

“ I once ” (says Joinville) “ rehearsed to the Legate two cases of sin that a priest of mine had been telling me of, and he answered me thus : ‘ No man knows as much of the heinous sins that are done in Acre as I do ; and it cannot be but God will take vengeance on them, in such a way that the city of Acre shall be washed in the blood of its inhabitants, and that another people shall come to occupy after them. ’ The good man’s prophecy hath come true in part, for of a truth the city hath been washed in the blood of its inhabitants, but those to replace them are not yet come : may God send them good when it pleases Him ! ” (p. 192).

CHAPTER XXXVII.

CONCERNING THE CITY OF ESHER.

ESHER is a great city lying in a north-westerly direction from the last, and 400 miles distant from the Port of Aden. It has a king, who is subject to the Soldan of Aden. He has a number of towns and villages under him, and administers his territory well and justly.

The people are Saracens. The place has a very good haven, wherefore many ships from India come thither with various cargoes ; and they export many good chargers thence to India.¹

A great deal of white incense grows in this country, and brings in a great revenue to the Prince ; for no one dares sell it to any one else ; and whilst he takes it from the people at 10 livres of gold for the hundredweight, he sells it to the merchants at 60 livres, so his profit is immense.²

Dates also grow very abundantly here. The people have no corn but rice, and very little of that ; but plenty is brought from abroad, for it sells here at a good profit. They have fish in great profusion, and notably plenty of tunny of large size ; so plentiful indeed that you may buy two big ones for a Venice groat of silver. The natives live on meat and rice and fish. They have no wine of the vine, but they make good wine from sugar, from rice, and from dates also.