

comes to pass that there is an immensity of treasure accumulated in this kingdom.⁶

Here are no horses bred; and thus a great part of the wealth of the country is wasted in purchasing horses; I will tell you how. You must know that the merchants of KIS and HORMES, DOFAR and SOER and ADEN collect great numbers of destriers and other horses, and these they bring to the territories of this King and of his four brothers, who are kings likewise as I told you. For a horse will fetch among them 500 *saggi* of gold, worth more than 100 marks of silver, and vast numbers are sold there every year. Indeed this King wants to buy more than 2000 horses every year, and so do his four brothers who are kings likewise. The reason why they want so many horses every year is that by the end of the year there shall not be one hundred of them remaining, for they all die off. And this arises from mismanagement, for those people do not know in the least how to treat a horse; and besides they have no farriers. The horse-merchants not only never bring any farriers with them, but also prevent any farrier from going thither, lest that should in any degree baulk the sale of horses, which brings them in every year such vast gains. They bring these horses by sea aboard ship.⁷

They have in this country the custom which I am going to relate. When a man is doomed to die for any crime, he may declare that he will put himself to death in honour of such or such an idol; and the government then grants him permission to do so. His kinsfolk and friends then set him up on a cart, and provide him with twelve knives, and proceed to conduct him all about the city, proclaiming aloud: "This valiant man is going to slay himself for the love of (such an idol)." And when they be come to the place of execution he takes a knife and sticks it through his arm, and cries: "I slay myself