

From the chapter *Concerning Jehoiada the Priest*.

At this time God pitying his people caused Elias to appear, who had been kept by God, it is not known where. That may be true which the Hebrews allege (as Jerome mentions in his comment on 1 Chronicles, xxi), viz., that he is the same as Phineas the son of Eleazar.<sup>1</sup> But it is asserted both by the Hebrews and the Sabæans, *i.e.*, the people of the kingdom of the Queen of Saba, that he had his place of abode in a very lofty mountain of that land which is called Mount Gybeit, meaning the Blessed Mountain. In this mountain also they say that the Magi were praying on the night of Christ's nativity when they saw the Star. It is in a manner inaccessible, for from the middle of the mountain upwards the air is said to be so thin and pure that none, or at least very few have been able to ascend it, and that only by keeping a sponge filled with water over the mouth. They say however that Elias by the will of God remained hidden there until the period in question.

The people of Saba say also that he still sometimes shows

<sup>1</sup> The Hebrew notions about the identity of Phineas and Elias have been adopted and expanded by the Mahomedans, who also identify in some way with them their mysterious prophet Khidhr. Hermitages or chapels dedicated to Khidhr and Elias appear to have been very numerous in Mussulman countries, especially on *hill-tops* (see *Ibn Batuta* passim). And the oriental christians and semi-christians also always associate Elias with mountain tops. There seems to be scarcely a prominent peak in the Greek Archipelago with which the name of Elias is not connected.

I do not know what *Gybeit* is, which he interprets as *Beatus*. *Kubeis* is the name of one of the holy mountains at Mecca of which wonderful things are related, but I find no meaning assigned to the name. There are many mountains in Java (if Java be the Saba of our author) which might in vast height and sublimity of aspect answer to the suggestions of Marignolli's description; none better perhaps than the Tjerimai, rising in isolated majesty to a height greater than Etna's, in the immediate vicinity of the coast, and close to Cheribon, the earliest seat of Mahomedanism in the island. Little less striking, and still more lofty, though not so isolated, is the Great S'lámat, a little further eastward, and by a singular coincidence its name (from the Arabic *Salámat*, Peace or Salvation) might fairly be translated *Mons Beatus*.