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JAHANGIR'S INDIA

The *Remonstrantie* of Francisco Pelsaert

TRANSLATED FROM THE DUTCH

BY

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Preface.

THE *Remonstrantie*—Report, or Relation,—of Francisco Pelsaert, a name which usually appears in its French form as François Pelsart, has been quoted or referred to by various writers on Mogul India from de Laet downwards, but, so far as I am aware, the complete document has never seen the light. Its contents inevitably precluded publication at the time, three centuries ago, when it was submitted to the Dutch East India Company, for it disclosed some important secrets of their trade. Nearly 40 years later, when the commercial situation was very different, M. Thévenot translated portions of it, about two-thirds of the whole, in his *Divers Voyages Curieux* (Paris, 1663), and this version, reproduced, I believe, in one or two later collections, has hitherto been the only source of information regarding Pelsaert's observations and opinions. Thévenot, who was working for a definitely commercial object, the promotion of French trade in the Indies, took only so much of the original as served his purpose, or, possibly, he had access to an incomplete manuscript, and it so happens that the portions omitted by him are of greater interest to students of history than those which he translated.

The translation now offered to the public has been made from photographs of the contemporary MS. in the Rijksarchief at The Hague. The *Remonstrantie* is primarily a commercial document, but, fortunately for posterity, Pelsaert included in it a detailed account of the social and administrative environment in which commerce had to be conducted. Readers who are not interested in such topics as the production of indigo, or the trade in spice, may be advised to pass lightly over the opening sections, which are mainly, though not exclusively, technical, in order to reach the subjects of more general importance which are treated further on—the administrative system, the standard of life, and the social and religious customs of the people.



PREFACE

CSL

The translation drafted by me has been revised, sentence by sentence, by Professor Geyl, who has had the last word on all questions regarding the meaning of the original text, but who is not responsible for the introduction, notes, or index. For generous assistance in preparing the book I have to thank, firstly, Dr. de Hullu, lately in charge of the colonial records in the Rijksarchief, who traced the MS. in reply to my enquiry on the subject; secondly, Mr. Bijlsma, now in charge of the colonial records, who supplied me with most of the references on which the introduction is based; and, thirdly, Mr. R. Burn, C.S.I., who obtained local information on many points dealt with in the notes. I have also to thank various friends, whose names are given in the notes, for information on particular matters.

W. H. MORELAND.

MAY, 1925.



Table of Contents

	PAGE
PREFACE - - - - -	v
INTRODUCTION - - - - -	ix
NOTES ON PELSART'S TRANSLITERATION - - -	xvii
THE REMONSTRANTIE	
1. THE CITY OF AGRA - - - - -	1
2. THE TRADE OF AGRA AND THE EAST COUNTRY -	6
3. INDIGO - - - - -	10
4. DESCRIPTION OF GUJARAT TRADE - - -	19
5. THE DUTCH TRADE IN NORTHERN INDIA - -	21
6. ACCOUNT OF THE PROVINCES NORTH AND WEST OF AGRA - - - - -	30
7. KASHMIR - - - - -	33
8. BURHANPUR AND GUJARAT - - - - -	37
9. THE TRADE IN DRUGS - - - - -	44
10. THE PRODUCTIVITY AND YIELD OF THE LAND -	47
11. THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE COUNTRY - -	50
12. THE MANNER OF LIFE - - - - -	60
13. RELIGIOUS SUPERSTITIONS - - - - -	69
14. THE HINDU RELIGION - - - - -	76
15. MOSLEM MARRIAGES IN AGRA - - - - -	81
CONCLUSION - - - - -	85
INDEX - - - - -	87



CSL

Introduction

THE brief but distinguished career of the author of the *Remonstrantie* can be traced in outline in the records of the Dutch East India Company. Francisco Pelsaert, of Antwerp, sailed for the East in the year 1618 in the position of assistant, the lowest grade but one in the Company's commercial service. In 1620 he was re-engaged in the higher rank of junior factor (*onderkoopman*), and was posted to India. He reached Surat in December of that year, travelling overland from the East coast, and was forthwith sent to Agra, where he remained until the end of 1627, rising to the position of senior factor. On the expiration of his engagement he returned to Holland, where he arrived in June, 1628, but his stay in Europe was short, for he was promptly re-employed, and sailed for Java on the *Batavia*, which cleared in October of the same year. In those days the command of a fleet or a ship, as distinct from the navigation, was ordinarily given to one of the Company's commercial servants, and Pelsaert was designated Commander of the *Batavia*, but he was finally appointed President of the fleet to which the *Batavia* belonged.

The voyage was disastrous. The *Batavia* was driven too far south, and was wrecked on an island off the west coast of Australia. Pelsaert undertook an adventurous boat journey to Java, reached Batavia safely, and returned on a relief-vessel to the scene of the wreck, where a serious mutiny had occurred. After dealing sternly with the mutineers, he brought the crew to Batavia, which was reached in December, 1629. The story of this shipwreck has a literature of its own. The journal of the voyage was published more than once in Holland, and a condensed translation was included in Thévenot's *Divers Voyages Curieux*, whence it passed into general circulation, until Francisco Pelsaert, expert indigo-buyer and general merchant, reappeared as 'the hard-headed Dutch sailor, Captain



INTRODUCTION

CSL

Francis Pelsart,' in tales of adventure published in the last century.¹

In a letter written in December, 1629, Pelsaert mentioned that his health had suffered from the fatigues and hardships he had experienced. In the following April he was appointed second-in-command of an expedition to Jambi in Sumatra; he returned to Batavia in June, and died in September. In the previous year he had been selected by the Directors of the Company as Extraordinary Member of the Council of India, but apparently his death occurred before the appointment could receive effect, as there is no record of his having taken his seat in Council.

The *Remonstrantie*, which sums up Pelsaert's seven years' experience in Agra, thus constitutes in effect the record of his regular work in the East. It was an important time, both for the Dutch Company and for the development of Indian commerce. After some abortive attempts to gain a footing in Western India, which terminated in the year 1607, the authorities at Batavia eventually found that a supply of cotton goods from Gujarat was indispensable to the success of their commercial operations, and they made a fresh start at Surat in 1616, but for a few years very little was accomplished. Then, towards the end of 1620, the well-known Pieter van den Broecke arrived in Surat as Director of what were called the 'Western Quarters,' comprising North and West India, Persia, and Arabia. In the course of the next seven years his talents and exertions secured for his employers a definite predominance in the trade of these regions, largely superseding the English merchants who had been first in the field.²

¹ See *Ongeluckige Voyagie van't Schip Batavia* (revised edition), Amsterdam, 1648; Thévenot, *Relation de divers voyages curieux*, Paris, 1663; *Early Voyages to Terra Australis*, Hakluyt Society, 1859; Henry Kingsley, *Tales of Old Travel*, London, 1869.

² The story of the Dutch establishment in Western India can be read at length in Dr. H. Terpstra's *Ophomst der Wester-Kwartieren van de Oost-Indische Compagnie* (The Hague, 1918). A brief summary is given in Ch. II. of my book, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb* (London, 1923).



INTRODUCTION

xi
CSL

While the primary object of this extension was to obtain a supply of cotton goods from Gujarat, the establishment of a factory at Agra was necessitated by two important considerations. In the first place, no European merchant in India could afford to neglect the indigo-trade, and the best indigo was grown in the vicinity of Agra. In the second place, the Dutch at this time relied mainly on sales of spices to finance their purchases, and Agra, or rather the Mogul Court, was the most extensive spice-market in India. Accordingly, we find that van den Broecke dispatched two factors, Heuten and Pelsaert, with some assistants, to Agra in January, 1621. The former died two years later; I have not traced the actual appointment of a successor, but an English letter of the period mentions that van den Broecke was thinking of Pelsaert as the most suitable candidate,¹ and probably he was in charge of the Agra factory from that time onwards. Of his actual experience in India, there is no formal record, but his descriptions of various places appear to afford sufficient indications of its range. He had, as has been mentioned above, travelled by land from Masulipatam to Surat, and from Surat to Agra; the latter journey was probably made by the eastern road, because his account of Burhanpur is clearly based on personal observation, while he does not describe any place on the alternative route by way of Ajmer. He had not travelled far to the eastward of Agra, certainly not so far as Allahabad, while on the other side he had visited Kashmir, presumably to transact some business at Court. This journey would take him to Lahore, as he would naturally use the route followed by the Emperor: apart from it, there are no indications of his having been absent from Agra for any considerable periods, except for seasonal visits to the indigo-country in the vicinity of Bayana.

Regarding the quality of his work the facts speak for themselves. He went up to Agra one of a small party of pioneers: when he left it, the Dutch had secured the leading position in the indigo-market, though there were still difficulties to be surmounted on the financial side.

¹ *The English Factories in India, 1622-23*, p. 281.



INTRODUCTION

That Pelsaert's services were appreciated by his immediate superior is shown by a letter of 16th December, 1627, from van den Broecke to the Directors of the Company, in which he wrote that he would gladly have retained the services of Senior Factor Francisco Pelsaert because of his good work, skill, and experience, and added a tribute to his knowledge of the language spoken in Agra. His selection as an Extraordinary Member of Council, within eleven years of his appointment as an assistant, sufficiently indicates the opinion formed of him by the Directors in Holland, based presumably in part on the *Remonstrantie*, and in part on the verbal reports which he furnished during his visit home. There is no doubt, then, that Pelsaert was an efficient and successful agent, whose work commended itself to his employers. Regarding his life, as distinguished from his work, I have found only a single notice. Some years after his death, an enquiry was held into irregularities at the Dutch factory in Agra, and the report, in dealing with the immoral life of the staff, observed incidentally that Pelsaert's private life also had been open to similar censure.¹ So far as Pelsaert was concerned, this report was *ex parte*, but there are various passages in the *Remonstrantie* which lend probability to the charge, and I think most readers of it will agree that his attitude on such matters was in harmony with his environment in Agra.

II.

The *Remonstrantie* was written, as the text shows, in 1626, when Pelsaert's engagement was drawing to an end. It is essentially a commercial report, drawn up for the use of the Company, not for a popular audience, and it is impossible to imagine that so much exclusive information would have been allowed to reach the Company's rivals in Europe. John de Laet was, however, permitted to use the portion dealing with the standard of life, which is closely summarised in his *De Imperio Magni Mogolis*, published in

¹ The report is abstracted in the *Dagh Register*, under date 22nd March, 1636; I have not traced the original document.



INTRODUCTION

CSL
xiii

1631.¹ Apart from this, I can trace no reference to the *Remonstrantie* until Thévenot published his abbreviated translation in 1663, and all the later references to it which I have noticed go back to Thévenot, and not to the original.

The present translation has been made from photographs of a manuscript preserved in the Rijksarchief, the only one of which I have heard. The manuscript is a contemporary copy, and, on the evidence of handwriting, Mr. Bijlsma concludes that it was written by a junior factor named Salomon Deschamps, who was with Pelsaert on the *Batavia*, and was subsequently sentenced to death for complicity in the mutiny. Probably then, the copy was made in Holland during the year 1628, while the copyist was waiting for his ship to sail. The text is in the usual commercial script of the period, and is as a rule very legible. Foreign names and words are written in the Italian hand, in the use of which the copyist was less expert, and there are occasional blunders and corrections which suggest that he was not familiar with Indian nomenclature; the great majority of the foreign words are, however, perfectly plain when once Pelsaert's methods of transliteration have been grasped. There can be no question that he had an accurate ear, while we know from van den Broecke's letter already quoted that he had mastered the language of the country, and these facts justify the inference that the comparatively few errors and obscurities in Indian words are due to the copyist, rather than the writer.

It is possible that the extant manuscript represents a later recension of the *Remonstrantie* than that which was used by Thévenot. The latter's translation bears the date 'Agra, 15th February, 1627,' and, if this is correct, it suggests that the manuscript used by him had been sent to Holland in the spring of that year. Pelsaert remained in India nearly a year longer, and, if the extant manuscript was copied in Holland in 1628, it may contain additions or corrections which were not available to Thévenot. This conjecture would explain some of the numerous differences between Thévenot's version and the present translation,

¹ Vide *Journal*, Royal Asiatic Society, January, 1923, p. 85.



INTRODUCTION

CSL

but it rests solely on the date given by Thévenot, who cannot be regarded as a very accurate compiler.

The aim of the translation is to reproduce Pelsaert's statements of fact and expressions of opinion as nearly as possible in his own language, but in a form which shall be intelligible to modern readers. A word-for-word rendering would not fulfil the latter condition, because the syntax of the original will not bear reproduction. Pelsaert had a gift for words, but not for putting words together. His ordinary narrative consists of long rambling sentences, loosely connected by conjunctions which are not always appropriate, but, in passages where he is striving for effect, the construction becomes so involved that it is sometimes impossible to be certain of the precise meaning. The footnotes indicate the passages where it has been found necessary to amend the text or offer a conjectural version, and also one or two cases where condensation has been considered desirable on other grounds. Apart from these, the departures from the original consist in breaking up the longer sentences, and eliminating verbal reduplications or redundancies, or in occasional insertions, which are marked by square brackets. Some of the titles of sections are given in the manuscript; where a title is wanting, it has been supplied in brackets.

As regards the language used in the translation, such Indian words as have become acclimatised in English have been allowed to remain, with necessary explanations in the notes, while modern equivalents have been used for expressions which are now obsolete. 'Moslems,' for instance, represents 'Moors,' while 'heathens' appear as 'Hindus.' Various words which originally meant linen are rendered as 'cotton goods' or 'calico,' their use in this sense having already become recognised in Eastern commerce at the time when Pelsaert wrote. The Dutch 'coopman' appears as 'factor,' the contemporary English term, while 'factory' represents 'comptoir.' Indian proper names are transliterated in the popular style in cases where there is no doubt as to their identity; in case of doubt, Pelsaert's empirical spelling has been retained. In providing footnotes the aim has been to give the minimum necessary to understand the text, and I have refrained from encumbering the book



INTRODUCTION

xv
CSL

with illustrative or confirmatory quotations from contemporary writers.

In a few passages in the *Remonstrantie*, Pelsaert refers to a history of the Mogul Empire, which he had written, or intended to write. No such work is extant, but there are some grounds for inferring that it may have been incorporated in the 'Fragment of Indian History,' which John de Laet printed in *De Imperio Magni Mogolis*, and which, to quote Dr. Vincent Smith,¹ 'deserves to be used critically as one of the early authorities for the history of Akbar.' De Laet mentions that he received the Dutch version of the Fragment from van den Broecke. Now in 1627, van den Broecke sent home a chronicle of the Moguls from the time of Humayun,² containing, as he wrote, all that he had been able to put together on the subject. It is unlikely that he should have compiled two chronicles of the period, and it is more reasonable to infer that the Fragment represents the chronicle sent home in 1627, and subsequently communicated to de Laet. Van den Broecke would naturally have sought for materials in Agra, lately the Mogul capital, and his subordinate, Pelsaert, would have been the natural agent to employ; but in any case we have the fact that the two men were engaged simultaneously in compiling the history of the Mogul Empire, and collaboration seems much more probable than independent work in view of the intimate relations which subsisted between them. If van den Broecke incorporated his subordinate's chronicle, it becomes easy to understand why no separate copy of it has survived³; and there is no reason for doubting Pelsaert's statement that he had studied the history of the country in which he was living.

A few words may be added regarding the orthography of Pelsaert's name. He himself wrote his Christian name as Francisco, and signed in the abbreviated form Franc^o, but

¹ *Akbar the Great Mogul*, p. 474 (2nd edition, Oxford, 1919).

² Letter to the Directors, dated 16th December, 1627, in the Rijksarchief.

³ Two copies of the Dutch original of the Fragment are preserved in the Rijksarchief, but they are copies only and give no clue to the authorship.



INTRODUCTION

CSL

Even in some Dutch works, like the *Journal of the Batavia* already quoted, he appears as Francoys; the form used by Thévenot was François, which was Englished to Francis in due course. The correct form of the surname, as it appears in official records, is Pelsaert, but his extant signatures are in the form Pelsartt, while van den Broecke wrote Pelser, and Thévenot gave the name its French form as Pelsart. The official style, Francisco Pelsaert, appears to be the most suitable in an age which, unlike the seventeenth century, expects uniformity in such matters.

W. H. MORELAND.

MAY, 1925.



Notes on Pelsaert's Transliteration

THE following notes, which are based on tabulation of words which can be identified with certainty, may be of use to students interested in some of the names which are given in the text in Pelsaert's spelling.

VOWELS. Pelsaert's 'e' usually represents a short Indian vowel, either 'a' or 'i,' while 'ae' represents Indian 'ā.' The diphthongs 'oo' and 'ou' may represent either 'ū' or 'ü.'

ASPIRATES. An Indian aspirate is sometimes omitted, e.g. 'Mameth' for 'Muhammad.'

DENIALS. The use of these was not systematised, and 't,' 'th,' 'd,' 'dt,' may be interchanged.

SIBILANTS. Pelsaert wrote 's' and 'z' almost indifferently. He evidently noticed some difference between Indian and Dutch sibilants, because he usually represented the former by 'ts' and 'tz,' or, with an apostrophe, 't's,' 't'z.'

GUTTURALS. These also were not systematised, and 'c,' 'ch,' 'g,' 'gh,' 'k,' and 'q,' are largely interchangeable. The Dutch pronunciation of these sounds approached nearer to Arabic than Indian usage, so that it was natural for Pelsaert to represent 'kh' and 'gh' by 'c' or 'g.'

PALATALS. Pelsaert had no signs available to represent the Indian 'j' or 'ch,' and his practice varied. Initial 'j' was usually represented by 'z,' but sometimes by 'zi': final 'j' usually by 's'; in the middle of a word we may find 's,' 'z,' 'di,' or 'dj.' For 'ch,' we have such forms as 'tch,' 'tschi,' 'ts,' 't'z.'

Pelsaert's 'ch' may represent a guttural, a sibilant, or, in one instance, a palatal. When he transliterated direct into Dutch, it is guttural, e.g. 'Chan' stands for 'Khān'; but when he was influenced by Portuguese usage, it represents the Indian or English 'sh,' so that 'Cha' stands for 'shāh.' He gives the word for current money as 'chalani,' just as it would be written to-day, but I have found no other instance of the use of 'ch' to represent a palatal sound.

The remaining letters call for no remarks, but the copyist occasionally wrote 'v' and 'r' so nearly alike that misreading is possible, and this is true also of his 'f' and 's' when occurring in the middle of a word.



Report

ON the present condition of the trade of this country, as ascertained by me, Francisco Pelsaert, Senior Factor, by careful enquiry and close observation in the seven years during which I have transacted the business of the United East India Company at the factory in Agra and elsewhere, under the control of Commander Pieter van den Broeke; set out briefly as follows.

[I. THE CITY OF AGRA.]

FIRSTLY, of the City of Agra, which is situated in $28^{\circ} 45'$ latitude. The city is exceedingly large, but decayed, open, and unwall'd. The streets and houses are built without any regular plan. There are, indeed, many palaces belonging to great princes and lords, but they are hidden away in alleys and corners. This is due to the sudden growth of the city, which was a mere village, lying in the jurisdiction of Bayana, until King Akbar chose it for his residence in the year 1566, and built the magnificent fort on the Jumna, which flows past the city, and is a musket-shot broad. The luxuriance of the groves all round makes it resemble a royal park rather than a city, and everyone acquired and purchased the plot of land which suited or pleased him best. Consequently there are no remarkable market-places, or bazaars, as there are in Lahore, Burhanpur, Ahmadabad or other cities, but the whole place is closely built over and inhabited, Hindus mingled with Moslems, the rich with the poor; and if the present King [Jahangir] had fixed his residence here as his father did, the city would have become one of the wonders of the world, for the gates which Akbar built for its security,¹ (Madari darwaza, Chaharsu darwaza,

¹ Modern descriptions of Agra name only the gates in the fortifications which were constructed after Pelsaert's time, and I have not found any other list of Akbar's gates, but my friend, Mr. R. Burn, has kindly ascertained for me that four of the five names survive in modern street nomenclature. The fifth is written Poutou; the last letter may be read either as 'n' or as 'u,' and I conjecture Puttu.



JAHANGIR'S INDIA

CSL

Nim darwaza, Puttu [?] darwaza, Nuri darwaza), now stand in the middle of the city, and¹ the area of buildings outside them is fully three times greater in extent.

The breadth of the city is by no means so great as the length, because everyone has tried to be close to the river bank, and consequently the water-front is occupied by the costly palaces of all the famous lords, which make it appear very gay and magnificent, and extend for a distance of 6 kos² or $3\frac{1}{2}$ Holland miles. I will record the chief of these palaces in order.

Beginning from the north,³ there is the palace of Bahadur Khan, who was formerly king of the fortress of Asir (5 kos from Burhanpur). Next is the palace of Raja Bhoj [?], father of the present Rai Ratan [?], Governor of Burhanpur⁴ (rank 5000 horse). Then come Ibrahim Khan (3000 horse); Rustam Kandahari (5000 horse); Raja Kishan Das (3000 horse); Itiqad Khan, the youngest brother of Asaf Khan (5000 horse); Shahzada Khanam, sister of the present king, who was married to Muzaffar Khan (formerly King of Gujarat); Goulziaer Begam,⁵ this king's mother; Khwaja Muhammad Thakaar⁶ [?] (2000 horse); Khwaja Bansi, formerly steward of Sultan Khurram

¹ In the MS. this clause begins with a negative particle which makes it unintelligible; the rendering given assumes that the particle is a copyist's mistake.

² The "Holland mile" was nearly 3 English miles, making the kos equal to about $1\frac{2}{3}$ of the latter. Further on the Holland mile is equated to $1\frac{1}{2}$ kos, making the kos about two English miles.

³ This list of palaces relates, it will be seen, to the western, or right bank, of the river, now occupied largely by modern buildings; possibly local antiquaries could still trace some of the sites recorded by Pelsaert. To annotate the passage which follows would take too much space; students of the period will recognise most of the names, and I refer only to those of which the reading is doubtful. The names should be taken as those in popular use, not as showing the actual occupants; some of them were dead when Pelsaert wrote. The number of horse after each name indicates the officer's rank in the Mogul system of administration.

⁴ Text has Bohos . . . roatan. Thévenot gives Botios . . . Rottang. For Bhoj and Ratan (Sarbuland Rai), see Rogers and Beveridge, *Memoirs of Jahangir*, II., 140.

⁵ This should represent Guljar Begam, but the name of Jahangir's mother is not elsewhere recorded (Beni Prasad, *History of Jahangir*, 6n.); her official title was Maryam-uz-Zamani, which Pelsaert gives below as "Maryam Makani."

⁶ Thakaar (or perhaps Thahaar) seems to be corrupt, and I cannot identify the name.



THE CITY OF AGRA

CSL

(1000 horse); Wazir Khan (5000 horse); Tzoaeghpoeera,¹ a large enclosure, inhabited by the widows of the late King Akbar; the palaces of Ehtibar Khan the eunuch, who was Governor² of Agra city at his death; Baqar Khan (3000 horse); Mirza Aboussagiet [?] (1500 horse);³ the exceedingly handsome and costly palace of Asaf Khan (8000 horse); Itimad-ud Daula (5000 horse); Khwaja Abdul Hasan⁴ (5000 horse); Rochia Sultan Begam,⁵ the present King's sister, but unmarried.

Then begins the Shahburj, or royal bastion, of the Fort, the walls of which are built of red cut stone, 25 ells⁶ high, and 2 kos in perimeter; in appearance, as well as in cost, it surpasses many of the most famous structures in the world. It is situated on a moderate elevation with a pleasing prospect on all sides, but especially towards the river, where it is magnificently adorned with stone lattice work and gilded windows, and here the King was accustomed to sit when he made his elephants fight. A short distance within stands his Ghusalkhana, which is very richly decked with alabaster, and has four angles and raised seats, the domes over which are plated on the outside with gold, so that the look of it is not only royal on a close view, but Imperial from a distance. Beyond this is a palace of Nurjahan Begam, the present Queen. There is little or no room within the Fort, it being occupied by various princely edifices and residences, as well as *mahals*, or palaces for ladies. Among these is the palace of Maryam Makani, wife of Akbar and mother of Jahangir, as well as three other *mahals*, named respectively *Itwar* (Sunday), *Mangal* (Tuesday), and *Sanichar* (Saturday), in which the King used to sleep on the day denoted by the name, and a fifth, the

¹ Possibly Shaikhpora, or some such name as Sokhpura.

² The Dutch 'Gouverneur' and English 'Governor' of this period represent the Portuguese 'governador.' All three are usually applied, not to the Viceroy of a Mogul province, but to his subordinate, the Amil of a *sarkar* or district. 'Governors' in the plural is occasionally used loosely to denote high officials in general.

³ Probably Mirza Abu Said, the *g* being a copying error for *y*.

⁴ Probably Abul Hasan.

⁵ Probably Ruqqaiya Sultan Begam, but if so the description is wrong, as that lady was married to Akbar. I cannot find that any of Akbar's daughters bore any name resembling that in the text.

⁶ The Dutch ell was about $\frac{3}{4}$ yard.



Bengali Mahal, occupied by ladies of various nations. Internally then the Fort is built over like a city with streets and shops, and has very little resemblance to a fortress, but from the outside anyone would regard it as impregnable.

After passing the Fort, there is the *Nakhas*, a great market, where in the morning horses, camels, oxen, tents, cotton goods, and many other things are sold. Beyond it lie the houses of some great lords, such as Mirza Abdulla, son of Khan Azam (3000 horse); Aga Nur, provost of the King's army (3000 horse); Jahan Khan (2000 horse); Mirza Khurram son of Khan Azam (2000 horse); Mahabat Khan (8000 horse); Khan Alam (5000 horse); Raja Bet [?] Singh¹ (3000 horse); the late Raja Man Singh (5000 horse); Raja Madho Singh (2000 horse).

On the other side of the river is a city named Sikandra,² well built and populated, but chiefly by banian³ merchants, for through it must pass all the merchandise brought from *Porop*, and *Bengalen puroop*⁴ and the Bhutan mountains, namely, cotton goods from Bengal, raw silk from Patna, spikenard, borax, verdigris, ginger, fennel, and thousands of sorts of drugs, too numerous to detail in this place. Here the officers of Nur Jahan Begam, who built their sarai there, collect duties on all these goods before they can be shipped across the river; and also on innumerable kinds of grain, butter, and other provisions, which are produced in the Eastern provinces, and imported thence. Without

¹ Thévenot has Bart Singh. The reference may possibly be to Bhao Singh, but he held the rank of 5000 horse at his death.

² Distinguish from Sikandra, the place where Akbar's tomb stands, and which lies some distance west of the river.

³ The text has 'Bayaenen,' i.e. of Bayana; the copyist's confusion between 'Bayana' and 'banian' reappears in other passages, and apparently he had heard of Bayana indigo, but not of banians.

⁴ 'Porop' (i.e. *Purab*, 'the East') appears with various spellings in some European records of the period as the name of a Mogul province, but I have not found it so used in any contemporary administrative documents, and I suspect its current use was vague rather than definite. From a later paragraph it will be seen that Pelsaert used the term to include the Mogul provinces of Allahabad, Bihar, and Orissa, but not Bengal. 'Bengalen-purop' is apparently corrupt. Thévenot has 'de Bengale, de Purlas, et de Boutom,' while the text has an erasure after 'puroop': the general meaning is however clear, 'goods from the East-country.'



THE CITY OF AGRA

CSL

These supplies this country could not be provided with food, and would almost die of hunger, so that this is a place of great traffic; it is fully two kos long, but not so broad, and contains many very handsome gardens, with buildings as delightful as the groves, among them those of Sultan Parviz, Nurjahan Begam, and the late Itimad-ud Daula, father of Asaf Khan and of the Queen. He was buried here, and his tomb has already cost fully 350,000 rupees, and will cost 1,000,000 more before it is finished. There are also two gardens belonging to the King, one named Charbagh,¹ the other Moti Mahal, and very many more, with handsome walls and great gateways, more like forts than gardens, so that the city is most pleasantly adorned. Here the great lords far surpass ours in magnificence, for their gardens serve for their enjoyment while they are alive, and after death for their tombs, which during their lifetime they build with great magnificence in the middle of the garden. The number of these is consequently so great that I shall abandon the attempt to describe them in detail, and turn to the trade of the country and the city.

¹ This word is not clear in the text, but I read it as 'Tsiarbaegh' the first three letters would represent *ch*.

[2. THE TRADE OF AGRA AND THE EAST COUNTRY.]

COMMERCE flourished here in the time of Akbar, and also in the beginning of the present reign, while he [Jahangir] still possessed a vigorous intellect, but since this King devoted his life to enjoyment, violence has taken the place of justice. Whereas each governor ought to protect the people under him, they have in fact by subtle means drained the people dry, because they know very well that poor suppliants cannot get a hearing at the King's Court; and consequently the country is impoverished, and the citizens have lost heart, for, as the old people say, the city has now nothing left of the glory of colour and splendour which formerly shone throughout the whole world. The survival of a certain amount of commerce is due to the situation of the city at the junction of all the roads from distant countries. All goods¹ must pass this way, as from Gujarat, Tatta (or Sind); from Kabul, Kandahar, or Multan, to the Deccan; from the Deccan or Burhanpur to those places, or to Lahore; and from Bengal and the whole East country; there are no practicable alternative routes, and the roads carry indescribable quantities of merchandise, especially cotton goods.

The East country (*Pourop*)² extends to Jagannath, a distance reckoned as 600 kos, and contains many large cities, among them the following.

Allahabad (150 kos), produces no commodities, and has very little trade, but is rather a pleasure-resort. King

¹ The text has *treckende ende gevende waren*, which is unintelligible. We should perhaps read *gaende* for *gevende*, the two participles together signifying 'in course of movement.'

² The rest of this section must be read as hearsay. The Dutch had not yet begun to trade in the country east of Agra, and the topographical details must represent the statements of Indian merchants in Agra, which naturally would not be precise in regard to distances or direction, and would increase in vagueness with increasing distance.



THE TRADE OF AGRA

CSL

Akbar built a very fine fort here, because it is the meeting-place of the three famous rivers, the Ganges, the Jumna, and¹ [blank in MS.].

Jaunpur (25 kos further), produces and exports large quantities of cotton goods, such as turbans, girdles, white *chelas*², *zelal*, *t'sey*, and coarse carpets.

Benares (5 kos further), also produces girdles, turbans, clothes for Hindu women, *t'soekhamber*, *gangazil* (a white cloth); also copper pots, dishes, basins, and other articles for use in Hindu houses.

Oudh (3 kos further), furnishes rather coarse cloth in pieces of 16 *gaz* ['yards' of about 32 inches].

Lakhawar (15 kos further), produces ambertees,³ a superior grade of white cloth, 14 *gaz* long and of different widths, worth from four to ten rupees the piece.

Patna (300 kos from Agra), yields annually 1000 to 2000 maunds of silk,⁴ the best of which sells at 16 or 17 mohurs per maund (of 50 lb.); taking the mohur at seven rupees, the price is 110 to 120 rupees. Most, or all, of it is consumed in Gujarat, the rest here in Agra. Formerly the English had a factory at Patna for the purchase of raw silk, but, owing to heavy losses, the trade has been discontinued for six or seven years, and does not appear likely to be

¹ The missing name is Saraswati, the river which in legend, if not in fact, joins the Ganges at Allahabad. 'Pleasure-resort' doubtless refers to the pilgrimage.

² Much remains to be done before the nomenclature of Indian cotton goods is satisfactorily explained. Pelsaert is not of great help, because he had not been actively engaged in this market, and probably gives only such names as he had picked up from Indian merchants. *Chela* is used of goods from various places: in Jaunpur, it was probably a plain calico. *Zelal* probably refers to the plain calico of Jalalpur (now in Fyzabad district). *T'sey* is a name I have not found elsewhere; it may possibly contain a reference to the river Sai. *T'soekhamber* is probably for 'chaukhamba,' which would indicate a four-line pattern; *gangazil* represents 'Gangajali,' or 'Ganges-water,' a fanciful description.

³ Lakhawar is really South of Patna; for its 'ambertee' calico, see *The English Factories in India*, 1618-21, p. 192, and *passim*.

⁴ The English letters from Patna (*vide* preceding note) show that the silk obtained there came from Bengal; the muslin (*cassa*) came from the same region. The gold mohur is described in a later paragraph. The maund of 50 Holland pounds is the Akbari maund (about 55 lb. avoirdupois).



resumed; besides, they are now getting Persian silk at a more reasonable price. Patna produces also much muslin (*cassa*), but it is coarse, worth four or five rupees the piece; also shields, which sell well in Agra.

Chabaspur and *Sonargaon* with the surrounding villages,¹ and indeed as far as *Jagannath*, all live by the weaving industry, and the produce has the highest reputation and quality, especially the fine muslin (*cassa* and *malmal*), which is also much longer and wider than elsewhere. An ordinary *cassa* is only 21–22 *gaz* by $1\frac{1}{8}$, but these are usually 24–25 *gaz* by $1\frac{1}{4}$, equivalent to 30 Holland ells long, by $1\frac{1}{2}$ ells broad.²

Jagannath (600 kos from here), is where the East country (*Poorop*) ends and Bengal begins. It produces fine muslin (*cassa* and *malmal*), also *hamaium*, and *tsehen*,³ a superior wide cloth suitable for bed-sheets, but little of it is brought [here] owing to the high quality and cost. Further on, *Dacca*, *Tsettagham*, *Bipil bander orixa*,⁴ are all under this King's rule; in these places the Portuguese used to have an extensive trade, for they have here cities inhabited by their own people, but they are now subject to the Moguls, because this King has built forts everywhere to keep them in subjection. Many of their trading vessels used to come annually from Malacca and Macao; they brought spices, [woollen] cloth,⁵ lead, tin, quicksilver, and vermillion; and for the return voyage purchased many kinds of white cotton cloth

¹ The topography becomes very vague here. *Chabaspur* may represent *Shahbazpur* in Backergunge district; *Sonargaon* was close to *Dacca*; *Jagannath* is on the Orissa coast. *Cassa* and *malmal* are the usual names for Bengal muslins.

² This equation gives approximately 32 inches for the *gaz*, showing that Akbar's *Ilahi gaz* is intended, and not the Bengal *gaz* of 27 inches.

³ *Hamaium* may be identified with *hammam*, a well-known Bengal calico of superior quality; *tsehen*, with *sahan*, also a high-grade calico.

⁴ 'Tsettagham' might represent either *Satgaon* or *Chittagong*; probably the former is intended, as the latter was outside the Mogul Empire. The next expression has obviously puzzled the copyist, but I take it to represent *Pipli-bandar* in Orissa, the port for those vessels which were not taken up the Hooghly river.

⁵ The text has *laken*, a general word for cloth, but in the East at this time it denoted the woollen cloth imported from Europe, as distinct from the cotton cloth of India.



THE TRADE OF AGRA

9^{CSL}

as well as Bengal muslin, or loaded their frigates with butter, rice, gingelly seed, and such goods, making large profits. The local muslins are not woven smoothly, because the yarn is rough and harsh, and consequently the cloth is not soft or pleasant to handle.

All these countries are very fertile, and yield immense quantities of grain, such as wheat or rice, sugar, and butter, large quantities of which are brought up the river Jumna, or carried by oxen overland, to provision this country [that is, Agra] and the King's army. In the other direction shallow-draught vessels carry from here much Sambhar salt (as there is little or no local salt), also opium, assafoetida, 'painted' cloth¹ called *chits* [chintz], red *salu* from Burhanpur, ormesines from Lahore, horses, and large quantities of cotton, which is grown largely between Surat and Burhanpur, and supports an extensive trade to Agra.

In Agra, and in Fathpur [Sikri], 12 kos from here, carpets are woven in moderate quantities, and can be obtained to order, fine or coarse as required, but the quality usually made sells at the rate of $2\frac{1}{4}$ to 3 rupees the square *gaz*. There is no other noteworthy local produce, since everything is brought from a distance; but the city contains all sorts of artisans in great numbers, who can imitate neatly whatever they see, but design nothing by themselves. We will therefore describe at some length the cultivation, manufacture, and sale of the indigo [of] Koil, Mewat, and the most distant villages of Agra and Bayana, which is an important article of commerce throughout the whole world.²

¹ 'Painted cloth,' i.e. Portuguese *pintado*, a description applied commercially both to the patterned goods of the East Coast, and to the chintz or prints of Northern and Western India.

² The grammar of this sentence is obscure; it may possibly be intended to mean that the indigo-villages in Mewat are more distant from Agra and Bayana than those of the Koil (i.e. Aligarh) tract.



[3. INDIGO.]

INDIGO is sown in June, when the first rain has fallen, at the rate of 14 or 15 lb. of seed to the *bigha*, or square of 60 Holland ells. If the rains are moderate, the crop grows an ell high in the course of four months, and is usually cut at the end of September or early in October, when it is fully ripe.¹ The leaves of indigo are round, not unlike the rue of our country. The cold weather sometimes sets in so suddenly that, if the cutting is postponed too long, the indigo loses its colour in the course of manufacture, and comes out brown without gloss, for it cannot stand cold. It is a good sign of a heavy yield if in the *nauti* [first crop] grass comes up plentifully, though expensive weeding is then required to prevent injury to the indigo roots, or delay in growth. At harvest the plants are cut a handbreadth from the ground, and next year the *ziarie* [second, or ratoon, crop] grows from the stumps. The yield of one *bigha* is usually put into each *put*, and allowed to steep for 16 or 17 hours, the *put* being about 38 ft. in perimeter, and its depth the height of an ordinary man; the water is then run off into a round *put*, constructed at a somewhat lower level, 32 ft. in circumference and 6 ft. deep. Two or three men standing in the *put* work the indigo back and forward with their arms, and owing to the continuous motion the water absorbs the dark-blue colour. It is then allowed to stand

¹ In order to follow this description, it is necessary to remember that in Pelsaert's time the indigo crop was commonly ratooned. The first year's cutting was called *nauti*; the cuttings in the second year were known as *jarhi* (or 'ziarie' as Pelsaert wrote); while a final cutting called *katel* was occasionally made, instead of leaving the last growth for seed. Akbar's *bigha* was a square of 60 *gaz*; Pelsaert may have written ells by mistake for *gaz*, but more probably the local *bigha* at Bayana was smaller than the Imperial standard. The word *put*, by which he designates the receptacles used in the manufacture, has such a wide range of meaning—hole, pool, pit, well—that it has seemed best to retain it in the translation, rather than risk introducing a wrong idea along with a particular equivalent. The description which follows points to receptacles not very different from the modern vats.



INDIGO

CSL

again for 16 hours, during which the matter, or substance, settles in a bowl-shaped receptacle at the bottom of the round *put*. The water is then run off through an outlet at the level of the bottom; the indigo which has sunk down is taken out, and laid on cotton cloths until it becomes as firm as soap, when it is made into balls. The bottom of the *put* [or, the ground under it] is spread with ashes,¹ so that a crust may be formed. The contents of each *put* is then placed in an earthen vessel, which is closed tightly to exclude light and wind, so that it may not become too dry, for if the indigo is exposed to wind even for an hour, it will become drier than if it were left exposed to the sun for the same time. The contents of each *put* (known as *dadera*) is usually from 12 to 20 ser according to the yield of the plant, that is to say, when the peasants or other dealers sell to us; it dries further by quite 5 ser in the maund in the course of handling, and in the bales. This *nauti* indigo is brown in colour and coarse in quality, and can easily be recognised by the eye or by touch.² It is more useful for dyeing woollens and other heavy goods, because it goes further than the *ziarie*.

The stalks, which are left a handbreadth high in October, grow again, and in the beginning of the following August, when the crop is fully half an ell high, it is cut in the manner already described for the *nauti*. Sometimes when the rains are, or have been, favourable, the *ziarie* plants are so luxuriant that three cuttings are made—once in the beginning of August, once in the beginning of September, and again when the *nauti* is cut, this last crop being called *katel*. When this happens, it is a sure sign that indigo will be cheap.

The *ziarie* indigo is superior in quality to the *nauti*, giving a violet infusion. Its quality can be easily judged, even without examining the inside of it, for it is much lighter in the hand than the *nauti*. In order to judge indigo with certainty, it should be looked at before midday in the sunshine; if it is pure, it will glisten and show various colours, like a rainbow, so that owing to the variations no

¹ The text is ambiguous, and it is not clear from it where Pelsaert says the ashes were placed.

² Two words are omitted here as unintelligible.



12
opinion of the colour can be formed. If it contains sand or dirt, the adulterations cannot be overlooked in sunlight. Such impurities are common; sometimes they are added intentionally to increase the weight, or they may be caused by the wind, if the balls, while still fresh and not hardened, are left to dry on sandy soil.

Katel is of extremely bad quality, hard, dull, without gloss or colour, almost like charcoal. It is bought from the sellers at half price, and beaten into powder with sticks. In order to prevent its detection, it is mixed with *ziarie* and *nauti* and made into bales, which must be carefully watched for, both in opening the sacks and in the pots. The man who buys in sacks or made-up bales must be on the look out for *katel* or inferior *nauti*, which, as I have said, is powdered and added. The man who buys or receives indigo still in pots must personally see that the top and the bottom are uniform, for sometimes *ziarie* is put on top and *nauti* under, and sometimes the top is fully dry and light, while the bottom is wet and heavy stuff like earth. This may serve as an earnest warning to anyone who has to receive indigo. Also, if circumstances permit, one should always open indigo in the sun in order to weigh it, for then the good or bad quality will become obvious as the balls are broken, but this operation must be carried on steadily. It is also advantageous, because the indigo dries very greatly while being handled and weighed in the sun. At the present time, however, many makers do not cut the *katel*, because, while the cost of manufacture is equal for all qualities, the yield of *katel* is barely half that of *ziarie* (that is, 15 to 20 ser for each *put*), the leaves containing little substance; the *katel* crop is therefore left on the ground to yield seed for the *nauti* of the following year.

The best comparison I can give to illustrate these three kinds of indigo is that the *nauti* is like a growing lad who has still to come to his prime and vigour; the *ziarie* is like a man in his vigorous prime; the *katel* is like an old, decrepit man, who in the course of his journey has had to cross many valleys of sadness and many mountains of misery, not only changed and wrinkled in the face, but falling gradually into helpless senility. I will add that the *nauti* far sur-



passes the *katel* in substance and quality, for while only a rupee a maund separates the *ziarie* from the *nauti*, they are worth fully double the *katel*.

The standing indigo is liable to many more accidents or misfortunes than other crops or products. If scanty rains follow the sowing of the *nauti*, the seed withers in the ground, while excessive rain and lack of sunshine quickly cause the plants to rot or to be washed one over another. Sometimes after a successful *nauti*, excessive cold in December, January, or February, so injures the roots which should give the *ziarie*, that no crop can be expected; and, if this has not happened, but the rains are late, with no fall in June or the first half of July, then the roots dry up, and obtain no nourishment for the crop. Further, for the last three years in succession, locusts have appeared in such numbers during June, July and August, as sometimes to obscure the sun, and wherever they settled, they cleared the land so completely that not a blade was left. They dominated the neighbourhood of Bayana to such an extent that they ate up entire fields of indigo as far as the eye could reach, leaving nothing but the bare stalks, and this has kept the price of indigo very high. Again, in September of 1621, the rainfall was so excessive and continuous that the whole country was flooded; the indigo crop, which was so promising that the peasants were afraid there would not be merchants enough to buy it, was so thoroughly washed away that what survived would not yield 400 bales; and consequently many men who were rich and had been concerned in sowing indigo all their lives, were reduced to such poverty, that even now nothing like so much indigo is sown as formerly. The yield of the indigo in the adjacent region known as Bayana used to be 4000 bales, but at present it is, at the outside, very little more than half that quantity.

The true Bayana indigo, which is made near that town, does not amount to more than about 300 bales, but it is much superior to the produce of other neighbouring villages. This superiority is due to the brackish water in the wells near the town, for the use of sweet water makes the indigo hard and coarse. There may be two wells nearly close together, one brackish and the other sweet; and in that

case plant worked with the brackish water will give indigo worth at least one rupee per maund more than plant cut from the same field, and worked with the sweet water.

The villages where indigo is made are the following, grouped under the five principal places:¹

1. BAYANA. Ebrahemedebat (one kos), Serco (4 k.), Otschien [Ujjain] (6 k.), Patehiouna [? Pachauna] (5 k.), T'sonoua [Sanowa] (4 k.), Pinijora (6 k.), Maunana (6 k.), Birampoer (4 k.), Melecqpoer [Malikpur] (4 k.), Berettha (5 k.), Azenaulie (4 k.), Batziora [Bachora] (4 k.), Pedaurle (4 k.), Gordaha (5 k.), Helleck (7 k.), Nade Beij (10 k.), Pehekertsie (7 k.), Koreka (5 k.), Khondier (5 k.), Rodauwlkera (4 k.), Nimbera (7 k.), Berouwa (5 k.), Ratsiona (7 k.), Indiara (4 k.), Tseneorpana (5 k.), Lathehora (4 k.).

2. GHANOWA, 10 kos west of Bayana. Mahal (2 k.), Roubas (2 k.), Tsertsonda [? Sirsaunda] (1½ k.), Daber (2 k.), Mahalpoer (1 k.), Gorassa (1 k.), Danagham (2 k.), Bockolie [Bakhauli] (1 k.), Barrawa (1½ k.), Ordela (¾ k.), Ziasewolie [? Jajawali] (1½ k.), Phetapoer (5 k.).

3. BASSOUWER, 10 k. east of Bayana. Weyer (3 k.), Ratsoulpoer [Rasulpur] (4 k.), Hissounla (4 k.), Tserres (2 k.), Borolie (1½ k.), Ziarathara (3 k.), Pantla (2½ k.), T'zetzelie [? Chachauli] (3 k.), T'sonoher (6 k.), T'sonkeri (6 k.).

4. HINDAUN, 10 k. from Bayana. Khera (2 k.), Ziamaelpoer [Jamalpur] (2 k.), Kottopoer (2 k.), Paricanepoer (3 k.), Osierpoer [Wazirpur] (6 k.), T'serroot (5 k.), Siltoiali (6 k.), Nardoulie (6 k.).

5. TORA, 18 kos from Bayana, with several villages under it, yields only about 200 bales annually; the indigo is brown rather than violet² in colour, and the balls are made much smaller than elsewhere.

¹ The list of villages which follows must be left to students of local topography, with the warning that some of the names have probably been corrupted in copying. I have indicated in brackets some probable equivalents, where Pelsaert's methods of transliteration might mislead English readers. Of the larger centres, Bayana appears on modern maps as Biana, S.W. of Agra, on the railway to Kotah, and Hindaun is on the same line, further south. Bassouwer may be Baseri, 20 miles east by south from Biana; Tora must be Toda Bhim, 35 miles due west. I have not found any name like Ghanowa or Chanowa west of Biana, but, if we read east for west, we find Khanua, 18 miles N.E. The distances given in the text are presumably measured from the town under which the village appears.

² The text has *uyt den violetten*. The meaning of these words is doubtful, and the rendering 'rather than violet' is a guess.



INDIGO

CSL
15

Other places also yield large quantities of indigo, such as Koil or Gorsa,¹ which lies 30 kos from Agra on the other side of the river. Most of its produce is bought up by Armenian, Lahore, and Kabuli merchants; it is good indigo, but has not such a reputation as that of Bayana, and consequently is not bought by us or by the English. A few bales ought to be purchased for a trial, so that our employers may be able to judge of the difference in the market and in dyeing, but it could not be done this year owing to lack of funds; if it should prove satisfactory, we should not be so closely restricted to the produce of Bayana. Taking one year with another, the yield is 1000 bales.

Mewat is a tract 30 kos from Agra, but, owing to the hills and forests, it is mostly in rebellion against the King.² Indigo is made in many of the villages of this tract, and the annual yield is 1000 bales or more, but it is inferior and of low quality, and usually sandy. The method of manufacture is that of Sarkhej rather than Bayana; the steeping of the plant, and the working back and forward to extract the dye from the leaves, are done in a single *put*, whereas in Bayana or Gorsa two are used as already explained. The price is consequently much lower, 20 rupees for a maund in Mewat when Bayana is selling for 30 rupees; very little is exported, but it is distributed all over Hindustan to places where indigo is not produced. This year, however, we have bought some bales for a trial.

Opinions may differ as to the course to be followed in buying indigo,³ but my own view, based on several years' experience, is this. When the yield is plentiful, that is to

¹ Koil is the modern Aligarh. Gorsa is presumably the indigo-centre mentioned frequently in English records as Coria or Corja, identified by Sir W. Foster (*The English Factories in India*, 1646-50, p. 56), with Khurja (now in Bulandshahr district). Pelsaert would have written either Gorsa or Chorsa for Khurja.

² Cf. below (§ 11): Jahangir 'is to be regarded as king of the plains or the open roads only.'

³ The discussion which follows deals with the important commercial question whether foreign buyers should purchase direct from small producers, or should rely on the existing organisation of the market. There were evidently disputes among the Dutch on this topic, and Pelsaert gives his views in some detail.



say, when the *ziarie* has suffered no injury, and the rains have been timely for the *nauti*, one or two experienced men should be sent in the end of August or the beginning of September to Chanowa¹ or the adjoining villages, and should buy whatever is really good; but if the crop promises to be short, it is better to remain quietly in Ghanowa,¹ and buy only from the substantial Hindu or Moslem merchants, who live there and have been many years in the trade, and who have made advances against indigo some months beforehand, binding the debtors to sell to no one else. These merchants would rather deal with us at a small profit than with other buyers; also, in Ghanowa there is much indigo, half of it made in the village. The question may be asked whether, if they get the indigo, we could not obtain it there, and at the same price. We might do so, on a single occasion, or in a single village, but the very next day the price will have risen at least a rupee per maund, [and] we shall be told by the merchants that their stock is not for sale. From repeated personal experience then, my opinion is that at such times it is more profitable for the Honourable Company that buyers should keep quiet, than that they should run about the country from one village to another. Goodness knows, the Armenians do quite enough of that, running and racing about like hungry folk, whose greedy eyes show that they are dissatisfied with the meal provided, who take a taste of every dish, [and] make the other guests hurry to secure their own portions, but directly they have tasted each course, they are satisfied, and can hold no more. In the indigo market they behave just like that, making as if they would buy up the whole stock, raising prices, losing a little themselves, and causing great injury to us and to other buyers who have to purchase large quantities. Now the Hindus have first of all the advantage of the profit they make in buying, and they get it through generous weighing, to which they persuade the peasants by wrangling and cajolery. There used to be a custom that in weighing indigo a bag of doubled cloth containing 152 pice was reckoned as 5 ser, giving an excess of quite one ser in the

¹ Chanowa and Ghanowa refer, I think, to the same place; Pelsaert interchanges *ch* and *gh*.



maund.¹ Again, when the indigo was moist, they kept from 20 to 30 balls ready behind each balance, which dried quite 5 ser in the maund; while by an old custom the maund was reckoned at 41 ser, so that altogether there was overweight of 7 ser or more in the maund, which greatly reduced the cost of buying; for in those days indigo was so plentiful that the peasants were sometimes confounded, and the middlemen might have to hold over perhaps 100 bales for want of buyers. Since, however, the crop was washed away in 1621, the whole of the produce is marketed promptly, and there is little or no surplus. They have nearly brought it to this that the balls are made smaller by one-half, the weighing is done with tens² instead of with pice or 5-sers, in order to give less excess, and in places³ only 10 or 15 balls are kept ready, so that there is very little overweight, and this can be of little advantage in buying. I may add that the loss by drying is incredible, for I estimate that a bale which here weighs 4 maunds will yield only 3½ maunds in Holland, an experience which has probably already surprised our honourable employers.

It is also necessary to have a buyer in Bayana, where the market opens much later than elsewhere, so that it is amply sufficient to go there in the beginning of October. The reason is that some rich and substantial merchants live in the town; the chief of them are named Mirza Sadiq and Ghazi Fazil, who sow most of the indigo, and who in some seasons have sold to nobody but us. The price is settled at his [*sic*] house, usually a rupee per maund more than the rate at Ghanowa or in other villages, because, as has been said, the quality is superior; and when the price has been fixed, but not before, anyone can sell to anyone he chooses. This subservience, or respect, is shown to Mirza Sadiq because he is the oldest [merchant] in Bayana.

¹ Akbar's ser weighed 30 dam, and in Agra the word 'pice' often meant a dam; thus the buyers got more than 5 ser by the weight of two dam *plus* the bag.

² I take 'tens' to mean weights of ten sers in place of bags of pice representing 5 sers.

³ Text has 'in plaets &': I read 'in plaetsen.' The phrase 'are kept ready,' which follows, is a guess at the probable meaning, rather than a precise equivalent; the original does not make sense.



JAHANGIR'S INDIA

CSL

I have now written at length of the indigo bearing the name of Bayana, which for the last four years has been very closely bought up, both by us, by Armenians, and by Moguls; the latter classes export it to Ispahan, whence some of it goes to Aleppo. In six years the English have not bought more than 600 bales, because, owing to bad luck, adversity, and mismanagement, their commercial position has greatly deteriorated; but if they begin to buy against us, as they would like to do if they had the money, indigo is likely to rise in price.

[4. DESCRIPTION OF GUJARAT TRADE.]

AHMADABAD is the capital of Gujarat, and receives annually from here [Agra] large quantities of goods, for example, much Patna silk, to be manufactured there into ormesines, satins, velvets, and various kinds of curious stuffs, so that there is here little trade in Chinese silk manufactures. Carpets are also woven there with an intermixture of silk and gold thread; while the imports include spikenard, *tzierila*,¹ *asafoetida*, *pipel* and numerous such drugs, besides Bengal *cassas* [muslins], *mals* [*malmal*], and clothing for Hindu women from Bengal and the Eastern provinces, *pamris*² from Kashmir and Lahore, and Bengal *kand* or white sugar. In the other direction are brought hither turbans, girdles, *orhnis* or women's head-coverings, worked very cleverly and ingeniously with gold thread; also velvets, satin of various kinds, striped, flowered, or plain; coconuts from Malabar; European woollen goods; lead, tin, quick-silver, vermilion; large quantities of spice, viz. cloves, nutmeg, and mace, and sandalwood. These goods are now bought from us at Surat, and forwarded in this direction, but formerly they were obtained in even greater quantities from the Portuguese in Cambay, who had a busy trade there, and who brought them to exchange for *kannekens*, *tirkandis*,³ and striped cloths for Mozambique and the Coasts.

The [Cambay] trade is however, nearly, or almost wholly at an end. Formerly, three caravans, or *kafilas*, used to come every year.⁴ (A *kafila* consists of a large number of

¹ I do not know what is meant by *tzierila* or *pipel*. Thévenot prints the first as *tziorela*, and omits the second.

² Kashmir shawls: see *Hobson-Jobson* (s.v. *Pambre*). They are described below in section 7.

³ *Kannekens* (or *candikens*) were small pieces of cheap calico, usually dyed blue or black. *Tirkandis* were similar, but usually dyed red. Both were in demand in most Asiatic markets.

⁴ The *kafilas*, or coasting fleets of small craft (frigates, or foists, i.e. *fustas*), are familiar to all students of the period. 'Armado de remas' means the fighting fleet of rowing vessels, employed by the Portuguese for escort and police work on the coast. 'India' should be read here in the restricted Portuguese sense, denoting merely the West Coast.



JAHANGIR'S INDIA

CSL

fustas, which the merchants of Goa, Cochin, Bassein, Daman and all the coasts of India get ready, from the beginning of October onwards, to be escorted by the *armado de remas* of the Portuguese or their own kings, owing to the danger from the Malabars, who with their small boats cause great injury to the Portuguese, for they have been bitter enemies for many years past.) Now the trade is so much decayed that this year, 1626, only 40 merchants' *fustas* arrived, carrying goods of small value; and this is the cause of the decline of Cambay, and indeed of all Gujarat, for the Portuguese brought all their goods, both the spices and Chinese silk carried in frigates from the South,¹ and the European merchandise distributed in all directions from the carracks at Goa, and sold them for a small profit, so that the [Cambay] merchants gained largely on their purchases, as well as on sales of cotton goods. Because of this decay, we are cursed not only by the Portuguese, but by the Hindus and Moslems, who put the whole blame on us, saying that we are the scourge of their prosperity; for, even though the Dutch and English business were worth a million rupees annually, it could not be compared to the former trade which was many times greater, not merely in India, but with Arabia and Persia also.²

¹ 'The South' means Malacca, Java, and Sumatra.

² The extent of the temporary injury to the Gujarat shipping industry at this period is too large a topic to be discussed in a note, but it may be pointed out that Pelsaert is giving not his own view, but the allegations of the shippers; the rate at which their complaints should be discounted is uncertain. This remark applies also to the complaints which he reproduces in § 8 below.

[5. THE DUTCH TRADE IN NORTHERN INDIA.]

OUR trade in this country can be conducted with great profit, honour, and reputation to the Honourable Company, if our employers will place reliance on the proposals put forward as a matter of duty by their servants, whether based on credible testimony, intrinsically sound arguments, or personal experience.¹ The spice trade in particular can be adequately maintained if our employers will believe us, because they control the whole produce of the trees, produce which is yielded in sufficient quantities nowhere in the world except in the Moluccas and Banda. What I want to urge is that our employers should send to the Coromandel Coast only so much spice as is consumed locally in the Carnatic, Golconda, and the vicinity, an amount which I conjecture to be less than 200 maunds, or 10,000 [lb.] of cloves, and as much nutmeg, with six sockels² of mace. This is probably an over-estimate rather than too little, for the whole [population] of the Carnatic consists of Klings³, or Hindus,

¹ The argument of this section requires a little explanation. At this time India spent little on European commodities, and most of the exports were paid for in gold and silver. Europeans were, however, unable to provide the precious metals in sufficient quantities to finance the trade they wished to do, and it was essential for them to make the most of all possible imports. The principal resource of the Dutch at this time (i.e. before the development of their lucrative trade with China and Japan), was their monopoly of cloves, mace and nutmegs. The chief Indian market for these spices lay in the north, and Pelsaert's point was that they should make the best of it by sending adequate supplies direct to their own factories in that region, instead of selling large quantities on the East Coast, which were brought to Agra by Indian merchants. His views were apparently accepted by the Directors, for not long afterwards orders were issued to regulate supplies very much on the lines indicated by him.

² Sockel (suckle, etc.) was the name applied to the packages in which mace was handled; they varied greatly in weight at this period. The pounds mentioned in this passage, and throughout, are Holland pounds, and the numbers given should be raised by 9 per cent., to convert them to avoirdupois.

³ For Kling, see *Hobson-Jobson*, s.v.



JAHANGIR'S INDIA

CSL

who use little or no spice, while in Golconda, and also in Malik Ambar's camp,¹ the people are as poor as they are haughty—almost like Spaniards in the street, but thrifty and mean in their kitchens. The Mogul soldiers on the other hand differ little from Europeans, who eat spiced food very readily, and consequently their consumption is proportionately greater. I know by experience that some wealthy banians of Agra maintain agents in Golconda with two objects in particular, to buy diamonds and spices, which their people in Masulipatam send to us [i.e. to Agra]; and this year they bought 300 maunds (15,000 lb.) of cloves at 11 pagodas per maund (of 25 lb.), and transported them to Agra, as well as proportionate quantities of nutmeg, mace, tin, and other goods.² The result is not merely to bring down a good market by 10 to 20 per cent., but to stop our sales altogether, because we have no agents in Golconda or Burhanpur to warn us of the despatch of such quantities of goods, and to make arrangements accordingly. We cannot rely on such news as we occasionally get from the letters of Hindus or Moslems, because of the risk that they might deliberately cheat us by such devices, and cause us to sell too cheap; a single merchant has much difficulty in dealing with such emergencies, and often neglects such warnings, to the Honourable Company's serious loss. Now it may be the case that our Chiefs at Masulipatam have given no warning to the Honourable General³ that not even a quarter of the spices and other goods are consumed locally; otherwise His Honour's zeal to secure the utmost profit for our foster-mother, the Company, would have prevented this loss; or, if this proposal should be doubted or criticised, the certain profit might be proved with uncertain loss for the Company by experiment within two years in the following way. Surat used to be supplied with

¹ That is, the army of Ahmadnagar, which was still holding out against the Moguls.

² Two different maunds are referred to in this passage, the Akbari of 55 lb., and the East Coast of about 27 lb., avoirdupois. The pagoda, the gold coin of the Coast, may be taken as worth something over three rupees at this time.

³ That is, the Governor-General at Batavia, who controlled the supplies of merchandise to Masulipatam and Surat.



THE DUTCH TRADE IN NORTHERN INDIA 23

CSL

25,000 lb. of cloves annually; raise that quantity to 50,000 lb., with a proportionate increase of nutmeg and mace; reduce the supplies to the Coromandel Coast by the same amount; then in the first or second year the books at headquarters will show His Honour whether the profits have increased or not. The following calculation will show the result according to the best estimate I can make.

Agra requires

700 mds. or 35,000 lb. cloves at	Rs. 200 per maund of 50 lb.	
		(Holland)
600 " 30,000 lb. nutmeg at	Rs. 100 " " " "	" "
30 sockels mace at	Rs. 300 " " " "	" "

At these approximate prices, the proceeds should be as follows:

700 mds. cloves at	Rs. 200	Rs. 140,000
600 " nutmeg at	Rs. 100	60,000
30 sockels mace, estimated as 50 mds., at	Rs. 300	15,000
		<hr/>
		Rs. 215,000

From this total must be deducted the heavy loss, or dryage, of spices, which is here 8 per cent. for cloves, and 3 to 4 per cent. for mace and nutmeg, as well as the cost of bringing the goods up, which however would not be so much felt on so large a capital as it is now. If we were provided with such a stock, we should be able to meet whatever indents our employers might make on Agra for Holland or Batavia, say, 1000 to 1200 bales of Bayana indigo; large supplies of saltpetre, borax and lac; and some cotton goods (viz. Bengal cassas, chouters, semianos, amberteas, and various other white cloths), if required from here¹; or else the surplus cash could be remitted by exchange on Surat. Contrast this with the business we now do, which brings no respect or credit to our nation. The heads of our factory are utterly discouraged, and the interests of the Honourable Company suffer seriously, for we are constantly burdened

¹ Cassas (muslin) and amberteas (calico) have been explained in previous notes. 'Semianos' were calico from Samana (now in Patiala state). 'Chouter' has rather a wide range of meaning, but, as used by the Dutch at this period, it seems to cover the calicoes of Oudh and Benares.



JAHANGIR'S INDIA

CSL

with debts, because our Chief at Surat can spare us no money; owing to the fact that everything is so strictly employed in despatching the ships for the South [i.e. Java], when a caravan of spices is sent up there is not left for Agra at the best more than 20,000 lb. cloves, 15,000 lb. nutmeg, and 15 or 20 sockels of mace. We have to do what we can with such supplies, while these cunning and crafty Hindu merchants now realise how we stand; they know how much we have to sell in the year, and they beat down our prices even to the point of extortion, because they can calculate, just as well as we can, our need for cash to buy saltpetre, cotton goods, and other merchandise, procurable only for ready money. They postpone then buying our goods, and they can wait longer than we, eking out their supplies in the meantime with cloves brought by Hindu and Moslem merchants from Golconda, though the quality is much inferior to ours, because they have certain methods of wetting them while in transit to counteract the great dryage. Then when the indigo season opens in September, we must sell, however unwillingly, though it is perfectly notorious that, even before the goods leave our warehouse, they are re-sold sometimes at an advance of 10 or 15 rupees the maund. There are only two possible remedies or improvements. One is to send up 20,000 rupees in cash in addition to the caravan (for bills drawn on the arrival of the ships come too late, when the loss has already been incurred by the Company); the other is, as has been said above, to confine the spice trade to this side of India, and leave the Coromandel Coast alone. Or perhaps our employers may consider that, since their supply of cloves is large, the consumption should be encouraged; a reduction of price to 100 or 80 rupees the maund might eventually produce a marked increase in consumption at Agra, for I have heard old residents and brokers say that, when cloves were imported in incredible quantities in the time of the Portuguese, even three times as much as we now supply, and the price was 60 to 80 rupees the maund,¹ the whole quantity was easily consumed, because the low price induced everyone to buy, and in the

¹ The price quoted as 'usual' in the *Ain-i-Akbari* (about 1594 A.D.) works out to Rs.60 per maund.



villages the women and children wore necklaces made of cloves.

Sandalwood is brought to Agra in moderate quantity from the Portuguese, who obtain it in Timor, and transport it to Malacca, whence it is carried to Goa and Cambay. No great trade can be done; 80 maunds, or 4000 lb., may sell at not more than 50 rupees the maund.

Large profits could be made here on the goods which are, or might be, brought by our ships from Holland, if the English did not bring such large annual supplies; but they still hanker after the great profits they made in the times when they had a monopoly of the trade, and consequently they fill the markets with large quantities of raw or branched coral; some thousand ells of heavy woollen cloth, red, yellow, and green (costing 4-4½ shillings the yard in England, and sold here for 4-7 rupees the yard); much quicksilver, vermilion, and ivory; and also swords and knives. These latter goods at first gave large profits on small consignments, and they were tempted to send whole cargoes of sabres and assorted cutlery, but as many rusted as sold. For the royal Camp or Court they bring tapestries, both silken and woollen, worked with stories from the Old Testament; great and fine pearls; rubies, and balas-rubies; art-ware inlaid with gold and gems; and new inventions or curiosities such as have never been seen before, which have a great attraction for the present King. In this way the English have secured much esteem at Court among the nobles, and sell their goods at the highest prices they can ask, under pretence of doing a great favour; and at the same time they escape many needless expenses in the way of presents, which we must constantly incur, though they bring very little in the way of thanks or reputation.

Formerly the English maintained an ambassador at the Camp, an arrangement which was very expensive to their Company; but it has now been abandoned, because a factor who sells their goods at Court can also look after all their incidental business, and obtain farmans, or rescripts, from the King. Frequently one hears many of the great lords asking (though it may be through the suggestions of our



JAHANGIR'S INDIA

CSL

English friends),¹ if precious stones are known in our country, or if there are any skilled craftsmen there, who can make *toffas* [*tuhfa*, rarities], as there are in England, Venice, and other European lands. It is essential therefore, both for the profit of the Honourable Company, and to increase the reputation of our own nation, that we should make it clear that our little country is not merely on a level with England, but surpasses the whole world in skill; and in order to do this, we should send to Agra every year rarities to the value of 100,000 guilders,² consisting of large pearls; large and fine emeralds (old and new); sapphires, rubies, and balas-rubies of rich colour; and gold art-ware of kinds which can be described better verbally than in writing, for instance, an antique box or casket, with various ingenious locks, in which different articles can be secured (for it is considered here a sign of skill, that the inside of a thing should be different from the outside). I will now specify various rarities which have been recommended to me by different nobles or great men, and which should be sent here by our ships, but the quantity supplied of each should be small:

- 10 small gold chains, of the most ingenious work.
- 20 sabres, costing 10 to 15 guilders each, embellished with some gold-work, slightly curved, of which I can show a sample.
- 20 handsome musket barrels, wrought with gold and set with agates of various colours, in which heads are carved, of the kind brought here overland by the Venetians.
- Some sea-horse teeth, marbled on the inside with black stripes, much esteemed.
- 2 or 3 good battle-pictures, painted by an artist with a pleasing style, for the Moslems want to see everything from close by; also one or two maps of the entire world; also some decorative pictures showing comic incidents, or nude figures.
- 10 large cases, in which to keep scissors, mirrors, razors, and other implements locked up.

¹ 'Friends' was the term regularly applied to the English in the Dutch commercial correspondence. The word carries a suggestion of irony in cases where the two Companies were competing actively for a market.

² The Dutch guilder (of 20 stivers) was accounted for in India at this time as $5/6$ rupee, the rupee being taken at 24 stivers.



10 to 20 gilt mirrors, costing 8 to 10 guilders each, but no large ones with ebony frames,¹ such as were sent on the *Golden Lion* by advice.

1 case red woollen cloth, costing 15 to 16 guilders the ell. Also 10 to 20 pieces tapestry, both silken and woollen, from 3½ to 8 ells long, and 2½ to 4 ells broad, but no sad colours, all bright, must be sent.

5 to 10 pieces Cassa,² of bright colours, green, red, or variegated.

No cloth of gold should be sent, as it is supplied from Persia, of good quality and much cheaper.

Many of the great men express surprise that we do not have the gold and silver (coined and uncoined), which we import in large quantities, manufactured by us into articles which are here in common use. Provided the workmanship is good, half the silver might be paid for manufacture, which would give ample payment for Dutch work; or in any case manufactured goods would yield quite as much profit as reals or Holland dollars, and could meet the taste of the nobles everywhere without loss to us. It would be well, therefore, for the first trial, to manufacture such goods as the following to the value of 8000 to 10,000 reals-of-eight,³ and to the same amount in gold:

Feet for *katels*,⁴ or bedsteads, hollow, and as light as possible, but artistically wrought.

Aftabas, or ewers used by Moslems for washing the hands.

Betel boxes.

Fan handles.

Handles for fly-switches.

Dishes and cups with covers.

If necessary, the style or fashion of these could be shown or explained.

Most of these goods could be sold in the Palace or the Camp, to the good profit, honour, and reputation of the Company, by an agent familiar with the language and customs of the country, who could at the same time prevent

¹ The objection was apparently to the frames, black being an unpopular colour at the Mogul Court. The meaning of 'by advice' is obscure.

² *Cassa* usually means Bengal muslin, as noted above, but here it must denote some textile made in Europe. Thévenot has velvet and satin, but his list differs considerably from the text. Probably the word should be *carisien* or 'kerseys,' a woollen fabric which sold well in India about this period.

³ The real was worth about two rupees in India.

⁴ For *katel*, see *Hobson-Jobson*, s.v. 'Cot.'

all the occasional difficulties which arise, wherever trade is attempted, from the improper procedure due to the insatiable greed of the Governors; and this could be done without incurring expenditure. At present these matters often cannot be prevented in spite of great trouble and cost.

The annual offtake of our commodities in Agra may be estimated as follows:

Quicksilver: 50 maunds or 2500 lb.; price is conjectural, but Rs. 160–180 the maund may be looked for.

Vermilion: 50 maunds, at Rs. 180–200 the maund.

Tin: 30 maunds, at Rs. 38 or 40 the maund.

Ivory: 50 maunds; but it must not be split, otherwise it makes a difference of more than half the price. The tusks must therefore be sawed at Surat in this way, to wit, into pieces a hand broad, and then coated or smeared with wax, so as not to split with the heat. Whole pieces sell at Rs. 70–80 the maund, and split pieces at Rs. 20–30. Arm-rings are made from the ivory for Hindu women, and are worn as ornaments in Multan and the Eastern provinces.

Red woollen cloth. Little or none of such as is now sent, at 8 to 10 guilders the ell; or unless it were the kind brought by the English, which must be sold in competition with them.

Our honourable employers will be surprised that no larger quantities of goods can be sold in so extensive a country as this, but I will explain that satisfactory profits could be made but for the amount of the English and Portuguese imports. For example, I observed that in 1626, when the Portuguese galleons chased the English ships from Surat, and they had to winter in the Mayottes,¹ quicksilver rose to Rs. 250 the maund, vermilion to Rs. 320, and coral and other goods proportionately. Small consignments sold at a profit are therefore better than large supplies sold at a loss, or held over for years; for the local merchants are naturally timorous, and dare not take any great risks, but think only of a small but certain profit. To some extent this is due to want of enterprise, and besides, if goods lie unsold, the interest of 10 to 12 per cent. annually consumes the merchants like a canker. In Agra the men who are richest live mainly by money-lending, a practice which is not discreditable to Hindus, but only to Moslems (though

¹ For this affair, see *The English Factories in India, 1624–29*, pp. xiv.–xvi.



Indeed they do it commonly enough); and that certain profit comes before the gain of the enterprising merchant.

All weights and measures in use here are two-fold, Akbari and Jahangiri, for the present King has raised weights, measures, and coins 20 per cent. above his father's standards. Thus an Akbari ser weighs 30 pice, or $1\frac{1}{4}$ lb., and the Jahangiri ser is 36 pice, or $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb.; the former maund is 50, and the latter, 60 lb.¹ The *gaz* [Indian yard] varies in the same way; 100 Akbari *gaz* make 120 of our ells, the other in proportion. The coins used are rupees, but there are different kinds, viz. *khazana* [treasury] or Akbar's old coins, and *chalani* [current], which are the rupees struck during Jahangir's reign in Agra, Lahore, Patna, Kandahar, or Gujarat; the shroffs [money-dealers] value the *chalani* rupee at from 1 to 2 per cent. above the *khazana*, though the coins are identical in weight. Then there are the *siwai*, which are equivalent to $1\frac{1}{4}$ rupees; and the *Jahangiri*, which weigh 20 per cent. more than the *khazana*. All bargains are done in terms of the same series of units, either *Akbari* or *Jahangiri*. No goods are sold by measure as we sell grain, etc., but everything is weighed by the maund.

There are gold coins, but only of one series, named *mohur*. The double coin weighs a *tola*, or 12 *mashas*, and is equivalent to 14 rupees, the half-coin in proportion. The inscriptions are similar to those of the rupees, except those which have been coined by the Queen; her coins, both rupees and mohurs, bear the twelve signs of the Zodiac, one sign on each coin. Very little trade, however, is done with these gold coins, seeing that most of them must come from the King's treasures, and further the great men hoard them, and search for them for their *khazana* [treasuries]. Copper coins also are in use. They are called pice, and at present 58 or more go to the rupee.² For still smaller sums for the use of the poor there are cowries, or white sea-shells, which pass at 80 to the pice.

¹ Here as elsewhere the pounds are Holland weight, not a voidrupois.

² Pelsaert, like other writers of the period, uses the word pice to denote both the dam and the half-dam (or *adhela*). In Akbar's time about 40 dam, or 80 *adhela*, went to the rupee, but the price of copper rose sharply early in the 17th century, and at this time a rupee exchanged for 30 dam or less; in this passage the reference must be to the *adhela*.



[6. ACCOUNT OF THE PROVINCES NORTH AND WEST OF AGRA.]

LAHORE is situated in 32° latitude, 300 kos north-west of Agra. It was a great centre of trade in the days before the English came to Agra,¹ and the Armenian and Aleppo merchants did a large and very profitable business. In those days the chief market for indigo was Lahore rather than Agra, because it was more convenient for the merchants, who travelled in caravans at fixed seasons by way of Kandahar and Ispahan to Aleppo; and this is why the indigo which reached Europe from Aleppo or the Levant was known as Lauri, or more properly Lahori. A brisk business is still done in the fine cotton goods of Masulipatam, or Golconda and Mongapatnam,² but nothing like what was formerly transacted. The trade of Lahore may in fact be called dead, for exports are limited to the requirements of Persia and Turkey, because the profits cannot stand the great costs of overland transit compared to those of our sea-carriage. Lahore thus lost practically all its trade, and the substantial Hindus, or Khattris, whose reputation still survives, lived on what was left of their old profits. For some years however the present King has spent five or six of the cool months of each year in Lahore (the rest, or hot weather, being spent in Kashmir or Kabul), and the city has now recovered, but more in splendour, royal buildings, palaces, and gardens, than in point of wealth. The river Ravi flows past the city. It rises in the mountains of Kashmir, and flows by Multan and on to Tatta and Bakkar,

¹ Much of this section must be read as hearsay. Pelsaert probably passed through Lahore on his way to Kashmir, but it is practically certain that he never was in Multan or Sind.

² Text has 'in Mongapatnam,' but the sense requires 'en' (i.e. and). The form of the name shows that this place was in Southern India, and it is linked with Golconda in a later passage as a source of turban-cloth. Presumably the reference is to Mangapatnam, now a village in the Cuddapah district; superior turbans are still made in the neighbourhood. (*Cuddapah District Gazetteer*, s.v. Jammalamadugu; I am indebted to Sir W. Foster for the identification and reference).



carrying a large trade in shallow-draught vessels. Agra imports from Lahore ormesines and carpets, which are woven there, and also many goods from more distant places, such as fruit from Kabul, asafoetida from Kandahar, and other commodities obtained in Multan. Agra exports to Lahore most of the spices which we sell here (for the local consumption is very small when the King is not here, or there is no Camp); also all kinds of white cotton goods, both Bengals and Golcondas; ivory (most of which is wrought in the neighbourhood of Multan); quicksilver, vermilion, coral; turbans, girdles, and all sorts of silk goods from Ahmadabad, where they are woven; silk from Patna; lac, pepper, and drugs too numerous to be named.

MULTAN is the capital of the province of that name, and lies 140 kos north [really, south-west] of Lahore.¹ The province is exceedingly productive, and commands the route to Persia, which runs by way of Kandahar. The Persian trade is extensive, because the city is conveniently served by three great rivers, the Ravi (which serves Bakkar in Sind, and also Lahore), the Behat [Jhelum] and the Sind [Indus]. The latter also rise in the mountains of Kashmir, so that near Multan the water flows with an astonishing current, but all the same they are largely used by shallow-draught vessels. Very much sugar is produced, which is carried by water to Tatta in large quantities, and also to Lahore; gallnuts and opium are also produced; sulphur is obtained in large quantities, as well as the best camels in India; the finest and most famous bows are made here, also large quantities of white cotton goods and napkins, which are exported to Kandahar. All these goods come by way of Lahore to Agra, and are thence distributed in all directions. From Agra or Lahore, Multan receives large quantities of cotton, coarse yarn, Bengal cotton goods, turbans, prints, red *salu* from Burhanpur, and small quantities of spices.

TATTA, the capital of Sind, is 80 kos distant from the sea. The port is named Lahari Bandar, where all large vessels

¹ Presumably Pelsaert was thinking of Multan as lying beyond Lahore, which is to the north of Agra. The next paragraph shows that he knew it to lie between Lahore and Tatta.



JAHANGIR'S INDIA

CSL

anchor; the goods are brought up in boats, and, owing to the strength of the current, they usually take from 8 to 10 days on the way. This country was conquered by the Khan Khanan under Akbar in the year [blank in MS.]. The city lies southwards from Agra, 400 kos distant by way of Jaisalmer, and 700 kos from Lahore by way of Multan. It prospered greatly owing to the trade of the Portuguese, while Ormuz remained in their hands. There are large supplies of white cotton goods, which in my opinion are far superior to *baftas* [Gujarat calico] at the same price¹; also much striped cloth, taffetas of yarn and silk, and other cotton goods. Ornamental desks, draught-boards, writing-cases, and similar goods are manufactured locally in large quantities; they are very prettily inlaid with ivory and ebony, and used to be exported in large quantities to Goa and the coast-towns. This business has however now come to an end,² and since the trade of Ormuz was lost, merchants from Ispahan have to come to Tatta, though with great difficulty and expense. They bring silk for sale, but clandestinely, because export from Persia is prohibited; they also import large quantities of *fouwne*³ (called by the Moslems *massiedt*), which grows there, and is used for dyeing red, like chay-root on the Coromandel Coast; also almonds, raisins, prunes, and other dried fruit. In addition, they bring large sums in gold ducats, because the heavy cost of transit reduces the profit to be made on merchandise. In return they take white cotton goods, yarn and silk *taffacils*,⁴ turbans, girdles, loin-cloths, Bengal cloth, Lahore indigo, 'painted' cloth, and much sugar, both candy and powder, which is brought by water from Lahore and Multan.

¹ Not long after this was written, the English began to export Sind calico to Europe.

² The Portuguese had acquired a practical monopoly of the sea-trade of Sind, which was directed mainly to the Persian Gulf. After the fall of Ormuz, this trade naturally declined, and must have been nearly at its lowest when Pelsaert wrote. The English restored the trade partially in the next decade.

³ Presumably intended for the Arabic word *fuwwat*, a synonym for *runās*, or Indian madder, which was an alternative to chay-root. For the latter, see *Hobson-Jobson* (s.v. Choya).

⁴ Taffacils (tapseels, etc.) were striped goods, woven in both silk and cotton.



[7. KASHMIR.]

KASHMIR is situated in 35° N. latitude. On the East the country extends to Great and Little Tibet, a ten days' journey.¹ On the South it is bounded by Cashaer and Lamoe, as far as the border of Kabul, being 30 days' march. On the West, it is bounded by territories belonging to this King [Jahangir], such as Poncie and Peshawar, 13 marches, but Bangissa, 10 marches further, belongs to Raja Golatia, who is continually at war with Hindustan. On the North it adjoins Pampoer, Bessiebrara, Amiets and Watibra, 20 days' journey. The most delightful pleasure-resort is Wirnagie, where the King has the best hunting-grounds in the whole of India. Many villages and handsome towns exist in all parts of the country, but they are too numerous to be recorded here, and we turn to the famous city of Kashmir, which extends over a strongly defended plain, circular, and ringed with terrible mountains, some of them lying at a distance of 15 or even 10 kos. One mountain, however, known to Moslems as Solomon's Throne, lies only one kos north of the city; they regard it as miraculous, and say that they have very old writings and proofs showing that Solomon himself built this throne. The city itself is planted with very pleasant fruit-bearing and other trees, while two great rivers flow past it. The larger of these comes from Wirnagie, Achiauwel, and Matiaro; the other rises from the ground like a well or spring, three kos from the city, having its source at Saluara from an inland lake; but the water of neither of them appears to be sweet or healthy, and the inhabitants boil it before they drink it, while the King and the chief nobles have their water carried 3 or 4 kos from Swindesseway, where the water is clear and snow-white. King Jahangir began the construction of

¹ Most of the topographical details given in this section must be left to students familiar with the historical geography of the Himalayan area. Wirnagie represents Vir-nāg, (*Mémoires of Jahangir*, II., 142). The 'city of Kashmir' is still the popular name of Srinagar. Solomon's Throne is the Takht-i-Sulaiman.



a wooden aqueduct, to bring good water from a distance of 10 or 12 kos into the fort, but, realising that it could be easily poisoned by enemies or malcontents, he abandoned it after having spent fully 10,000 rupees. In Kashmir foreigners usually suffer from the flux, and many die of it; the cause must be the water, and also the quantity of fruit which is available.

On the East side of the city lies a great stronghold, with a wall of grey stone, fully 9 or 10 feet thick, which joins it to a high, rocky hill, with a large palace on the summit, and another somewhat lower, or half way up, towards the North, as well as two or three residences with separate approaches, but the principal ones lie on the South towards the East. In the centre of this fort is the King's palace, which is noteworthy rather for its elevation and extent than its magnificence. The Queen lives next the King, on the North side; next to her, her brother Asaf Khan, and, a little further on, Mukarrib Khan. On the other, or southern, side, lives Sultan Shahriyar, the King's youngest son, who is married to the Queen's daughter by her first husband. On the south-west live Khwaja Abdul [? Abul] Hasan, and also other great nobles, all of whom reside within the fortress and round the hill, in a circle of about a kos in circumference. The city is very extensive, and contains many mosques, as their churches are called. The houses are built of pine-wood, the interstices being filled with clay, and their style is by no means contemptible; they look elegant, and fit for citizens rather than peasants, and they are ventilated with handsome and artistic open-work, instead of windows or glass. They have flat roofs, entirely covered with earth, on which the inhabitants often grow onions, or which are covered with grass, so that during the rains the green roofs and groves make the city most beautiful on a distant view.

The inhabitants of the country and the city are for the most part poor, but they are physically strong, especially the men, who can carry quite twice the load of a Hindustani; this is remarkable in view of the fact that men and women get so little food. Their children are very handsome and fair, while they are young and small, but when they grow



up, they become yellow and ugly, owing to their mode of life, which is that of beasts rather than men. The women are small in build, filthy, lousy and not handsome. They wear a coarse gray woollen garment, open from the neck to the waist. On the forehead they have a sort of red band, and above it an ugly, black, dirty clout, which falls from the head over the shoulders to the legs; cotton cloth is very dear, and their inborn poverty prevents them from possessing a change of raiment.

They are fanatical Moslems. It was their twelfth king who observed this creed,¹ before King Akbar's General, Raja Bhagwan Das, overcame the country by craft and subtlety, the lofty mountains and difficult roads rendering forcible conquest impossible.

Kashmir produces many kinds of fruit, such as apples, pears, walnuts, etc., but the flavour is inferior to those of Persia or Kabul. In December, January, and February the cold is very great, with constant rain and snow; the mountains remain white with snow, except in places where the sun shines in the warm weather, causing heavy floods in the rivers.

The reason of the King's special preference for this country is that, when the heat in India increases, his body burns like a furnace, owing to his consumption of excessively strong drink and opium, excesses which were still greater in his youth. He usually leaves Lahore in March or April, and reaches Kashmir in May. The journey is very difficult and dangerous, besides being expensive, for pack-animals cannot cross the mountains, and practically everything must be carried on men's heads. All the nobles curse the place, for it makes the rich poor, and the poor cannot fill their stomachs there, because everything is excessively dear; but apparently the King prefers his own comfort or pleasure to the welfare of his people.

Kashmir yields nothing for export to Agra except saffron, of which there are two kinds. That which grows near the city sells in Agra at 20 to 24 rupees the ser; the other kind, which grows at Casstuwary, 10 kos distant, is the best, and

¹ This sentence is obscure. The meaning seems to be that the King who submitted to Akbar was the twelfth Moslem king.



JAHANGIR'S INDIA

CSL

usually fetches 28 to 32 rupees the ser (of 30 pice weight). Many *pamris* are also woven; these are cloths 3 ells long and 2 broad, woven from the wool (it is more like hair), which grows on the hindquarters of the sheep, very fine, and as soft as silk. They are worn here [i.e. in Agra] as wraps in the winter because of the cold, and look very well and fine, having a surface like boratos.¹ Walnuts, which are plentiful, are also exported to Agra.

The goods sent from Agra to Kashmir are coarse, unbleached, cotton-cloth, yarn for local consumption, and also pepper and opium. Nutmeg, cloves and mace are too dear, and their use is unknown; but all of them are, as might be expected, brought there when the King is in residence.

¹ 'Borato' was the name of a thin woollen cloth fashionable in Europe at this period. The word rendered 'surface' is *heper*, which appears to indicate a twill or something of the kind.



[8. BURHANPUR AND GUJARAT.]

BURHANPUR is situated 300 kos south of Agra, and 150 kos north¹ of Surat. It is a very large, open city, and was formerly unfortified, but recently, when the Deccan² forces besieged it in order to assist Sultan Khurram [Shahjahan], Raja Ratan defended it with a wall of earth and fortified posts at various points. This year, 1626, when Khan Jahan, the Governor of the country, led a force of 40,000 horse against the Deccan, he ordered Lashkar Khan, who governed during his absence, to encircle the whole city with a wall, and owing to the number of people this has been accomplished very rapidly in a short time. Its length is 12 kos or more, but it is not a circle³; there are many bastions, and all is correct and exact, but constructed only of earth. The river Tapti, which flows past Surat, and passes this city also, is so full of rocks and stones as to be unfit for navigation; otherwise it would be very convenient for the trade of the city, which is still extensive, but was formerly much greater. The offtake of goods was incredible at the time when the city was governed by Khan Khanan or by Sultan Khurram, for Khurram was an active and powerful prince; he maintained a large standing army here against the Deccan, as it lies on the frontier; and he was always surrounded by an extensive Court. He was a patron of all craftsmen, to whom he paid such high wages that he attracted all the splendour of his father's Court, for he was as greedy for novelties, costly jewels, and other rarities as Jahangir himself, and he paid more liberally, being sensible, and

¹ 'North' should be 'East.' Burhanpur was a stage on one of the two routes leading from Surat to the north, and Pelsaert may have located it from this point of view.

² Text has '*de Canders*': I read '*de Decanders*.' The copyist has made a similar slip a little further on, '*de Can*' standing for '*de Decan*.'

³ So in the text, but the negative may be a copyist's error; if so, the meaning would be simply that the wall was 12 kos or more in circuit.



JAHANGIR'S INDIA

CSL

refusing to be guided, like his father, by his avaricious subordinates. He rebelled, however, because he thought his father had lived too long, and, besides, he wished to displace his eldest brother, Sultan Parwiz; but the rebellion failed, as can be read at length in the account I have written of the history of the country,¹ and after his flight some of his territories, including Burhanpur, were assigned to Parwiz. The latter's period of rule was very dull, for he was a man of poor spirit, aspiring to no state or display, and he was satisfied if he could get drunk every day, preferring to sleep by day and drink by night. Consequently he pays no attention to the administration of the country, his troops are left unpaid, their numbers diminished, and their pay reduced, while the farms of the revenue of the villages and neighbouring country are increased. It is this which impoverishes the country and enriches the courtiers.

The English used to have a regular factory at Burhanpur for the sale of various goods, such as heavy woollen cloth, lead, tin, quicksilver, vermilion, satins, and velvets, for the Army. All the money obtained by these sales was remitted by exchange on Agra or Surat, because there is nothing to be had locally which is suitable for their trade, or for ours. In case some improvement in administration should follow the death of the present King, it would be necessary to have a factory there for the sale of such goods, or others; though the English have agents there at present, it is only in order to dispose of large quantities of old stock, either profitably or at a loss.

SURAT (latitude $21\frac{1}{2}$ degrees), is, owing to its situation, the chief seaport belonging to the King, though the city is 7 kos, or about 4 [Holland] miles, up the river, and all goods, both imports and exports, must be shipped and landed by boat. Three kos, or two miles, further eastwards, the English have found a convenient anchorage named Swally, where there is a sandbank, which is exposed at low water, and gives shelter at high tide, so that it is a desirable place for loading and unloading goods. From

¹ For this account, see the Introduction.



Swally goods can be brought by land on carts; this is much more expensive than sending them by boat, but the latter course is exceedingly dangerous, because the Malabar pirates can keep their small craft lying off the river's mouth without being observed, and capture whatever there is.

The city is fairly well built, and is about two [Holland] miles in circumference. It has no walls, but ditches have been dug round it, provided with four gates on the land side. On the water front is a castle built of white coral rock,¹ small in circuit, but well provided with guns and equipment; it is considered locally to be practically impregnable, but it could not withstand a determined siege for long. In order to strengthen it further, or to increase the artillery, they have constructed a platform on an inner high wall running round the fort, and covered it with beams and planks; here, on the upper tier, are placed more than 30 guns, but as a matter of fact this arrangement would make them like a mouse in a trap, for if the upper works were shot away, or breached, the whole platform must collapse, and put the lower tier of guns also out of action.

Formerly, when the coast was still unknown to the English, a very extensive trade was carried on in Surat by the Moslems, but it has now fallen off greatly, and indeed is nothing compared to what it was, because all the chief seaports, which were recently so flourishing, have collapsed, some through war, others owing to other causes; Ormuz, Mocha, Aden, Dabhol, and also the whole Goa coast, are idle, and do not know where to voyage; each is almost smothered in its own produce, and there are no signs that any other place, country, or seaport, has benefited, though usually one country profits by the decay of another. All merchants, from whatever country they come, complain most bitterly. Portuguese, Moslems and Hindus all concur

¹ The word *corael-steen*, literally coral-stone, seems to have acquired a rather wider meaning in the East, for I have found it applied to building-stone in localities where the occurrence of a coral-formation is most unlikely. Mr. A. M. Macmillan, Collector of Surat, has kindly supplied me with information regarding the stone actually used in the Castle at Surat; Dr. H. H. Mann describes it as a highly fossiliferous limestone, yellow in colour, of a kind which is found in the Surat district.

in putting the blame for this state of things entirely on the English and on us, saying that we are the scourges of the sea and of their prosperity. Often enough, if we notice any shortcoming, and blame them, or threaten them, for it, the leading merchants tell us they heartily wish we had never come to their country. They point to the number of ships that used to sail from Surat alone—every year four or five of the King's great ships, each of 400 or 500 last¹ (two for Achin, two for Ormuz, two for Bantam, Macassar and those parts), besides smaller ships owned by individual merchants, coming and going in large numbers. Nowadays the total is very small. Two of the King's ships usually clear in February, and sail from the river in March, carrying goods on freight for anyone who offers; they reach Mocha at the end of April, where their goods may have to lie over for a year for want of buyers, but the ships start on their return voyage in August; unless one is destined for Suez or Mecca [Jidda], in which case it winters at Mocha, and the goods are sold at leisure. The ships bring back chiefly ducats, and small quantities of merchandise. A small vessel, or *tauri*, sails every year in September for Achin, carrying black *baftas*, *candekins*, *tricandis*, *chelas*,² and other cotton goods for that coast, and returns about March with tin, pepper, and a certain amount of other spices brought there by the people of Macassar.³ There remains no other regular voyage worth mentioning.

For the last four or five years, since the Portugese have lost Ormuz, the trade of the Surat merchants with Persia has been carried as freight by the English ships, or by ours; they consign chiefly cotton goods, turbans, and girdles from Golconda and Mangapatnam, which are sent

¹ A last represented two tons (measurement), or about 120 cubic feet at this period.

² Baftas were Gujarat calico; candekins and tricandis were short dyed pieces of calico; the Gujarat chelas were small, coarse pieces of calico, woven in coloured checks, and frequently supplied to slaves.

³ Macassar, in Celebes, was the centre of what the Dutch regarded as a smuggling-trade in spices. The local boats used to visit the Spice Islands, and buy cloves, mace, or nutmegs, when they could elude the Dutch, who claimed the monopoly of these products.



BURHANPUR AND GUJARAT

4
CSL

to Ispahan. Practically none of the goods which we carry on freight compete with what we ourselves send to Persia, so that this traffic is a great benefit to them without causing any injury to us, and the freight covers the expenses of the Company's ships. Some merchants who own *tauris*, or small vessels, send them along with our ships, laden with cotton, rice, or other goods of low grade, but no one dares to sail from any port to Ormuz unaccompanied, because (when our ships have left) the Portuguese frigates keep guard, and make prize of whatever they capture, so that Ormuz is now nothing but a deserted nest.¹

The reason why the chief English factory, as well as ours, is located in Surat is not to be found in the extent of the market or of the sale of goods, but in the fact that the ships must be unloaded and left there, and the goods forwarded thence to the places where they are wanted. If an adequate supply of cash were sent there in addition to the goods, it would be unnecessary, or at any rate it would be a serious loss to the Company, to sell anything worth mentioning in Surat, for the banian merchants who buy from us there despatch the goods promptly to Ahmadabad, Burhanpur, or Agra, where we have factories, and have to pay the cost of the staff which we employ. Profits should be credited in the place where they are made, unless the empty distinction were coveted to show the gains arising from our sales in the general accounts of the Surat factory, instead of in those of Agra, Ahmadabad, or Burhanpur (if a factory is to be established there). Further, there is nothing to be bought in Surat (except at a loss to the Company), apart from a few *baftas* which are woven at Navsari and also at Rander.² Absolutely no other merchandise is to be had in Surat, but much is brought there when the ships arrive, and we may be forced to purchase

¹ After the loss of Ormuz, the Portuguese at Muscat endeavoured to maintain the collection of customs on all goods entering the Persian Gulf. Their frigates employed for this purpose were not in a position to interfere with the Dutch or English ships, or with boats convoyed by them, but they could, and probably did, seize Indian boats when unaccompanied.

² Navsari is a short distance south of Surat. Rander, formerly an important place, lies on the Tapti between Surat and the sea.



42
baftas, candekins, chelas, etc., retail, because we have not the money to buy these in Broach or Ahmadabad during the rains, unless in order to do so we should have to be constantly involved in debt for loans carrying interest. The banians are now beginning to make a large profit in this way, and have raised the monthly rate of interest from 1 to $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent.; if loans are taken yearly, they will raise it much higher, and the amount of interest, or loss, is a matter of great importance.

Customs duties are here $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on all imports and exports of goods, and 2 per cent. on money, either gold or silver. At present these duties are collected for the King by the Governor, Mir Jahan Kuli Beg, but formerly they were assigned to various lords as salary; the arrangement has been altered as often as twice or thrice in the year.

Weights and measures are smaller here than in Hindustan. The Gujarat *gaz*¹ is eight per cent. shorter than a Holland ell, and a ser weighs only 18 pice or $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. (Holland), 24 pice weighing 1 pound; these units are used in Surat, and practically throughout Gujarat. Formerly mahmudis, and not rupees, were current here; the mahmudi is smaller, and worth only 10 stivers by our reckoning. Rupees have come into circulation during the last five or six years; the mahmudi is still the nominal unit for sales and purchases, but the actual payment is generally made in rupees, which we take as 24 stivers. The King has now a mint in Surat, as in Ahmadabad and all other capital cities.

BROACH, 20 kos landward from Surat, is a small town, but it is splendidly situated on moderately high ground. The town is surrounded by a wall of white stone, and looks more like a fort than a city; it is a kos in circuit, and from a distance is very picturesque. It enjoys a much better and more agreeable climate than other towns, chiefly because

¹ The Gujarat measure for cotton cloth is usually called 'covad' in the literature of the period; it was rather less than $\frac{3}{4}$ yard. The figure given, 8 per cent., seems somewhat too high. A contemporary report from Gujarat equates 15 ells to 15-16 covads, and the writer is to be trusted because he was then buying Gujarat cloth in large quantities, while Pelsaert had not been in Gujarat for some years, and may have made a slight miscalculation. The difference between an ell and a covad was, I think, nearer one inch than two.



of its elevation, owing to which it escapes all dangerous vapours; and further the well-known river Narbada, here a fine and broad stream, runs under the walls. This river flows past the fort of Handia,¹ beyond Burhanpur, and separates Hindustan from the Deccan. The town depends on the weaving industry, and produces the best-known fine *baftas*; all other sorts of cloth, for Mocha, Mozambique, and the South [Java, etc.], are also woven there, as well as in Baroda, and other neighbouring places. Consequently a factory is badly required there for purchases for the South, but nothing can be sold, for the people are mostly poor, or artisans. Tolls are levied here on goods, whether brought here for consumption, or merely in transit; the rate is $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., but it is calculated for all kinds of goods on a valuation made by the Kazi, or lawyer, of the town, and is in fact merely a knavish method of draining poor merchants dry. If for instance cloves are brought there on the way to Ahmadabad or Agra, the toll will be charged on the retail price which a local shop-keeper would charge for a pice-weight or ounce, without allowing for the heavy expense required to bring the goods into the shop, or for the seller's profit. It is the same for all kinds of goods in proportion, and, if this toll did not exist to stop us, we could bring all our goods from and to Agra much more conveniently than by way of Burhanpur, and at half the cost. It would therefore be an excellent thing if we could contract for this toll, or obtain an exemption from the King; the advantage and profit of this course can be readily inferred from what has been said above.

¹ Handia, or Hindiah, was headquarters of a *sarkar* (district) of Malwa, and had a fort commanding a passage of the Narbada.

[9. THE TRADE IN DRUGS.]¹

IN describing these important places, I have omitted mention of many flourishing cities, partly because of their number, and partly because they have no trade which would interest the Company. Further, I have not attempted to specify the quantity of goods imported, transported, or sold in the country, because no accurate statement can be made, for in this country conditions differ greatly from year to year; a good harvest will create a demand from every village, while these civil wars are ruinous to trade, and everybody is afraid to employ his capital. I hope therefore that our employers will be so kind as to overlook this shortcoming, considering how reasonable it is, and also the omission to describe the methods of producing many drugs which are obtained in Agra, as well as in the mountains of Parbet² and Bhutan, and in Kashmir. I have collected many samples of these drugs, but it will be best to have them identified, more certainly than I could do it, by druggists, herbalists, apothecaries, etc. I shall however record the following observations on borax, spikenard, and sal ammoniac, which are items of the Company's regular trade.

Borax is found in the Eastern mountains,³ in the dominions of a very powerful king, named Raja Bikram, the extent

¹ As the text shows, the word 'Drugs' had a wider meaning in Pelsaert's time than now.

² I take 'Parbet' here to be a generic term for 'the mountains,' i.e. the eastern Himalayas.

³ This account of Tibet must be taken as a reproduction of the vague, second-hand information obtainable in Agra. I have not identified the frontier mart Donga, but I am told the word means a level area in the hills, and possibly Pelsaert was mistaken in using it as a proper name. Mr. R. Burn suggests that it may stand for Dogam, once an important market in what is now the Bahraich district, but the details given in the text are too scanty for certainty. The distance may be read either as 150, or as 450, kos; the former reading is more probable on geographical grounds. Tachelachan may possibly represent the modern Taklakot, which lies on the route to Agra of the supplies of borax from the sources near the Manasarowar lakes.



THE TRADE IN DRUGS

CSL
45

of whose kingdom may be judged from the fact that it stretches to the frontiers of the White Tartars. Men of that nation carry on an extensive trade in it, because it yields many commodities in much demand, such as musk, civet, borax, spikenard, quicksilver, brass and copper, and a dye named *meynsel* which gives a handsome red-and-yellow colour. The inhabitants bring all these goods to Donga, 150 [?] kos from Agra and a great market; it is in Jahangir's territory, but is administered by Raja Bichha. The place where borax is found is named Tachelachan; it occurs in a river which flows through the eastern mountains and falls into a great lake called Masseroer [Manasarowar]. This lake must be very far away, for few or none of them [? my informants] have seen it, but they assert on the strength of their old books that in reality it can only be the sea, and not a lake. Owing to the peculiar quality of the water, the borax settles like coral in the bed of the river, and is dug out twice a year, and sold without any further treatment such as refining or evaporating. The supply is very large, sufficient to satisfy the whole world, and it usually sells at the low price of 4 or 5 rupees for a maund of 60 lb. It is brought to Agra in bales packed in sheepskin, each weighing 4 maunds; here we pack it in bladders, which are filled with bitter oil, to prevent deterioration from long keeping or from its natural qualities.

Spikenard grows wild in the mountains and is not sown. The plants grow a handbreadth high, and are closely intertwined; they are called *koille kie*.¹ Spikenard is here considered to be a valuable medicine or drug, particularly for stiffened limbs; it is rubbed down with oil, smeared on the limb, and allowed to dry; it produces warmth, and expels the cold. The spikenard is the flower or upper shoots of the *kuitek* [*sic*]. It is tawny in colour, and of the length of hair; the best sells in Agra at from 6 to 7 rupees the maund. In this country it is little valued or used, but it is exported to other places—Tatta, Multan, Persia, the Deccan, or I may say the whole world.

¹ I have failed to trace this name, which is not to be found in the botanical records at Kew.

Sal ammoniac is found at Thanesar or Sirhind, on the road to Lahore. It is a sort of scum which forms on the site of very old brick-kilns; it is dug and purified by evaporation, like saltpetre. The usual price is 7 to $7\frac{1}{2}$ rupees per maund, but under instructions from our employers we have now ceased to purchase it.

Saltpetre is found in many places near Agra, at distances of from 10 to 40 kos; it occurs usually in villages which have formerly been inhabited, and have been for some years abandoned. It is prepared from three kinds of earth, black, yellow, and white, but the black earth gives the best quality, being free from salt or brackishness. The method of manufacture is as follows. Two shallow reservoirs like salt-pans are made on the ground, one much larger than the other. The larger is filled with the salt earth and flooded with water from a channel in the ground; the earth is then thoroughly trodden out by numbers of labourers till it is pulverised and forms a thin paste; then it is allowed to stand for two days, so that the water may absorb all the substance. The water is then run off by a large outlet into the other reservoir, where a deposit settles, which is crude saltpetre. This is evaporated in iron pans once or twice, according to the degree of whiteness and purity desired, being skimmed continually until scarcely any impurities rise. It is then placed in large earthen jars, holding 25 to 30 lb.; a crust forms in the dew during the night, and if any impurities are still left, they sink to the bottom; the pots are then broken, and the saltpetre dried in the sun. From 5000 to 6000 maunds should be obtainable yearly in Agra alone, without reckoning the produce of places at a distance. The peasants, however, have now recognised that the produce, which was formerly cheap and in small demand, is wanted by us as well as by the English, who are also beginning to buy, and, like monkeys, are eager to imitate whatever they see done by others. The result is that, instead of the old price of $1\frac{1}{2}$ rupees for a maund of 64 lb., it is now up to 2 or $2\frac{1}{2}$ rupees, and likely to rise steadily. The industry is of little importance, and known to everybody, so I shall bring this description to an end, and turn to—

[10.] THE PRODUCTIVITY AND YIELD OF THE LAND.

THE land would give a plentiful, or even an extraordinary yield, if the peasants were not so cruelly and pitilessly oppressed; for villages which, owing to some small shortage of produce, are unable to pay the full amount of the revenue-farm, are made prize, so to speak, by their masters or governors, and wives and children sold, on the pretext of a charge of rebellion.¹ Some peasants abscond to escape their tyranny, and take refuge with rajas who are in rebellion, and consequently the fields lie empty and unsown, and grow into wildernesses. Such oppression is exceedingly prevalent in this country.

The year is here divided into three seasons. In April, May and June the heat is intolerable, and men can scarcely breathe. More than that, hot winds blow continuously, as stifling as if they came straight from the furnace of hell. The air is filled with the dust raised by violent whirlwinds from the sandy soil, making day like the darkest night that human eyes have seen or that can be grasped by the imagination. Thus, in the afternoon of 15th June, 1624, I watched a *travado* of dust² coming up gradually, which so hid the sky and the sun that for two hours people could not tell if the world was at an end, for the darkness and the fury of the wind could not have been exceeded. Then the storm disappeared gradually, as it had come, and the sun shone again. The months of June, July, August, September, and October are reckoned as the rainy season, during which it sometimes rains steadily. The days are still very hot, but the rain brings a pleasant and refreshing coolness. In November, December, January, February and March it is tolerably cool, and the climate is pleasant.

¹ The syntax is here very obscure, but the rendering given is the most probable. The identification of non-payment of revenue with rebellion is, of course, a familiar idea in India.

² *Travado* is Portuguese for a hurricane.



JAHANGIR'S INDIA

CSL

From April to June the fields lie hard and dry, unfit for ploughing or sowing owing to the heat. When the ground has been moistened by a few days' rain, they begin to sow indigo, rice, various kinds of food-grains eaten by the poor, such as *jowar*, *bajra*, *kangni*, various pulses for cattle-food, such as *moth*, *mung*, *orb*, *urd*, and a seed from which oil is extracted.¹ When all these are off the land, they plough and sow again, for there are two harvests; that is to say, in December and January, they sow wheat and barley, various pulses such as *chana*, *masur*, *matar*, and *sarson* and *alsi* (from which oil is extracted). Large numbers of wells have to be dug in order to irrigate the soil, for at this time it is beginning to lose its productive power. Provided the rains are seasonable, and the cold is not excessive, there is a year of plenty, not merely of food, but in the trade in all sorts of commodities. Such vegetables as the thin, sandy soil can produce—turnips, various beans, beetroot, salads, potherbs—grow here in abundance, as in Holland. Trees are plentiful round the city, but very scarce in the open country; even four or five trees usually mark the site of a village. Firewood is consequently very dear, and is sold by weight, 60 lb. for from 12 to 18 pice (or 5 stivers), making a serious annual expense for a large household. The poor burn cow-dung, mixed with straw and dried in the sun, which is also sold, as peat is sold in Holland. Fruit trees are still scarcer, because the ground is salty, and all fruit comes from Kandahar or Kabul—no apples,² pears, quinces, pomegranates, melons, almonds, dates, raisins, filberts, pistachios, and many other kinds. Great and wealthy amateurs have planted in their gardens Persian vines which bear seedless grapes, but the fruit does not ripen properly in one year out of three. Oranges are plentiful in December, January and February, and are obtainable also in June and July; they

¹ The names of the rains crops, which are greatly mutilated in Thévenot, are quite clear in the text, with the exception of *orb*, which may be a copyist's error for *arhar*. The oilseed must be *til* (sesamum). The names of the winter crops are perfectly clear, though the seed-time is put too late.

² The grammar is at fault: the meaning is that apples, etc., are imported from Kandahar and Kabul, not produced locally.



are very large, especially in the neighbourhood of Bayana. Lemons can be had in large quantities. The other fruits have too little taste, and are thought too little of, to be worth mentioning.

The supply of meat, such as we have in Holland, is ample, but it is cheaper than with us. There are sheep, goats, fowls, geese, ducks, deer and other game; and the supply is so large that it is little valued, and prices are low. Oxen and cows are not slaughtered, as they have to work while they are young, doing everything that is done by horses in Holland; and besides, their slaughter is strictly forbidden by the King on pain of death, though buffaloes may be freely killed. The King maintains this rule to please the Hindu rajas and banians, who regard the cow as one of the most veritable gods or sacred things. They also occasionally obtain by bribery a general order from the King, or from the Governor of a particular city, that no one shall catch any fish for several days, or for as long a period as they can secure; and, occasionally, that for some days no meat of any description, whether goat, sheep, or buffalo, shall be sold in the market. Such orders are extremely inconvenient for ordinary people, but the rich slaughter daily in their own houses. This would be a desirable country if men might indulge their hunger or appetite as they do in our cold lands; but the excessive heat makes a man powerless, takes away his desire for food, and limits him to water-drinking, which weakens or debilitates his body. But as this discussion is irrelevant, I shall close it, and turn to—

[II.] THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE COUNTRY.

[My description cannot be complete], because a full account of the peculiar rule of this King could not easily be given, or would require first of all a delineation of its origin, which would be too discursive for this report, and which I intend to write separately.¹ The chief reason [of its distinctive features] is that Jahangir, disregarding his own person and position, has surrendered himself to a crafty wife of humble lineage, as the result either of her arts or of her persuasive tongue. She has taken, and still continues increasingly to take, such advantage of this opportunity, that she has gradually enriched herself with superabundant treasures, and has secured a more than royal position. Her former and present supporters have been well rewarded, so that now most of the men who are near the King owe their promotion to her, and are consequently under such obligations to her, that he [Jahangir] is King in name only, while she and her brother Asaf Khan hold the kingdom firmly in their hands. Many misunderstandings result, for the King's orders or grants of appointments, etc., are not certainties, being of no value until they have been approved by the Queen. They² are impelled by a high and spirited temper, and although they have attained to the highest honour and rank, they still strive for an impossible advancement, for the world cannot sustain their eminence. Meanwhile she erects very expensive buildings in all directions—*sarais*, or halting-places for travellers and merchants, and pleasure-gardens and palaces such as no one has ever made before—intending thereby to establish an enduring reputation.

The King does not trouble himself with public affairs, but behaves as if they were no concern of his. If anyone

¹ For this account, see the Introduction.

² The text alternates between singular and plural, apparently referring sometimes to Nurjahan alone, and sometimes to Nurjahan and Asaf Khan jointly.



with a request to make at Court obtains an audience or is allowed to speak, the King hears him indeed, but will give no definite answer of Yes or No, referring him promptly to Asaf Khan, who in the same way will dispose of no important matter without communicating with his sister, the Queen, and who regulates his attitude in such a way that the authority of neither of them may be diminished. Anyone then who obtains a favour must thank them for it, and not the King. The chief business that interests the King, and about which he asks questions, is in what places there is good hunting, sport being his greatest delight. He rides out to hunt in the afternoon when the sun's heat has diminished, or when he wakes up; then he dresses and mounts a horse, or takes his seat on an elephant, not considering whether there are many or few attendants, or none at all, disregarding rain or wind, and he will not return till he has caught something, whether with falcons, or with leopards. Hunting with leopards is a remarkable form of sport.¹ These brutes are so accustomed to men that they are as tame as cats, whether they are reared from cubs or tamed when full grown. They are very carefully fed, and each has two men to look after him, as well as a cart, in which they sit, or are driven out, daily. When they come to a place where they sight buck, the leopard is released from the cart, his keepers show him the direction, and he creeps on his four feet until he gets a view, taking cover behind trees, plants or thickets, until he sees that his first quick rush and spring will be successful, for that is his only chance. Most of the leopards are so well trained that they never, or very seldom, miss. Sometimes also, but very rarely, the King hunts buck with buck. For this form of sport, buck are so thoroughly tamed that when they have been set free, they will come back when called by their masters or keepers. When there is to be a hunt, a running noose, made of twisted sinews, is fastened on the

¹ The prominence of sport in an account of the administration seems to be adequately explained by the fact that it was the King's chief interest. Hunting with leopards is a familiar form of sport; for hunting with tame buck see *Ain-i-Akbari* (I. 291 of Blochmann's translation).



tame buck's horns, and lies on his neck. When he sights a wild buck, he at once presents his horns to fight, and they push and struggle with their horns, until the tame buck feels that the noose has caught. Then he springs back and pulls so that they hold each other fast by the horns, until the men, who are standing or lying near, run up and capture the wild buck alive. These hunting pleasures surpass those of our country. The fanciers of buck derive great enjoyment or pastime from them, for they set them constantly to fight for stakes; but some of the animals are so furious that they will not yield, though they struggle till they fall dead, and they understand how to attack with their horns as well as if they had learned the art of fencing.

When the King was a young man, he preferred shooting to all other forms of sport, and he was a splendid shot. When forests or jungles which contained pig, lions, tigers and other dangerous beasts were pointed out to him, he went to the place, and killing lions and tigers was prohibited, unless information had previously been given to the King, who risked his life in such sport. A remarkable instance of this occurred in my time.¹ The King was out lion-shooting at Rupbas near Agra. For some time a lion had been doing great harm, killing men and cattle, and the King went there for this special purpose, surrounding his lair with large numbers of men; but no one, even if he was attacked, was allowed to kill the lion with any weapon except a dagger, even though he might be wounded. The King was inside the circle with his gun, accompanied only by one soldier, all his lords being scattered to drive the lion towards him, when suddenly the lion jumped out of a thicket and sprang at him. His companion, a Hindu or Rajput horseman named Anira, seeing that he could not safely use his gun, and that the King was in imminent danger of injury, caught the lion by the neck, and held

¹ The classical account of the courage of Anira (properly, Anirai Singhdalan), is in *The Memoirs of Jahangir*, I. 185. The differences in the text are such as might naturally occur in the case of a popular tale. The correct date is 1610-11, or before Pelsaert's time; perhaps the story had been told to him as having occurred 'quite recently.'



on as if dead, and wrestled with him. Sometimes one was on top and sometimes the other, and in the struggle the lion tore all the flesh of his arms and legs, indeed nearly his whole body, so that the bare bones showed everywhere, although the King had wounded the lion several times with his sword. At last men ran up, attracted by the shouting, and rescued Anira still living. The King showed the greatest solicitude for his cure, and appointed him immediately to the rank of 500 horse, from which he has won promotion by his courage until he is now a noble of 3000 horse. There have doubtless been many similar stories or occurrences in other countries, but I want to emphasise the devotion displayed by such subordinates, who are ready to give their life for their master as if they were actuated by a passion of love. But matters such as these are irrelevant, and we must return to the task we have undertaken.

When the King comes home in the evening from hunting, he takes his seat in his Ghusalkhana,¹ where all the lords come to present themselves, and where strangers who have requests to make are received in audience. He sits here till a quarter of the night or more has passed, and during this time he drinks his three *piyala*, or cups, of wine, taking them successively at regular intervals; and when he drinks, all the bystanders shout or cry out wishes that it may do him good, just as in our country when "the King drinks" is played.² Everyone leaves when the last cup has been drunk, and the King goes to bed. As soon as all the men have left, the Queen comes with the female slaves, and they undress him, chafing and fondling him as if he were a little child; for his three cups have made him so "happy"³ that he is more disposed to rest than to keep awake. This is the time when his wife, who knows so well how to manage him that she obtains whatever she asks for or desires, gets always 'yes,' and hardly ever 'no,' in reply.

¹ Ghusalkhana was the contemporary name of the apartment where the Emperor gave audience.

² This is an incident of the festivities of Twelfth Night in Holland. The moment when 'De Koning drinkt' is illustrated by many paintings of the Flemish school,

³ Literally 'blessed,' a colloquial term for a stage a little short of intoxication.

The King's territories, cities, and villages, with the annual yield of each, are all entered in a register which is in charge of the Diwan, at present Khwaja Abdul Hasan.¹ Everyone, whether prince, *amir*, or *mansabdar*, is granted, in accordance with his rank (be it 100, or 1000, or 10,000 horse), the appropriate income, to be derived from the administration of certain chief places. Some of the grantees, who are in attendance on the King, send some of their employees to represent them, or else hand over their grants to farmers, or *karoris* [sub-collectors], who have to take the risk of good or bad harvests; but the provinces are so impoverished that a *jagir* [assignment of revenue] which is reckoned to be worth 50,000 rupees, may sometimes not yield even 25,000, although so much is wrung from the peasants, that even dry bread is scarcely left to fill their stomachs. For that reason, many of the lords who hold the rank of 5000 horse, do not keep even 1000 in their employ, but they spend great sums on an extravagant display of elephants, horses, and servants, so that they ride out more like kings than subjects, everyone shouting *Phoos*,² that is to say, 'Out of the way!' or 'Make room!' People who do not make way are beaten, and the servants pay very little regard to whom they hit.

The most astonishing thing is that the avarice of the nobles has no solid basis, though they devote themselves entirely to gathering their treasures, without a thought of the cruelty or injustice involved. Immediately on the death of a lord who has enjoyed the King's *jagir*, be he great or small, without any exception—even before the breath is out of his body—the King's officers are ready on the spot, and make an inventory of the entire estate, recording everything down to the value of a single pice, even to the dresses and jewels of the ladies, provided they

¹ Khwaja Abul (not Abdul) Hasan was appointed chief Diwan, or revenue administrator, in 1621-22. *Mansabdar* denotes a possessor of military rank below a certain grade, while officers of superior rank were entitled *amir*.

² Mr. R. Burn tells me that the correct form of this exclamation is probably *poh-sha*, the imperative of a Pashtu verb signifying 'to understand'; it may be rendered 'Take care!'



have not concealed them. The King takes back the whole estate absolutely for himself, except in a case where the deceased has done good service in his lifetime, when the women and children are given enough to live on, but no more.¹ It might be supposed that wife, or children, or friends, could conceal during his [the lord's] lifetime enough for the family to live on, but this would be very difficult. As a rule all the possessions of the lords, and their transactions, are not secret, but perfectly well-known, for each has his *diwan* [steward], through whose hands everything passes; he has many subordinates, and for work that could be done by one man they have ten here; and each of them has some definite charge, for which he must account. [When the lord dies,] all these subordinates are arrested, and compelled to show from their books and papers where all the cash or property is deposited, and how their master's income has been disposed of; and if there is any suspicion about their disclosures, they are tortured until they tell the truth. And so you may see a man whom you knew with his turban cocked on one side, and nearly as unapproachable as his master, now running about with a torn coat and a pinched face; for it is rarely that such men can obtain similar employment from other masters, and they go about like pictures of death in life, as I have known many of them to do.

I have often ventured to ask great lords what is their true object in being so eager to amass their treasures, when what they have gathered is of no use to them or to their family. Their answers have been based on the emptiest worldly vanity, for they say that it is a very great and imperishable reputation if it is generally known, or the official records show, that such a man has left an estate worth so much. In reply I have urged that it would be possible to win a greater reputation for time and eternity, if, seeing that their friends and relations could expect no enjoyment from their wealth, they would share it with

¹ The syntax is obscure, and the sentence may possibly be intended to mean that the women and children are left with only the bare necessities of life, except in a case where the deceased has done good service (when presumably they would get more).



the poor, who in this country are in hundreds of thousands, or indeed innumerable, and would banish outside their doors all oppression, injustice, excessive pomp, chicanery, and similar practices, whereby they have nothing to hope for in the future, but very much to fear. [When I have urged such arguments], they have closed the discussion by saying that it is just the custom of the country.

It is the practice of the King, or rather of his wife, to give rapid advancement and promotion to any soldier, however low his rank, who has carried out orders with credit, or has displayed courage in the field. On the other hand, a very small fault, or a trifling mistake, may bring a man to the depths of misery or to the scaffold, and consequently everything in the kingdom is uncertain. Wealth, position, love, friendship, confidence, everything hangs by a thread. Nothing is permanent,¹ yea, even the noble buildings—gardens, tombs, or palaces,—which, in and near every city, one cannot contemplate without pity or distress because of their ruined state. For in this they are to be despised above all the laziest nations of the world, because they build them with so many hundreds of thousands, and yet keep them in repair only so long as the owners live and have the means. Once the builder is dead, no one will care for the buildings; the son will neglect his father's work, the mother her son's, brothers and friends will take no care for each other's buildings; everyone tries, as far as possible, to erect a new building of his own, and establish his own reputation alongside that of his ancestors. Consequently, it may be said that if all these buildings and erections were attended to and repaired for a century, the lands of every city, and even village, would be adorned with monuments; but as a matter of fact the roads leading to the cities are strewn with fallen columns of stone.

¹ The passage which follows is untranslatable as it stands. The rendering given involves three small emendations of the text, proposed by Professor Geyl, and is preferable to that which I offered in *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, p. 197. The main point, that the buildings are allowed to go to ruin, is clear enough; the difficulty is in the reference to other nations. The words 'hundreds of thousands' may be taken as referring to either money or labourers.



As regards the laws, they are scarcely observed at all, for the administration is absolutely autocratic, but there are books of law, which are in charge of their lawyers, the Kazis. Their laws contain such provisions as hand for hand, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; but who will excommunicate the Pope? And who would dare to ask a Governor 'Why do you rule us this way or that way? Our Law orders thus.' The facts are very different, although in every city there is a kachhahri, or royal court of justice, where the Governor, the Diwan, the Bakhshi, the Kotwal, the Kazi, and other officers sit together daily, or four days in the week.¹ Here all disputes are disposed of, but not until avarice has had its share. All capital cases, such as thefts, murders, or crimes are finally disposed of by the Governor, if the criminals are poor and unable to pay, and the sweepers drag them out to execution with very little ceremony. In the case of other offences the criminals are seldom or never executed; their property is merely confiscated for the Governor and Kotwal. Ordinary questions of divorce, quarrels, fights, threats, and the like, are in the hands of the Kotwal and the Kazi. One must indeed be sorry for the man who has to come to judgment before these godless 'un-judges'; their eyes are bleared with greed, their mouths gape like wolves for covetousness, and their bellies hunger for the bread of the poor; everyone stands with hands open to receive, for no mercy or compassion can be had except on payment of cash. This fault should not be attributed to judges or officers alone, for the evil is a universal plague; from the least to the greatest, right up to the King himself, everyone is infected with insatiable greed, so that if one has any business to transact with Governors or in palaces, he must not set about it without 'the vision of angels,'² for without presents he

¹ The titles of the local administrative hierarchy will be familiar to students of the period. 'Governor' is the Amil, as explained above (§ 1): 'Diwan,' the representative of the Imperial revenue department; 'Kotwal,' the city-governor; Kazi, the judge. 'Bakhshi' here denotes, I suspect, the Faujdar, or military commandant, who ranked with the Amil.

² This phrase seems to be a biblical, or literary, allusion, but I have failed to trace it.



JAHANGIR'S INDIA

CSL

need expect very little answer to his petitions. Our honourable employers need not deign to be surprised at this, for it is the custom of the country.

The King's letters or farmans to the chief lords or princes are transmitted with incredible speed, because royal runners are posted in the villages 4 or 5 kos apart, taking their turns of duty throughout the day and the night, and they take over a letter immediately on its arrival, run with it to the next village in a breath, and hand it over to another messenger. So the letter goes steadily on, and will travel 80 kos between night and day. Further the King has pigeons kept everywhere, to carry letters in time of need or great urgency. No doubt this is done at home also in the case of sieges, but only for short distances, whereas this King possesses the largest area of all the kingdoms of the world. The length of it from Surat northwards to Kashmir is 1100 kos, or 800 [Holland] miles, taking $1\frac{1}{2}$ kos to the mile. The stages are: Surat to Burhanpur, 150 kos; thence to Agra, 350 k.; Agra to Lahore, 300 k.; and from Lahore to Kashmir 300 k. The route by Ahmadabad is 50 kos nearer. Towards the North-West, the distance from Lahore, by Multan, to Kandahar is 600 k. On the East, it is 1000 k. from Agra to the sea coast through Purop, Bengal, and Orissa. In the West, Kabul is 300 k. from Lahore; and in the South West, the kingdom extends to Tatta, Sind and Bakkar. If all these countries were justly or rationally governed, they would not only yield an incalculable income, but would enable him [Jahangir] to conquer all the neighbouring kingdoms. But it is important to recognise also that he is to be regarded as King of the plains or the open roads only; for in many places you can travel only with a strong body of men, or on payment of heavy tolls to rebels. The whole country is enclosed and broken up by many mountains, and the people who live in, on, or beyond, the mountains know nothing of any king, or of Jahangir; they recognise only their Rajas, who are very numerous, and to whom the country is apportioned in many small fragments by old tradition. Jahangir, whose name implies that he grasps the whole world, must therefore be regarded as ruling no more than



half the dominions which he claims, since there are nearly as many rebels as subjects. Taking the chief cities for example, at Surat the forces of Raja Piepel¹ come pillaging up to, or inside, the city, murdering the people, and burning the villages; and in the same way, near Ahmadabad, Burhanpur, Agra, Delhi, Lahore, and many other cities, thieves, and robbers come in force by night or day like open enemies. The Governors are usually bribed by the thieves to remain inactive, for avarice dominates manly honour, and, instead of maintaining troops, they fill and adorn their *mahals* with beautiful women, and seem to have the pleasure-house of the whole world within their walls. I shall now try to describe them as far as is possible, as well as the poverty of the people at large.

¹ I have not traced this particular Raja.

[12.] THE MANNER OF LIFE

of the rich in their great superfluity and absolute power, and the utter subjection and poverty of the common people—poverty so great and miserable that the life of the people can be depicted or accurately described only as the home of stark want and the dwelling-place of bitter woe. Nevertheless, the people endure patiently, professing that they do not deserve anything better; and scarcely anyone will make an effort, for a ladder by which to climb higher is hard to find, because a workman's children can follow no occupation other than that of their father, nor can they inter-marry with any other caste.

There are three classes of the people who are indeed nominally free, but whose status differs very little from voluntary slavery—workmen, peons or servants, and shopkeepers. For the workman there are two scourges, the first of which is low wages. Goldsmiths, painters,¹ embroiderers, carpet-makers, cotton or silk-weavers, blacksmiths, coppersmiths, tailors, masons, builders, stone-cutters, a hundred crafts in all, for a job which one man would do in Holland here passes through four men's hands before it is finished,—any of these by working from morning to night can earn only 5 or 6 *tackas*,² that is, 4 or 5 stivers in wages. The second [scourge] is [the oppression of] the Governor, the nobles, the Diwan, the Kotwal, the Bakhshi, and other royal officers. If any of these wants a workman, the man is not asked if he is willing to come, but is seized in the house or in the street, well beaten if he should dare to raise any objection, and in the evening paid half his wages, or nothing at all. From these facts the nature of their food can be easily inferred. They know little of the taste of meat. For their monotonous daily food they

¹ 'Painters' denotes the men who made 'painted' cloth, or chintz.

² The word 'tacka' is sometimes hard to interpret, but the equation here given shows that Pelsaert used it for the dam. The word is presumably *tanka*.



I have nothing but a little *khichri*,¹ made of 'green pulse' mixed with rice, which is cooked with water over a little fire until the moisture has evaporated, and eaten hot with butter in the evening; in the day time they munch a little parched pulse or other grain,² which they say suffices for their lean stomachs.

Their houses are built of mud with thatched roofs. Furniture there is little or none, except some earthenware pots to hold water and for cooking, and two beds, one for the man, the other for his wife; for here man and wife do not sleep together, but the man calls his wife when he wants her in the night, and when he has finished she goes back to her own place or bed. Their bedclothes are scanty, merely a sheet, or perhaps two, serving both as under- and over-sheet; this is sufficient in the hot weather, but the bitter cold nights are miserable indeed, and they try to keep warm over little coudung fires which are lit outside the doors, because the houses have no fire-places or chimneys; the smoke from these fires all over the city is so great that the eyes run, and the throat seems to be choked.

Peons or servants are exceedingly numerous in this country, for everyone—be he mounted soldier, merchant, or king's official—keeps as many as his position and circumstances permit. Outside the house, they serve for display, running continually before their master's horse; inside, they do the work of the house, each knowing his own duties. The *tziurewardar*[?]³ attends only to his horse, the *baihwan*, or carter, to his cart and oxen; the *farrash*,

¹ In the text, *kitchery*. The original of 'green pulse' is 'groene ertjens'; the phrase probably indicates *moth*, the cheapest of the pulses. In the Agra Account-book of 1637-9, preserved in MS. at The Hague, a similar phrase is used to explain the word *moth*, which appears frequently in the accounts.

² By a curious perversion of this passage, Thévenot has 'coffee and vegetables.' His *kahue* (coffee) seems to come from a misreading of the Dutch verb *kauwen*, which I render 'munch.'

³ This word is not clear in the MS. Thévenot has *selwidar*; perhaps *silahdar* is intended. The remaining names of servants are familiar, except *tzantel*, which may represent either *chandāl* or *santāl*.



or tent-pitcher, attends to his tent on the way, spreads carpets, both on the march and in the house, and looks after the *diwan-khana* or sitting room; the *masalchi*, or torch-bearer, looks to his torch, and lights lamps and candles in the evening; the *sarwan*, or camel-driver, looks to his camel; and there are two or three *mahawats* or attendants to each elephant according to its size. The *tsantel*, or messenger, a plume on his head and two bells at his belt, runs at a steady pace, ringing the bells; they carry their master's letters a long distance in a short time, covering 25 to 30 kos in a day; but they eat much *postibangh*¹ or opium regularly, so that they do not feel the continuous work or fatigue. They run on with dizzy head; they will not as a rule answer anyone who asks where they come from or where they are going, but hurry straight on. These messengers may bring their masters, who hold official positions as governors, into great credit, or disgrace, with the King, because letters on important official business are sometimes delayed, and if the news they contain should reach the King first from some other place, whether nearer or more distant, the officer will be blamed for negligence, and dismissed from his post. There are many more servants in the crowd, whom it would take too long to enumerate; in the houses of the great lords each servant confines himself strictly to his own duties, and it is like life on the Portuguese ships, where the chief boatswain, if he saw the foremast fall overboard, would not disgrace himself by going forward or on to the forecastle, though he could save the mast by doing so.

For this slack and lazy service the wages are paid by the Moguls only after large deductions, for most of the great lords reckon 40 days to the month, and pay from 3 to 4 rupees for that period; while wages are often left several months in arrears, and then paid in worn-out clothes or other things. If, however, the master holds office or power, the servants are arrogant, oppressing the innocent, and sinning on the strength of their master's greatness. Very few of them serve their master honestly;

¹ *Post*, opium, and *bhāng*, infusion of hemp.



THE MANNER OF LIFE

CSL
63

they steal whatever they can; if they buy only a pice-worth of food, they will take their share or *dasturi* [commission]. The masters sometimes know this very well, but they suppose it is paid by the poor, and not out of their pockets; in this, however, they are mistaken, because the commission is always taken into account in the sale. Otherwise it would be impossible for the servants to feed themselves and their families on such low wages; and accordingly their position and manner of life differs very little from that of the workman in the wealth of their poverty.¹

Whatever he may deal in—spices, drugs, fruit, cotton goods, cloth, or anything else—the shopkeeper is held in greater respect than the workman, and some of them are even well-to-do; but they must not let the fact be seen, or they will be the victims of a trumped-up charge, and whatever they have will be confiscated in legal form, because informers swarm like flies round the governors, and make no difference between friends and enemies, perjuring themselves when necessary in order to remain in favour. Further, they are subject to a rule that if the King's nobles, or governors, should require any of their goods, they must sell for very little—less than half price; for to begin with, they must give great weight for small coins,² the difference being 20 per cent; then 9 per cent is deducted for *dasturi* [commission]; then clerks, overseers, cashiers,³ and others all know very well how to get their share; so that in such circumstances the unfortunate shopkeeper may be robbed in a single hour of the profits of a whole month, although they bear the general cost.⁴

¹ Literally, 'in their rich poverty,' apparently a fanciful phrase.

² *Vide* § 5, above, where Pelsaert explains that ordinary transactions were carried out either in Akbari or Jahangiri units: the meaning is that in these forced sales tradesmen had to give Jahangiri weight for Akbari money.

³ Text has 'schryvers, droges mosseroufs.' 'Droges' I take to be *daroghas*; the last word is probably a corruption of some such form as *mutasarraf*.

⁴ The meaning of the last six words is obscure. Perhaps the reference is to the overhead costs of the business, which have still to be met though the particular transaction yields no profit.



JAHANGIR'S INDIA

CSL

This is a short sketch of the life of these poor wretches, who, in their submissive bondage, may be compared to poor, contemptible earthworms, or to little fishes, which, however closely they may conceal themselves, are swallowed up by the great monsters of a wild sea. Now we shall write a little of the manner of life of the great and rich, but, in order to do so, we must entirely change our tune; for the pen which has described bitter poverty, clothed with the woeful garment of sighs, the foe of love, friendship and happiness, but the friend of loneliness wet with the daily dew of tears,—that pen must entirely change its style, and tell that in the palaces of these lords dwells all the wealth there is, wealth which glitters indeed, but is borrowed, wrung from the sweat of the poor. Consequently their position is as unstable as the wind, resting on no firm foundation, but rather on pillars of glass, resplendent in the eyes of the world, but collapsing under the stress of even a slight storm.

Their *mahals* are adorned internally with lascivious sensuality, wanton and reckless festivity, superfluous pomp, inflated pride, and ornamental daintiness, while the servants of the lords may justly be described as a generation of iniquity, greed and oppression, for, like their masters, they make hay while the sun shines. Sometimes while they [the nobles] think they are exalted to a seat in heaven, an envious report to the King may cast them down to the depths of woe. Very few of them, however, think of the future, but they enjoy themselves to the uttermost while they can. As a rule they have three or four wives, the daughters of worthy men, but the senior wife commands most respect. All live together in the enclosure surrounded by high walls, which is called the *mahal*, having tanks and gardens inside. Each wife has separate apartments for herself and her slaves, of whom there may be 10, or 20, or 100, according to her fortune. Each has a regular monthly allowance for her *gastos*¹ [expenditure]. Jewels and clothes are provided by the husband according to the extent of his affection. Their food comes from one kitchen, but each

¹ The Portuguese word *gastos* is used in other contemporary Dutch records in the sense of housekeeping or travelling expenses.



wife takes it in her own apartments; for they hate each other secretly, though they seldom or never allow it to be seen, because of their desire to retain the favour of their husband, whom they fear, honour, and worship, as a god rather than a man. Each night he visits a particular wife, or *mahal*, and receives a very warm welcome from her and from the slaves, who, dressed specially for the occasion, seem to fly, rather than run, about their duties. If it is the hot weather, they undress the husband as soon as he comes in, and rub his body with pounded sandalwood and rosewater, or some other scented and cooling oil. Fans are kept going steadily in the room, or in the open air, where they usually sit. Some of the slaves chafe the master's hands and feet, some sit and sing, or play music and dance, or provide other recreation, the wife sitting near him all the time. They study night and day how to make exciting perfumes and efficacious preserves, such as *mosseri* or *falonj*,¹ containing amber, pearls, gold, opium, and other stimulants; but these are mostly for their own use, for they eat them occasionally in the day-time, because they produce a pleasant elevation of the spirit. In the cool of the evening they drink a great deal of wine, for the women learn the habit quickly from their husbands, and drinking has become very fashionable in the last few years. The husband sits like a golden cock among the gilded hens until midnight, or until passion, or drink, sends him to bed. Then if one of the pretty slave girls takes his fancy, he calls her to him and enjoys her, his wife not daring to show any signs of displeasure, but dissembling, though she will take it out of the slave-girl later on.

Two or three eunuchs, or more, who are merely purchased Bengali slaves, but are usually faithful to their master, are appointed for each wife, to ensure that she is seen by no man except her husband; and, if a eunuch fails in this duty, he, with everyone else to blame for the stranger's presence, is in danger of losing his life. They are thus held

¹ 'Falonj' is presumably named from the seed *falanja*, which is used as a perfume. 'Mosseri' suggests elevation of spirit; but I have not attempted to investigate the precise nature of these stimulants.



JAHANGIR'S INDIA

CSL

in high esteem by their master, but the women pay them still greater regard, for the whole management of the *mahal* is in their hands, and they can give or refuse whatever is wanted. Thus they can get whatever they desire—fine horses to ride, servants to attend them outside, and female slaves inside the house, clothes as fine and smart as those of their master himself. The wives feel themselves bound to do all this, in order that what happens in the house may be concealed from their husband's knowledge; for many, or perhaps most of them, so far forget themselves, that, when their husband has gone away, either to Court, or to some place where he takes only his favourite wife, and leaves the rest at home, they allow the eunuch to enjoy them according to his ability, and thus gratify their burning passions when they have no opportunity of going out; but otherwise they spare no craft or trouble to enable them to enjoy themselves outside. These wretched women wear, indeed, the most expensive clothes, eat the daintiest food, and enjoy all worldly pleasures except one, and for that one they grieve, saying they would willingly give everything in exchange for a beggar's poverty.

The ladies of our country should be able to realise from this description the good fortune of their birth, and the extent of their freedom when compared with the position of ladies like them in other lands; but this topic lies outside the scope of my task, and I shall now speak of the houses which are built here. They are noble and pleasant, with many apartments, but there is not much in the way of an upper story except a flat roof, on which to enjoy the evening air. There are usually gardens and tanks inside the house; and in the hot weather the tanks are filled daily with fresh water, drawn by oxen from wells. The water is drawn, or sometimes raised by a wheel, in such quantity that it flows through a leaden pipe and rises like a fountain; in this climate water and plants are a refreshment and recreation unknown in our cold country. These houses last for a few years only, because the walls are built with mud instead of mortar, but the white plaster of the walls is very noteworthy, and far superior to anything in our



THE MANNER OF LIFE

CSL
67

country. They use unslaked lime, which is mixed with milk, gum, and sugar into a thin paste. When the walls have been plastered with lime, they apply this paste, rubbing it with well-designed trowels until it is smooth; then they polish it steadily with agates, perhaps for a whole day, until it is dry and hard, and shines like alabaster, or can even be used as a looking-glass.

They have no furniture of the kind we delight in, such as tables, stools, benches, cupboards, bedsteads, etc.; but their cots, or sleeping places, and other furniture of kinds unknown in our country, are lavishly ornamented with gold or silver, and they use more gold and silver in serving food than we do, though nearly all of it is used in the *mahal*, and is seen by scarcely anybody except women. Outside the *mahal*, there is only the *diwan-khana*, or sitting-place, which is spread with handsome carpets, and kept very clean and neat. Here the lord takes his seat in the morning to attend to his business, whatever it is, and here all his subordinates come to salaam him. This is a very humble salute, in which the body is bent forward, and the right hand is placed on the head; but persons of equal rank or position merely bend the body. If strangers desire admittance, their names are first announced, and they are then introduced. After saluting, they take seats appropriate to their position in a row on each side of their host, and that so humbly that they seem unlike themselves, for it is more like a school of wise and virtuous philosophers than a gathering of false infidels; and no one will move from his place, though they should sit the whole day. There is a certain gravity in their mode of speaking; they make no loud noise, and do not shout or use gestures. If they talk secrets, which they do not wish to be heard by everybody, they hold a handkerchief, or their girdle, before their mouths, so that neither speaker shall be touched by the other's breath. Everyone leaves as soon as he has obtained an answer to his request, but friends, acquaintances, and persons of position remain until the lord retires into the house, or unless the audience is prolonged until meal-time, though there are no fixed hours for meals. Before eating they first wash their hands; then the tablecloth



is brought and spread on the floor. The food¹ consists of *birinj*, *aeshalia*, *pollaeb*, (yellow, red, green, or black), *zueyla*, *dupiazza*; also roast meats, and various other good courses, served on very large dishes, with too little butter, and too much spice for our taste.² The *tsaftergir*³, or head servant, sits in the middle, and serves each guest according to his rank, the senior first. In eating, they use little in the way of spoons or knives except their five fingers, which they besmear up to the knuckles soldier-fashion, for napkins are not used, and it is very bad manners to lick the fingers. Each guest confines himself to the portion served before him; no food is touched with the left hand; and little or nothing is drunk while eating, whether water or wine, until they have said their prayer and washed their hands. Alike at midday and in the evening the guests rise and take their leave with scanty compliments, saying merely, God grant a lasting blessing on the house! and the host then goes into his *mahal* to sleep until the evening, when he usually comes out again to the sitting-place. Such are the usual customs, but detailed descriptions such as this must show some discrepancies. Some rich people, and many who are economical, take their meals in the *mahal* in order to save the heavy cost of the outside service; and again they cannot hold their reception when they are in the King's camp, because they are on duty continuously from morning to night. Some of the nobles, again, have chaste wives, but they are too few to be worth mentioning; most of the ladies are tarred with the same brush, and when the husband is away, though he may think they are guarded quite safely by his eunuchs, they are too clever for Argus himself with his hundred eyes, and get all the pleasure they can, though not so much as they desire.

¹ *Birinj* (dressed rice) and *dupiazza* (meat with onions, etc.) are described in the account of Akbar's kitchen in the *Ain-i-Akbari* (I. 59, in Blochmann's translation). *Pollaeb* may be a perversion of *putāo*. 'Aeshalia' should perhaps be *al-shalla* (spiced meat). 'Zueyla' is altered in the text, and may possibly be a corruption of *t'huli* (spiced wheaten cakes).

² This clause is obscure, and the text is probably corrupt. The statement that there was too little butter is clear, but the words regarding spices are meaningless as they stand, and the rendering is conjectural.

³ Perhaps *safraichi* (table-servant) is meant; the word is altered in the text.



[13.] RELIGIOUS SUPERSTITIONS.

AN account of the religion of Muhammad, taken from the Koran, has been published in our language, but it makes no reference to a large number of superstitions which are prevalent in this country.¹ I shall therefore say a little about some which are common here, and which seem not unlike the views of the papists; for when Muhammad compiled his Koran, he picked various opinions from all religions—and there were a good many, owing to the disunion and schisms in the church—particularly those which were false and pleasing to worldly eyes. Thus they have among them as many *pirs*, or prophets, as the papists have saints; they do not make images of them, and that practice is absolutely forbidden by their law; but all the same they put forward their silly mundane fables about them. They say that every earthly king has his regular court of princes and lords, each employed according to his merits in the administration with great care and supervision, and that no one can approach the king unless he has one of them for a friend; and they argue from this example that even in heaven a man must have a spokesman or advocate with God, who will put forward his request or his prayer, and obtain an order to grant his petition according to his deserts. Thus these mistaken men clearly agree with the papists, for they do not understand that God is the Knower of all hearts, but obscure the incomprehensible illumination of the beams of His almighty compassion, and bestow it on poor earthworms and false hypocrites. Through the subtlety of the devil these men in their lifetime blind the eyes of the poor; and sometimes the deception is continued after their death by crafty mendicants or disciples, who, by posing as their successors, batten on the innocent poor. These men know how to establish their position by means

¹ Readers, whether Hindu, Moslem, or Roman Catholic, will make the necessary allowances for the vigorous language in which Pelsaert's Protestant zeal is occasionally manifested in this section and the next.



of sorcery, or perhaps it is that the popular imagination is led to accept their pretensions by the strange and ridiculous fables they tell of what has already been achieved by their companions.

For example, there is Pir Ghazi Muinuddin, who is buried in a very costly tomb at Ajmer, whither pilgrims journey annually from distant places, and most of those who are childless travel there barefooted. King Akbar also, who had no children in his youth, made a vow to this saint, and went there from Agra on foot with his wife Miryam Makani, travelling four kos a day.¹ As a memorial, he erected a *minar*, or milestone, at every kos of the whole road, with a well beside it for the convenience of travellers, and also *mahals* or women's houses, 8 kos apart. It so happened that his wife became pregnant, giving birth to the present king, Jahangir or Shah Salim, and consequently the people now believe confidently that the Pir was the giver of this child, and are all the more confirmed in their error. There are immense numbers of such *pirs*, each with his own skill and power of granting requests. In Makanpur, 70 kos from Agra on the eastern road, is buried Pir Shah Madar, who is said to possess many gifts and wield many powers.² The pilgrimage to his tomb is in February, when immense numbers of people from all quarters gather near Sikandra, beyond Agra, and march thither like an army, accompanied by even greater numbers of mendicants than the devotees, who there take various parties under their standards for protection.

There are many such festivals, but to write of them all would be interminable, and I think it will be better to describe only the chief feast-days. I should not, however, willingly pass over some of their holy men whom I have seen in their lifetime, particularly Sultan Khusru, the eldest son of the present King. He was murdered in the

¹ This incident is of course familiar: the details given by Pelsaert should be read as reproducing the story as it was told in his time, not as a first-hand account of facts which occurred half a century before.

² The cult of Shah Madar survives at Makanpur (vide *Imperial Gazetteer*, XVII. 43).



RELIGIOUS SUPERSTITIONS

CSL
71

fort at Burhanpur, in February, 1621,¹ at the instance of his younger brother Sultan Khurram, because he was thought to be next in succession to the throne; the murder was committed by a slave named Raza, who during the night strangled him with a *lungi*, or cloth, so as to raise the less suspicion of violence, and suggest a natural death. His body was brought to Agra, and taken thence to Allahabad, to be buried beside his mother. In the excitement or mourning which followed his death, for he was much beloved by the common people, although he was held a prisoner by his brother under the King's orders, some mendicants presumed to make a representation of a grave at a spot where the bier or corpse had rested for a night on the journey, and announced to the common people that their God had in their sleep ordered them to do so, because Khusru was an innocent martyr; and consequently that everyone should come to make offerings at similar shrines every Thursday, and their prayers would certainly be granted, because Khusru occupied as great a position in heaven as he had held on earth. This devilish folly made such headway in various towns, such as Burhanpur, Sironj, Agra, and Allahabad, that both Hindus and Moslems in vast numbers went in procession every Thursday with flags, pipes, and drums to his worship; he was accepted as a true *pir*, or saint; and they carried matters so far that they were foolish enough never to take an oath except by 'the head of the Sultan,' which was regarded as more binding than if they had sworn by God Himself. His father the King prohibited this practice, saying that Khusru was in his lifetime a sinful, nay, a rebellious son, and if he was really murdered by his brother, the guilt attached to the murderer, but did not operate to absolve Khusru, or to justify his being regarded as a saint. On this, Kasim Khan, the Governor of Agra, destroyed and obliterated the shrine, which had been built at great cost; the attendants

¹ Really 1622. The complicity of Sultan Khurram (Shahjahan) in the murder of Khusru has been questioned, but the evidence brought together by Mr. Beni Madho (*Life of Jahangir*, p. 336), shows at any rate that the charge was generally believed in India at the time.



or receivers of offerings were driven away; and everything that was found was confiscated for the King.

Three classes of the people are affected in consequence. First there are the mendicants, who on the day of worship used to gather on the road in thousands and swarm like flies, so that no one could walk a yard without molestation, and, calling on no name but that of 'the head of the Sultan,' earned enough in that day to provide them with food for the week. Next there are the confectioners, who used to line the whole road in great numbers with stalls of sweet-stuffs, and sold great quantities, together with the hawkers of toys (like pedlars at our fairs), for no one would return without having bought something for the children. The roads and open places were full, too, of jugglers, dancers, players, and such rabble, the noise was deafening, and the crowd made it even more impossible to see, or find room to move. Lastly, and the greatest sufferers of all, comes the class of secluded ladies. Under pretext of a pilgrimage, they used to come without reproach to see, and perhaps even speak to their lovers. Assignations were made in the gardens, which are numerous in the neighbourhood, and there passion was given the food for which it hungered, and for which, in the case of many, no opportunity could be found on any other day. On such occasions new passions were aroused by the sight of a handsome youth, who took the lady's fancy, and while *she* saw *him*, *he* might not be able to see *her*. Thus nobody more regrets these gardens, or is more grieved, than these pitiable little creatures of Agra; for the festival still continues in Burhanpur, Sironj and other places on the road.¹

All their saints have origins of the kind which I have described, and they have dabbled largely in magic. The Moslems count their Muhammad superior to all the prophets who have been sent by God, with the exception

¹ The feature of social life referred to in this paragraph was not a novelty. More than two centuries before, Firoz Shah had noticed the improprieties resulting from visits to tombs on holy days, and he 'commanded that no woman should go out to the tombs under pain of exemplary punishment' (Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, III. 380).



of Christ; but they hold that on his advent the Christian faith was killed or annihilated, just as Judaism was by the coming of Christ. The only title they give to Muhammad is the Messenger of God. They attribute to him superhuman or fabulous gifts during his life on earth, for instance that a cloud or shadow always rested above his head; that his body cast no shadow; that flies never settled on it; that a long journey was shortened for him, and the road contracted; and that no one ever saw his excrement, which the earth opened and absorbed. There are many similar absurdities, which I will omit, and come to the two great festivals, called *Id*, which they keep very strictly. The dates depend upon the moon; I remember when the fast came in August, but this year it began in June. This fast is kept very strictly for a whole lunar month; they neither eat nor drink throughout the whole day, or until the stars appear or have become visible in the evening, and in the intolerable heat the prolonged abstinence from water is very trying; but food, be it fish or meat, is not prohibited at night. They sleep apart from their wives for the whole month, and they drink no wine, which, though it is described as unclean in their scriptures, they learn to drink in large quantities, neglecting the prohibition, and explaining it away after our fashion.

At the end of this month of fasting comes the great *Id* of which I have spoken, and which they keep as devoutly as we do Easter. In the morning they go to the great mosques named *Idgah*, which are usually outside the city, where the Kazis, who are their lawyers, offer prayers; people of all classes gather there, and return home in great joy, the great men in full state, the poor in clean white clothes. Friends send each other food accompanied by good wishes, and everyone is very gay because the heavy burden of fasting or abstinence is past, and nobody is bound or compelled to fast for longer than he chooses or wishes,¹ nor is it any shame [not to do so].

The other *Id* comes 70 days later, and during the interval few or no marriages are allowed to take place. This feast

¹ This sentence is ambiguous, and may also be read in the sense that it was not compulsory to observe the fast.



JAHANGIR'S INDIA

CSL

commemorates God's mercy to Abraham, when he was about to sacrifice his only son Isaac, who was obedient to him, relying on his compassion. He prepared to make a worthy burnt-offering, even to slay his son; but an angel held back the knife, and the sacrifice was remitted, and he offered instead a goat which was standing behind a hedge. On that day therefore everyone who is able will sacrifice a goat in his house, and keep the day as a great festival. A month later comes the commemoration of Hasan and Husain, two brothers, sons of Ali, who was married to Bibi Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad. From these two, namely Muhammad and Ali, arose after their death a schism in the new faith; for Persians, Usbeks, and Tartars hold by Ali rather than Muhammad, while Turks, Arabs, and Hindustanis, or the whole of this kingdom, hold only by Muhammad, and not at all by Ali; and thus there is a great distinction, the sects calling each other *kafirs* or infidels, and hating each other as bitterly as the papists hate our religion. Those who follow Muhammad are called *sunnis*, and those who follow Ali *rawafiz* [i.e. *shias*]. At first, the new-found faith was introduced in a deceitfully attractive form, and men were given remarkable latitude, and a broad ladder by which they could climb to heaven without difficulty, thus offering pleasant allurements for the innocent. When however they became powerful, and found their wings strong enough for flight, they adopted forcible methods to spread their creed, and waged war against those who did not accept it; and in a battle against a heathen king, Raja Bickhanhaar, Hasan and Husain were killed. In commemoration of this slaughter they make a great noise all night for a period of ten days; the men keep apart from their wives, and fast by day; the women sing lamentations, and make a display of mourning; in the chief streets of the city the men make two coffins, adorn them as richly as they can, and carry them round in the evening with many lights and large crowds attending, with great cries of mourning and noise. The chief celebration is on the last night, when it seems from the great mourning as if God had plagued the whole country as in the time of Pharaoh's obstinacy, when all the first-born were



RELIGIOUS SUPERSTITIONS

75

CSL

slain in one day. The outcry lasts till the first quarter of the day; the coffins are brought to the river, and if two parties meet carrying their biers (it is worst on that day), and one will not give place to the other, then, if they are evenly matched, they may kill each other as if they were enemies at open war, for they run with naked swords like madmen. No Hindus can venture into the streets before midday, for even if they should escape with their life, at the least their arms and legs would be broken to pieces. This continues till at last they have thrown them [the coffins] into the river; then they bathe, return home finely dressed, and each goes to the graves of his deceased parents or friends, which have been newly whitewashed and decorated for the occasion, bringing food and flowers, and, after due mourning, giving the food to the poor. They believe that all good deeds or charities performed on that day on behalf of the dead, will benefit them whether they are in heaven or in hell, a fable which resembles the papist doctrine of purgatory; and the festival may fairly be compared to All Souls' Day, when they read the seven psalms in the churches, or pay a penny to have them read, in order that the souls in purgatory may be given some respite or relief from the prescribed period, or occasionally may even be released and taken to heaven.



[14. THE HINDU RELIGION.]

It has been my wish to make a thorough study of the Hindu faith and its origin, in order that I might be able to describe it; but the fact that it has no foundation beyond elaborate poetic fables, the great number of their gods and their marvellous transformations, and the extraordinary variety of their beliefs—these considerations have deterred me, or indeed prevented me from reaching the truth; and if one sect only is dealt with, the account will differ totally from those given by others, and will be contradicted by writers who have probably taken their matter from some different school. Among the banians of Gujarat, for example, there are innumerable sects, one of which will not eat or drink with another, apart from the class of brahmans, who are respected and accounted sacred by all of them. In India or Hindustan again, there are just as many [sects of] khattris, but they are somewhat bolder, or less strict, in their beliefs; they can eat goat's or sheep's flesh, and indeed they also drink wine in private; but many, whom I pass over, will not eat of anything that has been alive, not even green plants, but only rice, wheat, and butter, which make up the whole of their diet. It is of common occurrence that there are as many opinions as there are families, and since the members of a family intermarry, its extinction would mean the extinction of the whole creed.¹

The Hindus are more punctilious and much stricter than the Moslems in their ceremonies. No one, man or woman, will omit to wash the body in the morning, however cold it may be. The common people go to a river or running water, while the rich bathe at home; and they will not touch food till they have washed. They sit down to eat, naked and with bare head, inside a well-marked enclosure, which no one enters while they are eating; if they are disturbed, they will give up that meal. They will not omit to go and

¹ This sentence gives the probable meaning of a very obscure passage.



THE HINDU RELIGION

CSL
77

bathe in the Ganges once a year; those who can manage it will travel 500 or 600 kos for the purpose. They bathe in October, and they are convinced that by doing so they are purified of all their sins. They bring back a little of the water of the Ganges and keep it in their house, which, so they think, will protect them from sorcery or witchcraft. The water certainly has one remarkable quality, in that it never stinks, and no worms appear in it, even if it is kept for 100 years, and consequently they regard the river as sacred. The bathing-place¹ lies about 40 kos from Agra.

Some of the brahmans are very ingenious, good astronomers, familiar with the course of the stars, and usually prepared to foretell the weather. They reckon eclipses very clearly, and they also do a great deal of fortune-telling. There are usually one or two such men with a great reputation in the city; indeed the present King generally kept one at Court, whose prophecies, or most of them, proved quite accurate. The brahmans have consequently secured a great reputation, and they have now acquired such influence over the great men, and then over all the Moslems, that they will not undertake a journey until they have enquired what day or hour is auspicious for the start; and when they return from a journey, or come to take up an appointment, they will not enter the city until the suitable day or hour has been predicted, and then they wait until the exact moment has arrived. The result is that many of this rabble now frequent the streets, book in hand, to tell men their fortune, and, though their predictions have little value, they are believed by the poor, for they always get excellent measure, and their questions are met with ambiguous replies.

The Hindus, to whom I have referred, have three ordinary sources of livelihood. First there are the leading merchants and jewellers, and they are most able and expert in their business. Next there are the workmen, for practically all work is done by Hindus, the Moslems practising scarcely any crafts but dyeing and weaving, which are followed by Hindus in some places, but by Moslems everywhere.

¹ Presumably Soron on the Ganges, where large bathing festivals take place in the autumn.



Thirdly there are the clerks and brokers: all the business of the lords' palaces and of the Moslem merchants is done by Hindus—book-keeping, buying, and selling. They are particularly clever brokers, and are consequently generally employed as such throughout all these countries, except for the sale of horses, oxen, camels, elephants, or any living creatures, which they will not handle as the Moslems do.

Another class of Hindus is named Rajput. These men live in the hill-country, and are excellent soldiers, but many of them have nevertheless been brought into subjection by this King and his father, owing to the fact that the land is divided into small portions, and each Raja or King has only a small territory, so that continuous hard fighting went on among themselves. Each Raja had only a single fort or city, which protected the open country belonging to him. They are bold and courageous people, determined and loyal. The men are short in stature and ugly. Mounted or on foot, they have no weapon other than a short spear, with shield, sword, and dagger, but they are slow to retreat in a fight, and are obstinate in attack, because the quantity of opium they eat excites them, and causes them to care little for their lives. They eat all kinds of meat except beef, and drink wine. In war time the race is much esteemed, and is feared by the other classes of soldiers, but during peace they get the cold shoulder, because in palaces or camps they make less show or display than the Moguls or Hindustanis.

When a Rajput dies, his wives (or rather his wife, for they marry only one if there is genuine love) allow themselves to be burnt alive, as is the practice among the banians or khattiris, and in Agra this commonly occurs two or three times a week. It is not a very pleasant spectacle, but I witnessed it out of curiosity, when a woman who lived near our house declared to her friends, immediately on her husband's death, that she would be *sati*, which means that she would accompany him where he had gone,¹ making

¹ This bit of popular etymology seems to have prevailed widely in India at this period. It appears in several of the quotations in *Hobson-Jobson* (s.v.), and also in some other Dutch narratives of the 17th century.



the announcement with little lamentation, and as if her heart was sealed with grief. They imagine or believe that, if they have lived well in this world, the soul, directly the breath has left the body, flies to another man or child of equal or higher rank, and is born again; but if a man has not lived well, the soul passes to a beast—bird, worm, fish, evil or good animal—according to the appointed punishment. This is the reason why they will kill no animal, so as not to trouble or disturb the soul within, which would have to journey to some other animal, for they say: Who knows but the soul of my father, mother, sister, or children who may have died, may for their sins be in that animal? To return however to what we were saying, when a woman has made up her mind, it is impossible for her friends or for anyone in the world to dissuade her, strive as they may, but if she persists, she must be left in peace. So she goes and bathes, according to the daily custom, puts on her finest clothes, her jewels, and the best ornaments she has, adorning herself as if it was her wedding day. The woman I have mentioned then went, with music and songs, to the Governor to obtain his permission. The Governor urged many sound arguments to show that what she proposed to do was a sin, and merely the inspiration of the devil to secure her voluntary death; and, because she was a handsome young woman of about 18 years of age, he pressed her strongly to dissuade her if possible from her undertaking, and even offered her 500 rupees yearly as long as she should live. He could, however, produce no effect, but she answered with resolute firmness that her motive was not [the fear of] poverty, but love for her husband, and even if she could have all the King's treasures in this world, they would be of no use to her, for she meant to live with her husband. This was her first and last word throughout, she seemed to be out of her senses, and she was taking up far too much time; so the Governor, since governors are not allowed by the King's orders to refuse these requests, gave his consent. Then she hurried off with a light step, as if she might be too late, till she reached the place, a little outside the city, where was a small hut, built of wood, roofed with straw, and decorated with flowers. There she took off all her



JAHANGIR'S INDIA

CSL

Jewels and distributed them among her friends, and also her clothes, which she disposed of in the same way, keeping only an undergarment. Then she took a handful of rice, and distributed it to all the bystanders; this being done, she embraced her friends and said her last farewells; took her baby, which was only a year old, kissed it, and handed it to her nearest friends; then ran to the hut where her dead husband lay, and kissed and embraced him eagerly. Then she [or they] took the fire and applied the brand, and the friends piled wood before the door; everyone shouted out Ram! Ram! (the name of their god), the shouts continuing till they supposed she was dead. When the burning was over, everyone took a little of the ash of the bones, which they regard as sacred, and preserve. Surely this is as great a love as the women of our country bear to their husbands, for the deed was done not under compulsion but out of sheer love. At the same time there are hundreds, or even thousands, who do not do it, and there is no such reproach as is asserted by many, who write that those who neglect it incur the reproach of their caste.



[15.] MOSLEM MARRIAGES IN AGRA.

IN arranging a marriage, the bridegroom has no share in the choice, still less has the bride, for the selection is made by the parents, or, if they are dead, by other friends.¹ When a youth is from 15 to 18 years old, his friends seek for the daughter of a man within the circle of friendship; but this applies to the rich rather than the poor, because as a rule soldier marries soldier, merchant marries merchant, and so on according to occupation. If they know of no suitable match, there are female marriage-brokers, who know of all eligible parties; the parents will call these in, and ask if there is no rich young lady for their son. The brokers understand their business, and instead of one will suggest perhaps twenty-five. When the proposals have been thoroughly examined in regard to birth and present position, the parents choose the one which seems to be most suitable. Then the mother, or the nearest friends, go with the youth to the friends of the young lady they have chosen, even if they have no previous acquaintance, and, after compliments, ask if they will give the lady in marriage to the youth. After full discussion on both sides, there is usually an interval of some days, or, if they get an immediate assent, the youth, or bridegroom, sends a ring to the bride, with his compliments. She sends in return some betel, with a handkerchief or something of the kind, though the unfortunate bridegroom is not allowed to meet the ladies, still less to see if his future bride is white or black, straight or crooked, pretty or ugly; he must trust to his mother and friends. From this time on begins much merry-making in the house, with music and singing, and the congratulations of friends on both sides. When the bridegroom

¹ Readers who are not familiar with the ceremonies described in this section will find it interesting to compare with it the description given two centuries later by Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali (*Observations on the Mussulmans of India*, Letters XIII., XIV.). The lady was behind the scenes, and in a position to explain some things which Pelsaert, among the male guests, might overlook or misunderstand.



goes home with his friends, similar music begins there also, and this goes on continuously, night and day, with drums, pipes and other noise, provided by both parties, so that the whole neighbourhood is drowned in noise. At last the wedding-day comes. This is fixed for 15 or 20 days after the engagement, in order to give time for preparing the feast. Three or four days before it, the bridegroom and his parents go to the bride's house, with a great company of the whole tribe, and taking with them a large number of *gondas*, or large ornamented wooden dishes, full of confectionery, sugar, almonds, raisins and other fruits, and also a sum of money, 100 or 1000 rupees, according to their position. The money goes towards the expenses of the bride's relatives, most of which must be paid by the bridegroom, who also provides the bride's jewellery. The procession comes to the bride's house with much music and drumming, and the visitors stay for the evening meal, returning home at night. The next evening the friends of the bride come with similar noise and pomp, and hundreds of lights; they bring to the bridegroom a representation, made of cotton, satin, and paper, in the form of ships or boats, ornamented with tinsel, and various colours and flowers. This is placed on the roof of the house till it falls to pieces. Then the women employed for the purpose anoint the bridegroom, and rub his hands and feet with *mehndi* (a powder made into a paste), till they are quite red; this is supposed to have been sent by the bride, and the occasion is called Mehndi day in consequence. The guests remain to sup with the bridegroom, and go home at night. The next day is the marriage-day. The bridegroom is dressed in red, and so garlanded with flowers that his face cannot be seen, and towards evening all the friends and invited guests gather, and accompany the bridegroom to the bride's house with the greatest possible display of lighted fireworks, drums, trumpets, music, and singers, so that everything may pass off without adverse comment. The bridegroom goes on horseback, with the male friends and a great cavalcade: the women follow in palanquins and carts, covered with the finest cloth that can be provided. The bridegroom goes to the place where the male guests



MOSLEM MARRIAGES IN AGRA

83
CSL

are gathered, but he may not speak till the marriage is complete, but sits as if he were dumb. The ladies go into the female apartments, where there is music, singing, and dancing, as there is before the men, where the dancers sing and dance as skilfully as they can. It is the custom at all weddings and feasts to call in these people for the guests' entertainment. There are many classes of dancers¹, among them *lolonis*, who are descended from courtesans who have come from Persia to India, and sing only in Persian; and a second class, *domnis*, who sing in Hindustani, and whose songs are considered more beautiful, more amorous, and more profound, than those of the Persians, while their tunes are superior; they dance, too, to the rhythm of the songs with a kind of swaying of the body which is not lascivious, but rather modest. Other classes are named *horckenis* and *hentsinis*, who have various styles of singing and dancing, but who are all alike accommodating people. [The music] lasts till a quarter of the night has gone, when the Kazi's clerk and *moslena* [*? maulana*] comes, and he makes a prayer, and then joins them in marriage without the bride being present. The ceremony consists merely in the registration in the Kazi's book, showing that such and such a person has acknowledged taking such and such a woman as his wife. When this is over, the meal is served, and they go to eat, after which there is music, singing, and dancing as before, lasting the whole night till the morning. Then they pack up the bride's belongings, that is to say, whatever she brings to the marriage is displayed and carried away. The bridegroom follows with the same pomp as when he arrived in the evening, except the lights and fireworks; then his bride, sitting in a palanquin; and then follow the lady friends of bride and bridegroom.² In this way he takes his bride home. His house is ready; he goes in, and his wife is brought to him, whom he now

¹ Of the classes of dancers mentioned in the text, *Lolonis* points to the Persian *loli*, public singer. *Domnis* are recorded in Crooke's *Tribes and Castes of the N.W. Provinces* as a sub-caste under the group Tawaif. *Horckenis* may represent the sub-caste Harakiya. *Hentsinis* is presumably formed from *hansna* (to laugh), and may be a recognised description, or merely a nickname.

² This clause gives the probable sense of a very involved passage.



JAHANGIR'S INDIA

CSL

sees for the first time, and he may congratulate himself if she happens to be pretty, or to suit his taste. The marriage must be consummated at once, while the ladies sit and sing at no great distance;¹ otherwise the bridegroom would be deeply disgraced, and the married ladies would send him the spinning-wheel. When the marriage has been consummated, the mother and an old woman enter, and, after their investigation, they begin to scream or sing 'Mubarak!' or Good Luck! as if a great victory had been won. Then the bridegroom goes to his apartments for the day, and the bride to hers; and the friends take their leave and depart, after each has received the gift of a piece of cloth, the men from the bridegroom and the women from the bride.

What I have described is the Hindustani custom, but Moguls, and also Hindus, have different ceremonies. The Hindus join their children in marriage at the age of only four or five years; and if the boy dies, the girl or bride cannot marry again, but must die a virgin, unless she employs clandestine means. The men on the other hand may marry as often as they choose, if their wives die; and old men have to marry children, because there are no grown-up maidens to be found.

¹ The translation of this paragraph is slightly condensed.



CONCLUSION.

THIS is a sketch of the ordinary course of manners, administration, and customs, so far as appeared to me to be possible, but it is not a system of law that I have been describing, because in this country there is a great diversity of tastes, among both the upper and the lower classes; a description cannot be so complete but that some one may say that he has on one occasion seen or learned something contrary to it; and, consequently, when such chatterers talk, my employers will recognise that absolute concordance is impossible of attainment. Further, I have deliberately passed over in haste certain matters, such as the origin of the inhabitants, their nature or disposition, their dress, their methods in war, etc.; but since the object of my report is merely to furnish information to my honourable employers regarding the actual or potential trade of the country, I have been constrained by zeal to fulfil my duty, to show and make it clear that while in India I have not been like the main-mast, which also travels to India,¹ but rather their servant, who is, and always will be, bound to render them such services as etc., etc. I close by wishing my employers continual expansion and development of their trade, all good fortune, and prosperity to themselves.

From

Your most obedient servant,
FRANC^o PELSARTT.

¹ I have not come across this phrase elsewhere, but presumably it was a jocular way of saying that a man had learned nothing by travel.

Index

- Agra
 Character of the merchants, 28
 City described, 1 ff.
 Climate and agriculture, 47
 Dutch business in, 21
 European goods for, 25
 Fort, 3
 Production, 9
 Spice trade, 21 ff.
 Supplies, 48
 Trade, 6
 Agriculture, 47-49
 Ahmadabad, 19
 Ajmer, 70
 Akbar, 1, 7, 70
 Allahabad, 6
 Anirai, 52
 Armenian buyers, 16, 18
 Asaf Khan, 50, 51
 Bayana, 13, 17
 Benares, 7
 Borax, 44, 45
 Broach, 42, 43
 Brokers, 78
 Burhanpur, 37, 38, 71
 Coinage
 Gujarat, 42
 Mogul, 29
 Cotton Goods
 Benares, 7
 Bengal, 8
 Deccan, 40
 Gujarat, 40-43
 Jagannath, 8
 Jaunpur, 7
 Lakhawar, 7
 Oudh, 7
 Patna, 7
 Sind, 32
 Cow-killing, 49
 Customs duties, 42
 Drugs, 44 ff.
 English merchants
 at Agra, 18, 25, 28, 46
 at Burhanpur, 38
 at Patna, 7
 at Surat, 39, 41
 Eunuchs, 65 ff.
 Fathpur Sikri, 9
 Festivals and Fasts
 Cult of Khusru, 70 ff.
 Id, 73
 Muharram, 74
 Ramzan, 73
 Food
 the poor, 60
 the nobles, 68
 Fruit
 in Agra, 48
 in Kashmir, 35
 Fuel, 48, 61, 130, 165
 Furniture
 the nobles, 67
 the poor, 61
 Ganges, bathing in, 77
 Gujarat
 Chief cities described, 38-43
 Trade described, 19, 20
 Hindu religion, 76
 Housing
 the nobles, 66
 the poor, 61
 Indigo
 Adulteration, 12
 Cultivation, 10
 Injuries, 13
 Lahore market, 30, 78
 Manufacture, 10
 Quality, 11
 Trade, 15-18
 Informers, 63
 Interest
 in Agra, 28
 in Gujarat, 42
 Itimad-ud Daula, tomb of, 5
 Jagannath, 8
 Jagirs, 54
 Jahangir
 His administration, 6, 50 ff.
 Habits, 52, 53
 Residence at Lahore, 30
 In Kashmir, 30 ff.
 Taste for novelties, 25
 Taste for sport, 51
 Jaunpur, 7



INDEX

CSL

- Kashmir, 33 ff.
Khusru (Sultan), 70, 71
Koil, Indigo of, 15
- Lahore, 30
Lakhawar, 7
Law and justice, 57
Luxury, 64 ff.
- Marriage customs
Hindu, 84
Moslem, 81 ff.
- Masulipatam, 22
Mewat, Indigo of, 15
Mogul Administration
General description, 50 ff.
in Agra, 6, 28
in Burhanpur, 38
Insecurity, 58, 59
Law and justice, 57, 79
Meat-supply and slaughter of
cows, 49
Oppression of peasants, 47
Official intelligence, 59
Prevalence of rebels, 58
Promotion and punishment, 56,
64
Rule of inheritance, 54
Moslem Religion, 69 ff.
Muinuddin (Saint), 70
Multan, 31
- Nobles
Avarice, 54
Extravagance, 54, 64
Inheritance, 55
Instability, 56, 64
Life described, 64 ff.
- Nurjahan
Her character, 50
Her coinage, 21
In Kashmir, 34
Relations with Jahangir, 50, 53
- Ormuz, 39-41
Oudh, 7
- Pamris, 36
Parwiz (Sultan), 38
Patna, 7
Pelsaert (F)
His position in Agra, 1
Life, ix.-xvi.
Motives in writing, 85
Portuguese, 8, 19, 32
Pourop, 42
Poverty, 47, 48, 54, 56, 60 ff.
- Rajputs, 78
- Saffron, 35
Sal ammoniac, 46
Saltpetre, 46
Sandalwood, 25,
Servants, 61 ff.
Shahjahan (Sultan Khurram), 37
Shah Madar (Saint), 79
Shopkeepers, 63
Sikandra, 4, 5
Sind, 31, 32
Soothsayers, 77
Spice Trade
At Agra, 21 ff.
At Masulipatam, 22
In Kashmir, 36
- Spikenard, 45
Standard of life, 60 ff.
Surat, 38 ff.
Swally, 38
- Transit duties, 43
- Wages, 60, 62
Weights and Measures, 29, 42
Widow-burning, 78 ff.
Workmen, 60, 77

1523



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