

blew on it, and said to the interpreter: "This man belongs to one extremity of the world, as we belong to the other." Then he said to me: "Thou hast witnessed a miracle. Dost thou call to mind the day of thy visit to the island where there was a temple, and the man seated among the idols who gave thee ten pieces of gold?" "Yes, in sooth," answered I. He rejoined "I was that man".<sup>1</sup> I kissed his hand; the shaikh seemed a while lost in thought, then entered his cave, and did not come back to us. One would have said that he regretted the words that he had spoken. We were rash enough to enter the grotto in order to surprise him, but we did not find him. We saw one of his comrades, however, who had in his hand some paper bank-notes, and who said to us: "Take this for your entertainment, and begone." We answered: "But we wish to wait for the shaikh." He answered: "If you were to wait ten years you would not see him. For 'tis his way never to let himself be seen by a person who has learned one of his secrets." He added: "Think not that he is absent; he is here present with you!"

Greatly astonished at all this I departed. On telling my story to the Kazi, the Shaikh of Islam and (my host) Au-haduddin of Sinjar, they observed: "This is his way with strangers who visit him; nobody ever knows what religion he professes. But the man whom you took for one of his comrades was the shaikh himself." They then informed me that this personage had quitted the country for about fifty years and had returned only a year previously. The king,<sup>2</sup> the generals, and other chiefs went to see him, and made him presents in proportion to their rank; whilst every day the fakirs and poor monks went to see him, and received from him gifts in proportion to the deserts of each,

<sup>1</sup> This refers to a mysterious incident that occurred to Ibn Batuta at a small island on the western coast of India just before he got to Hunawar (see *supra*, p. 416).

<sup>2</sup> *I.e.* the viceroy.