part, the fiscal advocate of the aforesaid College, together with the elders and administrators of the Company of Zeeland Dealing with the East Indies, plaintiffs, and Francesco Carletti, merchant of Florence, come to defend his goods found on the galleon called *Saint James*, defendant, on the other part: His Excellency and the abovementioned councilors, having seen the process and evidence produced by the one and the other party to the suit, and having considered everything well, do declare the goods of the aforesaid defendant condemned and confiscated for the benefit of the common cause and of those who have the right after paying the costs for the reasons that the Council has set forth. Done in the College of the Admiralty, met on August 12 of the year 1603.” It was signed

“Meyros U”; underneath was written: “By order of the College, Adrian Nicolai.”

From that very unjust and iniquitous sentence, to which the judges themselves had been parties, I at once appealed to the States General of the Seven Provinces united in rebellion against the Crown of Spain, who sit at the city of The Hague, the court of Holland. They form a supreme council which administers that entire united state, and which is formed of many commissioners sent there by each of the Seven Provinces, some with many voices, others with fewer. From them I very easily obtained a privilege and patent for reconsideration of the aforesaid sentence, to be undertaken with the addition of some other judges, as many as had made up the College of the Admiralty of Zeeland, who were seven. So that altogether they would be fourteen, and they were named at that same time by the States General, all being personages of the first importance and jurisconsults taken from various magistratures and councils of that region, as in the rescript of the States General, made in response to my plea, they declared and named in the following manner:

“The States General of the United Provinces have requested and ordered and do request and order by this, as supervisors of the suit in the plea mentioned: the gentlemen Bijl and Alberda of their College, Iniosa, Cromhout, and Zossendale, councilors respectively of the Great Council and of the Provincial Council, Verius, councilor and minister of the city of Amsterdam, and Oldenbernavelt,* councilor and minister of the city of Rotterdam, to pronounce sentence in the said suit as it seems to them to be proper. Done in the

*Translator's note. This seems to have been the very famous Jan van Olden Barneveldt, (1547-1619), champion of Dutch independence from Spain.

Congregation of the States General on September 20 of the year 1603."

I also wrote to the Council of the Admiralty to find out in advance the exact date on which the supervisors named were to be there. And I brought the letters and other documents. And when I had presented all that to the College of the Admiralty, they accepted the new hearing and gave me an order to deposit immediately in the hands of their secretary one thousand florins of that money, which amounts to more than 330 ducats, this to pay for the labors of the judges and for other costs. But they were not as eager to name and determine the day on which the judges for the rehearing would be in Zeeland. On the contrary, they tried—and always kept on trying—to do everything possible to prolong the trial, never wanting to take steps to hasten it either by justice or by agreement, especially when they realized that I was beginning to run out of the means for proceeding with such large expenses, about which I remonstrated continually in appeals to those States General.

But all that accomplished little good, just as little good was done for me by the several letters written by Your Serene Highness in various ways and to several personages, and, furthermore, by those of the Most Serene Queen of France, to whom, instead of giving the pleasure of that which she justly asked in my favor and benefit, they sent as a gift that bed and other curiosities which I was carrying for Your Serene Highness, as I have said in another place in these my discourses, and which you did not wish to accept when they offered them to you, you not wishing to prejudice my cause. But finally, after I had been bringing ruin upon myself for three years and nine months, they were forced by a command from the aforementioned States General, who were continually importuned by me in words and pleas in great

numbers, in all of which I never asked for anything more than the expeditious carrying out of justice. And they, with their letters, which they wrote to the Admiralty and to those States of the province of Zeeland, interceded for me. Those States too form a College that deals with the things of that province, and it is made up of several noble and not noble persons sent by each of the cities of the province as commissioners representing those cities, which are six altogether, two more than the four already mentioned—Zierikzee and Dargus, each of which is on its own island near that of Valcheren, on which the other four cities are. And they sit in Middelburg. From that College are taken those councilors deputed to represent that province of Zeeland in the Council or College of the States General. And all members of the government change almost every year; and each man is president of these colleges once, for a week, and it is his duty to propose and deliver the pleas that are brought there. And if they cannot all be taken care of during his week, he hands them on to the presidents who follow him.

But to return to the forwarding of my cause, those States General desired that it be brought to a conclusion by means of some agreement. And especially they sought to bring that about when Your Serene Highness wrote that letter saying that if they did not return to me my stuffs and the curiosities that I was bringing to Your Highness, you would be forced to take enough to make up for them from their ships, merchandise, and persons who came to your ports and regions and carried on business there. Besides which the province of Holland awoke and made a solemn protest to that of Zeeland, saying that they should render to me what was mine. And that followed upon what Your Serene Highness threatened to do in the matter of taking the damages from their vessels if they did not restore my goods to me.

At that same time I was summoned to their College, where they asked me if I would be content to settle my claim amicably. And I answered that I had put and did put everything in the hands of Their Lordships, from whom I hoped to receive all fairness and good treatment. But the deputies and administrators of the Company of the said merchants were not so agreeable. For when they were called, they responded that they wished to offer me what they had in mind to give me and not to submit it to the arbitration of Their Lordships, who thereupon, seeing that for the time being nothing good for me could be accomplished, agreed to name the date on which the judges delegated to the retrial should appear at Middelburg. And besides that, they wrote at once to the Council of the Admiralty, sending them a copy of the letter that Your Serene Highness had written, and they also instructed me to await the answer that I should receive from Middelburg, to which was sent that dispatch, reading like this:

"We send you herewith the copy of the new letter received by us from the Grand Duke of Tuscany, from which you will be able to understand how pressingly His Highness supports the cause of Francesco Carletti, a citizen of his Florence, and how for that reason, and also for the preservation of the authority, reputation, and honor of this country with all the kings and princes, said Carletti we neither can nor wish to deal with any longer without giving him justice, and have the wish to see that said justice be speedy. We have resolved unanimously to say to and instruct the commissioner-inspectors of the suit of the aforesaid Carletti that they should be prepared on the third Tuesday from now, which will be January 6, of the year 1604, new style, to betake themselves to Middelburg to take up with us on the spot said cause, and to give an opinion such as shall be found according to the

right and to fair justice, this unless in the interim the difference between Carletti and the Elders of the Company should be found solved by friendly means. We request and desire by this that you be willing to make yourselves available on said date for the purpose set forth, and without delaying it further, so as not to do wrong to the abovementioned Carletti and cause vain expenses, and we nonetheless advise you that in the interim you shall do your duty in trying to bring the parties together, which we urgently seek and desire, to preserve the friendship and good affection of the aforesaid Highness toward our lands, so that the said Carletti we can for this reason have go on to Zeeland or await the visit of the aforesaid inspectors."

When the determined time had passed and no response to the said letter had come from Middelburg, it became my duty to have the said inspectors transported at my expense from the court of The Hague to Rotterdam, and thence in a warship to Zeeland, this in the month of April of the year 1605, though they had been ordered by the States General to be there the preceding January. But they never came there, and so I finally resolved to ask the States General for a license and passport so as to leave that country and come here without the execution of justice. Beyond that, and when they had refused me the passport, I wrote a letter to the States of Zeeland, which at that time were meeting at Middelburg on affairs of war, and sent a similar letter, of this tenor, to the College of the Admiralty:

"We send you herewith a plea again presented to us by Francesco Carletti, requesting and asking in a friendly manner, and desiring (because we fear the possibility that the supplicant, out of need and lack of means, may try to take himself out of the country without having had justice; and that from such an action some harm and damage may fol-

low, not only prejudicing the reputation of the country, but also to the ruin and danger of subjects of our country) that you will see to it that either the suit be settled in a friendly way within one month after the date of this letter or that in the interval it be arranged so that the retrial can go forward without delay."

These letters were written on January 24, 1604; and shortly thereafter, on the following March 16, I wrote other letters similar to them, and with the same respect—and praying to know why they did not have their orders carried out. And truly each one of those provinces, and Zeeland especially, so professes liberty that it cannot recognize superiors. And although the States General represent the principality of all those United Provinces, it does not follow for that reason that it is the custom of those provinces to obey them except in the affairs of war common to them all. The provinces often quarrel among themselves, as do the cities within a province. These provinces are: Holland, Zeeland, the regions of Utrecht, Gelderland, Overijssel, Friesland, and Groningen—all such strong regions that when a geography is made they are portrayed in the form of a lion, on the spine of which are Holland, Utrecht, Zeeland, and Flanders; on the head, Friesland; and Groningen in the mouth of the lion, the tail of which ends with Flanders and the regions of Luxembourg and Namur; in the middle of the body is Brabant and the regions of the Episcopate of Lodi; and on its paws and breast are Gelderland and Overijssel.

Having finally reached Middelburg during April, the commissioner-inspectors began, as they had been commanded by the States General, to deal with an agreement. But for many days they could not complete anything, so that, those inspectors having demonstrated their wish to end the trial by the way of justice, of which there was no need at all to speak, the

men of the College of the Admiralty were so clever at intrigue that the abovementioned retrial judges said to me: "Carletti, we do not hope or believe ourselves able to bring this trial to an end by either agreement or judgment, but feel that we must go back to The Hague without doing anything, and this for a reason that we cannot tell you. However, because your evil fortune will have it that way, we advise you to accept from them that little which they are willing to give, as otherwise this will be a long matter, and you will be able to carry it on here another time only at great cost."

And that being confirmed to me by those in whom I most had confidence, and who had showed and were showing the best hope for my cause, I could do nothing but say that they should terminate it in the best way they could, so that it might be brought to some end. For strength is more powerful than reason, and by that time I lacked all the circumstances and powers needed by anyone going to law: that is, friends to give advice on the moneys to be spent, instead of which I found myself with an empty purse and one bag full of patience and another full of documents. And I was laden with worries and many afflictions and fatigues and pains of the soul over having to travel back and forth over those sea-canals, which are frozen in the winter, and on which the men move on shoes that, for soles, have an iron rod a finger thick and square in shape which allows them to slide with such speed that one does not go that swiftly in a mailcoach.

Furthermore, I was in constant danger, and ran it particularly when, following the States General while seeking a solution of my cause, I passed with them and with the whole army that they had with them in Flanders to take Sluis in 2,800 vessels. One night I found myself on one of those ships. And I thought that it was going to turn out badly, certain soldiers having got the idea that I had valuable jewels on me.

For that reason, and to disprove it, I undressed completely and offered them a gold chain of forty scudos, the one that Your Highness desired and which was made in China and to which two reliquaries, also of gold, were fastened. But they did not want it. And, altering their attitude, they ended up making sport of the whole matter and saying that I had nothing to fear. But during that entire night I neither could sleep nor wanted to.

I would think myself fully repaid for all of those afflictions if they had been borne for the love of God. For no one who has not experienced it can imagine the sorrow of seeing oneself stripped naked of all one's possessions through no fault of one's own and without having done anything that should condemn one to lose them. It is enough to break one's heart, and if the mercy of God did not come to one's aid, one might go mad, as I was on the verge of doing, finding myself at one and the same time deprived of so much goods and in a country so foreign that I had difficulty in being admitted to their houses and in being heard.

Oh, how true it is that in the whole world no other misfortune and sorrow are greater than that of having been rich and fortunate and then seeing oneself reduced to extreme misery! For those who never have been rich scarcely understand what a thing poverty is, and those whom fortune never raises up are happier than those who, exalted by it, then are made to fall—as occurred with me, who at the age of thirty years found myself to have circumnavigated the whole world from west to east with such fortune in my traveling that to bring it all to perfection all that was lacking was to have finished the trip safely to Lisbon, whence thereafter I should have come to this city triumphally, to enjoy the fruit of such honorable efforts. But because fortune—or, to say it better, the will of God—wished it this way, one must be-

lieve that this was a just and clement order and determination, confessing that it is fate, destiny, luck, the situation and fortune, which raises one up and lets one down, which disturbs and consoles, and that if we thus experience the influences of the planets, they are nothing but instruments carrying out the wishes of God.

But to return to my cause and come to the stipulations of the agreement, there was signed by the Council of the Admiralty, together with the retrial judges, a paper that said in substance that so as to carry out the order of the States General, the said retrial judges had met together in the College of the aforesaid Admiralty on the date of April 18, 1605, to review that cause and deal with it; and that together they had judged that it would be a good thing to find a way of adjusting it by friendly means, thus following the intentions of the States General, which had recommended that all due diligence be employed. And for that reason, having summoned into the Council the administrators of the Company of Merchants Dealing with East India and Francesco Carletti, both these parties were besought with solicitude to wish to arrive at some agreement between them. And that, by means of that Council, was reached with a declaration that the administrators would give 13,000 florins of that money to the said Carletti, not because they lacked confidence in the justice of their good reasons, but to satisfy the States General and out of respect for the support in the letters from the Queen of France and those from the Grand Duke of Tuscany; and that I, similarly, not lacking confidence in the justice of my good reasons, was content to accept that, renouncing all pretensions and demands that I might have against said Company or others; and that this their agreement and largess having been given to me, never was to be in prejudice of that Company or other companies in requiring

them to do the same for others as a certain consequence and obligation, but only for the reasons given above.

Thus all my claims were ended by my ruin. Then, the re-trial judges having been returned to The Hague by the same route and manner, and each of them thanked, and after I had spent a big quantity of scudos in the going, remaining, and returning, I also had to obey the custom of the country in giving them, together with the seven advocates who had served me in my cause, a good dinner. And there were gaily consumed almost a whole night and many flasks of wine, all on account of my misfortune, for which, with beakers in hand after they had been eating for more than three hours, they tried to console me. Finally, the dinner and the drinking having ended, each of them went to his home. And I immediately took thought of leaving that country and passing over to England, and thence to Spain, despite the fact that I was besought by those merchants to carry out various pieces of business, which they continue always to do each year, and especially with regard to East India, to which those companies, which are formed by the union of many men putting their money together, send each year ten or twelve ships, this under shareholding arrangements.

And those ships are sent to those parts and to the Molucca Islands to buy spices of all sorts and also to prey on the ships of the Portuguese when they are encountered. And they are moved and driven to make these new dealings by the bad advice that was given to the King of Spain, persuading him to refuse permission, during the wars that he has with those regions which are in rebellion against his dominion, for their ships to go to make deals with their merchandise in Spain and other places under his command. And that has been the cause of the ruination of all the traders of the West

and East Indies, they thereby being forced to deal thus in the one region and in the other.

And it was credible that this should have happened to that nation, the larger part of which lives on and by means of the water, and which has so many vessels that very often one finds in the harbor of the city of Amsterdam seven or eight hundred ships of the line, not to mention an infinite number of other, smaller vessels or to calculate those which are in other harbors throughout that country and elsewhere. All the interests of that country depend upon the sea, and for that reason it is not to be wondered at that they have sought new traffic and new navigations in new worlds. The sea, it could be said, is the land to them, and in fact it would be if it were not for the industriousness of the men who hold it back by walls that they call dikes, and which are made of well-packed earth.

And to protect these against the waves of the sea, which drive into them with their flooding, and especially when they arrive in company with the wind—which always is present in that country—they make a straw covering on that side. To hold it fastened there, they drive straw into the earth crosswise to that which extends above, in such a way that the one supports the other as if it were being hammered in with the greatest ease by that which is placed on top. And, also, Nature has provided where human industry and strength could not avail, by bringing about the birth (or perhaps it is the sea that has brought them there) of certain mounds of sand, which they call dunes, and which they have been planting constantly with reeds so that the wind shall not carry them away. These dunes and the walls made of earth, or dikes, are in the charge of the chief men of that country, who are called *dich grave*, and who often go to inspect them and keep careful watch over them, they being no less important than life, the cities, and their possessions. These hillocks are

along that part of the ocean which looks toward the west, in the province of Holland, and they hold back the sea when it rises so high there with its tide that if it could get past them it would inundate the whole country and submerge the cities, as it has submerged them in other times, so that one still can see remains of church towers in mid-sea in that region of Zeeland.

Zeeland means nothing but land and sea-water, as *zee* means sea, and *land* means earth. And Holland means land without foundation, but empty and as if in the air, and which trembles: because that is the very truth, that while one is riding in the carriages, one sees the embankments and walls of the ditches move here and there at the sides of the road—that is, rising and falling. I think that this results from the earth's foundation there, which is a mud dug out of the water, and which, spread out over the ground to the thickness of four fingers, then is cut into squares six fingers in each direction. And this sort of earth is burned instead of wood. It is very light and is mixed with a substance that seems like rotted firewood. It contains sulphur, and if one is close to a fire of it, one's face becomes covered with the color of the sulphur flame. And that earth is called *turbe*.

The dunes or hillocks of sand begin at a little town, one hour's trip from the court at The Hague, which is called Grave Sande, and then they extend along that coast as far as certain small islands, the largest and last of which is populated and is called Midlant; and in width they are here a little more and there a little less, but they never go beyond the width of half a mile. On those dunes there are so many rabbits multiplying that they feed the whole country and provide the greatest pastime. They are seen coming out at the ends of the bases of those hillocks and going toward the tilled land in great numbers to graze. In the town of Grave

Sande there is a church in which I saw an epitaph in stone set into the chapel wall of the biggest altar on the left-hand side. On it is preserved the story of how a Countess of Holland and Zeeland called Margaret, in 1276, gave birth to three hundred and sixty-five children, male and female, who all were baptized by the Bishop of Utrecht. And the females were called Elisabeth and the males William, and they all died with their mother on the day of their birth. And there they still preserve two huge copper basins on the wall where the epitaph is, and in those they all were baptized.

But to return to the chronicle of their navigations, I say that at first, driven by the aforementioned prohibition, they set themselves to forming various companies and uniting their substance so that together they could send ships into the venture, here toward the Cape of Good Hope and there through the Strait of Magellan to East India and the Molucca Islands and other places, looking for new trade. And though in the beginning they encountered some difficulties among those people, who did not wish to welcome them or even to trade because of the warnings given them by the Portuguese as to what would happen if they let those others enter their harbors, nevertheless, little by little, they began to send a larger number of vessels and better arms, so as to be able to fight with the Portuguese and with anyone who interfered with their voyages and new commerce.

And because they often came out victorious, they acquired the reputation of being able also to defend those people who, having by then begun to enjoy the generosity with which they bought all the spices (not yet being experienced and therefore paying three times as much as the Portuguese paid), now traded voluntarily with them, especially those on the island of Sumatra, oldtime enemies of the Portuguese name. On that island they have free stopping-

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places in the harbors of Acén and Pedir, on that of Java at the port of Baton, and similarly on the island of Borneo and in Patani, a land and harbor on the other coast from Malacca, and in various other localities and throughout all the Molucca Islands. They particularly purchase pepper, and everything at the highest price, paying for a *bar* of pepper, which is 400 pounds, twenty-five ducats in Spanish *reales*, and the Portuguese have the same amount for eight ducats invested in merchandise consisting of cotton cloths (as I recounted to Your Serene Highness in the third chronicle) that they bring from India—where neither the Hollanders nor any others but the Portuguese have commerce or any way of procuring the said cloths.

I also understood that those ships which took the Portuguese carrack had bought pepper in Sumatra at forty-six ducats for each *bar* of 360 pounds, an excessively exorbitant price and beyond all reason. And if they had not got the good booty from the carrack, those investors would have lost severely. The result is that, between the huge number of ships that they send out each year and the fact that they do not have the merchandise that those people would like and of which they have need, they destroy the trade maintained by the Portuguese by the good scheme of sending few ships and enough merchandise to buy the spices without alteration and rivalry from those who may have them. And this is what happened to the ships mentioned, finding themselves there with such numbers and of such diverse owners and nations—for at one and the same time there are Hollanders, Zeelanders, Englishmen, and Frenchmen—as to raise the price of the wind bringing them there, not to mention the spices.

And they would also be able to buy with merchandise from China, as I have seen happen with ships sent out by the Portuguese, who, giving three scudos' worth of stuffs

from China, bring back three hundred pounds of pepper (I mean, and always have wanted to indicate, pounds of sixteen ounces) from the region of Giambi and Andregghi, reselling it in China for nine ducats per 125 like pounds. But it would be better to bring it to Europe along with other Chinese merchandise, for in that way one could make a very useful and profitable business, equal to any other in the world if only the Chinese wanted to allow and accept trade with strangers in their country, as in the chronicle of that kingdom I have said that they do not wish to do. Nor do these nations really want to introduce it there, for while they prey upon the Portuguese ships, they show their spirit as more addicted to stealing from others than to the true and genuine ways of mercantile dealings.

Nor is there any need of saying: "They are our enemies." For merchants are not expected to wage wars among themselves because of dissensions between their princes. And if at first, despite that very war between Spain and those States, they do not attack merchant ships anywhere, why today do the Dutch merchants, who have returned to doing business freely with Spain, desire to go to India, and even to China, to prey on the ships of the Portuguese merchants? Recently, in the very harbor where the city of Amacao is, and it a settlement of Portuguese, and in view of the Chinese who also live there, they were not ashamed to ruin a Portuguese ship already loaded and about to depart for Japan. And whatever they did not want, they burned, together with the vessel itself. And it was a certain thing that it was carrying interests of the Chinese, who had sold their goods to the Portuguese, and many of whom may have had things loaded to their account on board, as they are accustomed to doing.

That way of behaving cannot please the Chinese at all, they not being so barbarian that they cannot judge that this warfare

does not befit merchants going about the world to seek new trade, the more so because they can see and know that what is continually being sought on those voyages is to prey on the ships going and coming over all those seas. And because of that the Chinese also experience notable losses and damage. For when the ships do not reach their shores, that cuts off the trade from which, as has been said, they earn a large amount of silver. So that instead of smoothing the way to the opening of this most useful commerce, which they gained a few years ago in the province of Fukian with the same intention of damaging not only the Portuguese but also the Castilians who are in the Philippine Islands, in the end, and realizing that this offer which they had made to the Chinese was not being accepted, they turned upon them, firing their artillery at the land and threatening great damage. So, as I say, instead of opening this trade, they rather are closing it, the Chinese nation being rather afraid and very hostile after seeing that destruction which they wreak upon people. And they do not let it be known that they are subjects of a single king and profess a single religion, theirs being altered by the diversity of not wanting to admit that which is believed and held by the Roman Church.

To get back to me, Most Serene Lord, I then had decided and resolved, as I have said, to leave those regions for the direction of England and thence go to Spain so as to return to India and attempt to re-establish myself with better fortune. With that thought in mind, I went to get the necessary papers from the resident ambassador of the King of France to those States General, a man with whom I had formed a very close friendship. And he urged me to be willing to go to France and to court, saying that His Majesty, upon seeing me, would be able to use me easily in certain affairs that he had begun to undertake in Holland. To that I replied

that I should not go there either to offer myself or to be seen, but that if the King sent for me, in that matter or another, I certainly should not fail to go there and pay my respects, and that if thereafter I should be able to serve him in what he had in mind, I should do so most willingly. He replied that he wanted to write that to the court, and he asked me to await the answer, which I did. And in a few days he gave me a letter signed by the King and by his first secretary of state, Villeroi. In this they said that, having understood my good will and the skill that I brought to my willingness to serve in a negotiation—the one I had been told of by his ambassador in that country—for that reason, and before doing anything else, I should come to Paris to see him, and that I should be welcome for putting that negotiation into effect. And that letter, because it came from so great a monarch, I, having committed it to memory, wish, if it so please Your Serene Highness, to recite in that language. And it read thus:

Signor Francesco Carletti

*j'ai sau, par les advis que m'en a donnes le Sr. de Buzanval, la volonté e le moyen que vous avez de me servir en une occasione de la quelle il a descouru avec vous. Chose qui m'a este bien agreable, comme sera votre venue viser moy pour en faire sortir les effects, ammoyen de quoy venes me trouver au plustost, e vous seres le bien venu, ainsy que vous dira le Sr. de Buzanval. Je prie Dieu, Sr. Francesco Carletti, qu'il vous ayl en sa sant. garde. Fait a Paris le XXII jour de novembre 1605.**

* Translator's note. This letter from Henry IV reads: "I have learned, from the notices given me by the Sr. de Buzanval, of the will and means that you have of serving me in a matter that he has discussed with you. This is a very agreeable thing to me, as will be your coming to see me about beginning to carry this out. So for that purpose, come to find me as quickly as possible, and you will be very welcome, as the Sr. de Buzanval will tell you. I pray God, Sr. Francesco Carletti, that He may keep you in His holy care. Done at Paris the 22nd day of November, 1605."

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It was signed "Henry," and farther down by the Sieur of Neuville, commonly called Villeroy, as the signature also meant from the New Town.

Because of that letter I quickly bestirred myself, and early in December, I embarked on a coastal vessel which left from the port of Brielle, not far from The Hague, which is the last part of Holland that is taken back from the sea by those hillocks of sand. From there we went to disembark at Havre de Grace, on French soil, and thence by a river to Rouen and then to Paris, where I arrived on the ninth of said month. That day I went to make myself known to the Secretary Villeroy and kiss his hands. The next morning he took me in his carriage to the Louvre, the royal palace, and presented me to His Majesty as he came from his cabinet to go to the Tuileries, a garden of delights to which one goes from the said Louvre through a very beautiful corridor as one does from Your Serene Highness's Palazzo Vecchio to the Pitti. And there, along those spacious pathways stretching as far as the eye could see and adorned with fresh thickets, the King stopped to transact his affairs. That morning they consisted of nothing more than an event that had happened the preceding evening to His Majesty when, returning from hunting the stag, he was at the Bridge of Notre Dame. There, a beater approached him and, taking hold of his cloak by one hem, tried to drag him from his horse. Men having leaped upon him, he was seized and put into prison. And that morning, the King having asked what the guide had done, he was told the man had supped happily and slept without thoughts. Then the King said: "*Set un fu, je ne veu point qu'il morra*" (He is crazy, I do not wish him to die). This matter having been completed, and I having first, as he emerged from his cabinet, made my reverence before him, he said to me in French while putting his hand on my shoulder: "Carletti, you

are welcome. I am very content to see you here." And then he added: "Concerning the business for which I have had you come, I wish you to deal with the Sieur de Rony," who was present there. And to Rony, who is the treasurer general of all France, I was taken the next day. And dealing with him regarding the business that His Majesty had the desire to do, I found him completely opposed to the will of the King and not at all conforming to that which his ambassador had said to me at The Hague, but greatly disdaining the business and the man who had drawn it to the King's attention, who had been the Secretary Villeroy, not at all a friend of Rony, as is the way of those courts. And the treasurers also are not at all eager to take funds from the treasury, and the more so when they are not the ones to have proposed the affairs. Although I was urged by Villeroy to hold firm to my intention, nonetheless, without any other reply, I said that I sought to do only everything that the King ordered and that I was not seeking in these negotiations more than that which pleased His Majesty, to whom I had come because I was called and not to offer myself to him for anything but to carry out whatever it was that he himself wished to do. And it was believed that steps were taken from Holland in this court so that the thing should not take effect. It all was resolved when the King said to the Most Illustrious Signor Don Giovanni Medici, whom he also had told to deal with me: "As Rony says that this business is not good for France, it must not be good." This was told to me at the end of the affair by the aforementioned Most Illustrious Signor Don Giovanni Medici.

The King had them give me nine hundred francs from the treasury in recompense for my having been brought to that court, whence, first having made my reverence to Her Majesty the Queen and thanked her for the letters she had written in my favor and recommendation during my misfortune at those

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States General of the Low Countries, I bethought myself of leaving and coming to Florence, moved by that letter which Your Serene Highness had had written to me while I was in Paris by the Signor Cavaliere Belisario Vinta asking for information that I felt obliged to come to tell you in person, as I have done completely and always will do as a most obligated and faithful vassal.

Leaving Paris, I went to Lyons by post, and thence by relays to Turin, and from there to Milan and then to Bologna. And finally, on the day of San Giovanni Gualberto, the twelfth of July, 1606, I reached Florence, whence I had departed in the year 1591, as I said at the beginning of these chronicles to Your Serene Highness: to whom, that same day, I was presented by the said Signor Cavaliere Vinta, your first secretary of state, to make you my reverence.