

## CHAPTER XXXI.

DISCOURSETH OF THE TWO ISLANDS CALLED MALE AND FEMALE,  
AND WHY THEY ARE SO CALLED.

WHEN you leave this kingdom of Kesmacoran, which is on the mainland, you go by sea some 500 miles towards the south; and then you find the two Islands, MALE and FEMALE, lying about 30 miles distant from one another. The people are all baptized Christians, but maintain the ordinances of the Old Testament; thus when their wives are with child they never go near them till their confinement, or for forty days thereafter.

In the Island however which is called Male, dwell the men alone, without their wives or any other women. Every year when the month of March arrives the men all set out for the other Island, and tarry there for three months, to wit, March, April, May, dwelling with their wives for that space. At the end of those three months they return to their own Island, and pursue their husbandry and trade for the other nine months.

They find on this Island very fine ambergris. They live on flesh and milk and rice. They are capital fishermen, and catch a great quantity of fine large sea-fish, and these they dry, so that all the year they have plenty of food, and also enough to sell to the traders who go thither. They have no chief except a bishop, who is subject to the archbishop of another Island, of which we shall presently speak, called SCOTRA. They have also a peculiar language.

As for the children which their wives bear to them, if they be girls they abide with their mothers; but if they be boys the mothers bring them up till they are fourteen, and then send them to the fathers. Such is the custom