

those two!" the traveller himself exclaims. On another occasion he mentions meeting at Brussa a certain Shaik Abdallah of Misr who bore the surname of *The Traveller*. This worthy had indeed made the tour of the world, as some would have it, but he had never been in China nor in the Island of Serendib, neither in Spain nor in Negroland. "I have beaten him," says Ibn Batuta, "for all these have I visited!"<sup>1</sup>

He entered on his wanderings at the age of twenty-one (14th June, 1325), and did not close them till he was hard on fifty-one (in January, 1355): his career thus coinciding in time pretty exactly with that of Sir John Mandeville (1322-1356), a traveller the compass of whose journeys would be deemed to equal or surpass the Moor's, if we could but believe them to be as genuine.

Ibn Batuta commenced his travels by traversing the whole longitude of Africa (finding time to marry twice upon the road) to Alexandria, the haven of which he extols as surpassing all that he saw in the course of his peregrinations, except those of Kaulam and Calicut in India, that held by the Christians at Sudák or Soldaia in the Crimea, and the great port of Zayton in China. After some stay at Cairo, which was then perhaps the greatest city in the world out of China,<sup>2</sup> he ascended the valley of the Nile to Syene, and passed the Desert to Aidhab on the Red Sea, with the view of crossing the latter to Mecca. But wars raging on that sea prevented this, so he retraced his steps and proceeded to visit Palestine and the rest of Syria, including Aleppo and Damascus. He then performed the pilgrimage to the holy cities of his religion,<sup>3</sup> and afterwards visited the shrine

<sup>1</sup> ii, 321.

<sup>2</sup> The traveller reports that the Plague or Black Death of 1348 carried off 24,000 souls in one day (!) in the united cities of Cairo and Misr or Fostat (i, 229); whilst in 1381 the pestilence was said to have carried off 30,000 a day. George Guccio, who heard this at Cairo in 1384, relates also of the visitation of 1348 that "according to what the then Soldan wrote to King Hugo of Cyprus, there were some days when more than 100,000 souls died in Cairo!" (*Viaggi in Terra Santa*, p. 291).

<sup>3</sup> Between Medina and Mecca he mentions an additional instance of the phenomenon spoken of at p. 156 *supra*. Near Bedr, he says, "in front of you is the Mount of the Drums, (*Jibal-ul-Thabúl*); it is like a huge sand-hill, and the natives assert that in that place every Thursday night they hear as it were the sound of drums" (i, 296).