

he turned up in safety. He returned with his debt paid in ample measure with pieces of that valuable stone of which we have spoken; and to mark his gratitude to God he made a large distribution of alms to the poor, a custom which he kept up throughout his whole journey.

One day when he had sat down with a company of Saracens at a dinner to which one of them had invited him, some fanatic burst in, sword in hand, and pointing his weapon at Benedict's breast desired him instantly to invoke the name of Mahomet. Our friend replied that no such name was wont to be invoked in the law which he professed, and that he must absolutely refuse to do so. The bystanders then came to his aid, and the madman was ejected. The same threats of death however, unless he would address prayer to Mahomet, are said to have been directed to him repeatedly, yet God ever delivered him until the end of his journey. On another day it happened that the King of Cascar sent for him, when the priests and theologians of the accursed faith were present at the court, (they call their theologians *Mullàs*.) Being then asked what faith he would profess, whether that of Moses, or of David, or of Mahomet, and in what direction he would turn his face in prayer? our friend replied that the faith he professed was that of JESUS, whom they called *Isai*, and that it mattered not to what quarter he turned in prayer, for God was everywhere. This last answer of his created a great discussion among them, for in prayer they make a point of turning to the west. At last they came to the conclusion that our law also might have some good in it.¹

¹ At Yarkand there were one hundred and sixty mosques; and every Friday an official went about the bazar reminding the people of the duties of the day. After this twelve men issued from the chief mosque armed with whips of hide, which they laid about those whom they found in the streets, absenting themselves from public prayer (*Jarric*). The same custom is mentioned by Ibn Batuta as existing at Khwarizm in his time, and he tried to introduce similar *Blue Laws* when judge in the Maldives. It still prevails in Bokhara (*Burnes*, ii, 243; *Vambery*, p. 185). The pious