

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD^s THE PEOPLE GO NAKED
*place you please, and stay under water as long as ever they can;*¹ *and when they cannot* FB VA
bear it in the water longer they come up and stay a little, and dive again to the bottom, and
so they do all the day; and when they are at the bottom of the sea they find on it
scallops which men call sea oysters, and bring them up in a little bag of net tied to the Z R
body. And in these oysters are found the pearls large and small and of all sorts.
These scallops are indeed split and are put in the aforesaid tubs full of water which are on the Z
ships, for the pearls are found in the flesh of those scallops. And while they stay in Z
the water of the tub, those bodies are decomposed and rot and are made like the white of an egg,
and then they float at the top and the pearls stay at the bottom clean. And in this way the
pearls are fished, and they are so very great a quantity found in that gulf that it does VA
*not to tell.*² *For you may know that pearls which are found in this sea are*
distributed through all the world, because the greater part of those which are taken in this gulf R
are round and bright. Moreover I tell you that the king of this kingdom has a very great
quantity of duty from them and very great treasure. Now we have told you how
the pearls are found. Moreover I tell you quite truly that as soon as it is the end Z
of the month of April and mid May that fishing is ended, because these scallops, that is Z
those where the pearls are found, are found there no more. And yet it is truth
that they travel about three hundred miles away from here, where the said scallops they Z Z
are found and that is from mid September till mid October. The people are idolaters; TA³ G
they have a peculiar speech, and a king. Moreover I tell you that in [78d] all this kingdom Z
or province of Maabar there is no need of tailor or stitcher to cut or sew cloth because FA
they all go naked at all the times of the year. For I tell you that they have all
seasons temperate, that is that they have neither cold nor hot, and so they always
go naked, men and women, except so much alone that they cover themselves in G
their natural parts with a little cloth or with leather. And the king also goes naked G Z
like the rest, except that it is true that he has other things for royal honour such as I Z Z
I shall describe to you. You may know then for truth that their king goes as I have V
told you quite naked save that he covers his natural parts with a small and noble and L
beautiful cloth around him, and at the neck he has a broad golden collar all round V VB
which is all full of large and beautiful pearls and of precious stones, these are rubies V
and sapphires and emeralds and other dear stones large & fair, so that this collar V
is well worth a very great treasure. And again there hangs on the neck of the king
a cord of thin silk which extends all in front of the chest for one pace, and on this Z

¹ *e demorent toute come il plus pueni* FB: *tant demeurent soubz yaue comme il puent* V: *stano quanto i puol* toute may be tant or, as B. thinks, *soute*, or a confusion of the two.

² *qe ce ne fait a conter*