

CHAPTER XXXVI.

CONCERNING THE PROVINCE OF ADEN.

YOU must know that in the province of ADEN there is a Prince who is called the Soldan. The people are all Saracens and adorers of Mahommet, and have a great hatred of Christians. There are many towns and villages in the country.

This Aden is the port to which many of the ships of India come with their cargoes; and from this haven the merchants carry the goods a distance of seven days further in small vessels. At the end of those seven days they land the goods and load them on camels, and so carry them a land journey of 30 days. This brings them to the river of ALEXANDRIA, and by it they descend to the latter city. It is by this way through Aden that the Saracens of Alexandria receive all their stores of pepper and other spicery; and there is no other route equally good and convenient by which these goods could reach that place.¹

And you must know that the Soldan of Aden receives a large amount in duties from the ships that traffic between India and his country, importing different kinds of goods; and from the exports also he gets a revenue, for there are despatched from the port of Aden to India a very large number of Arab chargers, and palfreys, and stout nags adapted for all work, which are a source of great profit to those who export them.² For horses fetch very high prices in India, there being none bred there, as I have told you before; insomuch that a charger will sell there for 100 marks of silver and more. On these also the Soldan of Aden receives heavy payments in port charges, so that 'tis said he is one of the richest princes in the world.³