

CHAPTER XXXIII.

CONCERNING THE ISLAND OF MADEIGASCAR.

MADEIGASCAR is an Island towards the south, about a thousand miles from Scotra. The people are all Saracens, adoring Mahomet. They have four *Eshaks*, *i.e.* four Elders, who are said to govern the whole Island. And you must know that it is a most noble and beautiful Island, and one of the greatest in the world, for it is about 4000 miles in compass. The people live by trade and handicrafts.

In this Island, and in another beyond it called ZANGHIBAR, about which we shall tell you afterwards, there are more elephants than in any country in the world. The amount of traffic in elephants' teeth in these two Islands is something astonishing.

In this Island they eat no flesh but that of camels; and of these they kill an incredible number daily. They say it is the best and wholesomest of all flesh; and so they eat of it all the year round.¹

They have in this Island many trees of red sanders, of excellent quality; in fact, all their forests consist of it.² They have also a quantity of ambergris, for whales are abundant in that sea, and they catch numbers of them; and so are *Oil-heads*, which are a huge kind of fish, which also produce ambergris like the whale.³ There are numbers of leopards, bears, and lions in the country, and other wild beasts in abundance. Many traders, and many ships go thither with cloths of gold and silk, and many other kinds of goods, and drive a profitable trade.

You must know that this Island lies so far south that ships cannot go further south or visit other Islands in