

and stout in battle, going forth to war naked as they are with only a shield that covers them from head to foot. And if they hap to take any one in war who cannot produce money to ransom himself withal they do straightway eat him. But if they can get money from him they let him go.

And the king of that country<sup>1</sup> weareth round his neck a string of three hundred very big pearls, for that he maketh to his gods daily three hundred prayers. He carrieth also in his hand a certain precious stone called a ruby, a good span in length and breadth, so that when he hath this stone in his hand it shows like a flame of fire. And this, it is said, is the most noble and valuable gem that existeth at this day in the world, and the great emperor of the Tartars of Cathay hath never been able to get it into his possession either by force or by money, or by any device whatever. This king attends to justice and maintains it,<sup>2</sup> and throughout his realm all men may fare safely. And there be many other things in this kingdom that I care not to write of.

25. Concerning the island of Sillan, and the marvels thereof.

There is also another island called SILLAN,<sup>3</sup> which hath a compass of good 2,000 miles. There be found therein an infinite number of serpents, and many other wild animals in great numbers, especially elephants. In this country also there is an exceeding great mountain, of which the folk relate that it was upon it that Adam mourned for his son one hundred years. In the midst<sup>4</sup> of this mountain is a certain beautiful level place, in which there is a lake of no great size, but having a great depth of water. This they say was de-

<sup>1</sup> MIN. RAM. "Of these beasts."

<sup>2</sup> MIN. RAM. "Albeit he is an idolater and hath a face like a dog's."

<sup>3</sup> We need not wonder at the dimensions ascribed to Ceylon, when the same have in the preceding chapter been assigned to Nicobar. But the persistence of marine tradition in exaggerating the size of Ceylon, in the face of facts tolerably manifest, is curious. The examples may be seen in *Sir Emerson Tennent's Ceylon*, ch. i.

<sup>4</sup> VEN. has "at the summit of the mountain," but the text is better.