

Meantime a certain native named Agiasi¹ was nominated chief of the future caravan of merchants. And having heard that our brother was a man of courage, as well as a merchant of large dealings, he invited him to a grand entertainment at his house, at which there was a great concert of music after the manner of those people, as well as a dinner. After dinner the chief requested our brother to accompany the caravan all the way to Cathay. He indeed desired nothing better, but experience had taught him how to deal with Saracens, so he was glad that the proposal should come from the other side, and thus that he should seem to be granting rather than accepting a favour. So the king himself was prevailed on by the chief to make the request, and did accordingly ask Benedict to accompany the *Caruanbasa* as they call the chief of the company. Benedict agreed to do so on condition that the king would grant him circular letters for the whole course of the journey. His former comrades, belonging to the Cabul caravan, took offence at this, for as has been said, it was always necessary on those occasions to travel in large numbers. So they counselled him against putting any trust in the natives, for these intended the thing only as a trap by which they might succeed in devouring his fortune, and his very life. Our friend however represented that he was acting in accordance with the King's expressed wishes, and had given his promise to the chief of the caravan, from which as an honest man he could not go back. In truth the fears which those merchants professed to entertain were not unfounded, for many of the natives of the country declared that those three Armenians (for so they called them, as being all of one faith) would be murdered as soon as they set foot outside the city walls. And so Demetrius took fright, and a second time drew back from prosecuting the journey further, trying also to persuade Mahomed Tughlak enforced like regulations at Dehli when the whim took him, sometimes with death as his manner was.

¹ Hajji 'Aziz?