

postor's carcass at Mecha. In fact she was now on her return from that immense journey to Mecha, which she had performed for the sake of her blasphemous creed; and having run short of money she came to seek assistance from the merchants, and promised that she would honestly repay their advances with ample interest on reaching her territory. This seemed to our brother an opportunity not to be lost of obtaining the favour of the king of another kingdom, for now the efficacy of the Mogul's orders was coming to an end. So he made her an advance of about six hundred pieces of gold from the sale of his goods, and refused to allow interest to be stipulated in the bond. She would not, however, let herself be outdone in liberality, for she afterwards paid him in pieces of that kind of marble which is so highly esteemed among the Chinese, and which is the most profitable of all investments that one can take to Cathay.

From this place the Priest Leo Grymanus went back, being unable to stand the fatigues of the journey; and his comrade Demetrius stopped behind in the town on account of some business. So our brother set out, attended by no one but the Armenian, in the caravan with the other merchants. For some others had now joined them, and it was thought that they could proceed with safety.

The first town that they came to was CIARAKÁR, a place where there is great abundance of iron.¹ And here Benedict was subjected to a great deal of annoyance. For in those outskirts of the Mogul's dominions no attention was paid to the king's *firman*, which had hitherto given him immunity from exactions of every kind. Ten days later they got to a

¹ *Charekar*, at the head of the Koh-Daman valley, north of Kabul, famous in our own day for the gallant defence made there by Eldred Pottinger, and Haughton, during the Kabul outbreak. It is mentioned by Ibn Batuta as *Charkh*. Leech, in his Report on the Passes, calls it *Charka*.

It is to be recollected that the names in the text are all spelt by Ricci after the Italian fashion.