

V. *An Abstract with some Reflections on a new Account of East-India and Persia, in Eight Letters, being Nine Years Travels, begun 1672. and finished 1681, &c. By John Fryer, M. D. Cantabrig. and Fellow of the Royal Society. Printed for R. Chiswel at the Rose and Crown in St. Paul's Church-Yard. 1698.*

HOW much the Geography of the present Age surpasses that of the Ancients, is sufficiently known to all such as have been at the trouble to examine and compare them; and that not only for the Number and Quantity of the Habitable and Inhabited Countries of the World; but for the more exact Limitations and Boundaries of them; and for the more particular Account of the Nature and Products of the Countries themselves; that is, of the Nature of the Soyl, and of the Animals, Vegetables and Minerals it produceth and yields, and of the Men that inhabit each, their Shape, their Genius, Manners, Customs, Laws, Governments, Arts, Inventions, Trades and Manufactures, and whatever else is of Significancy to be known concerning them. For this in a great measure we are beholding to such Ingenious Spirits as this our Author, who have had the Curiosity not only to travel, view, and inform themselves in the Places where they are. but also the Industry to record them in writing, whilst yet fresh in their Memory, and the good Nature to communicate them in Print for the Use of the Publick. Of this Kind we have had of late Years many eminent Instances of our own Countrymen, concerning the In-land parts, as Cap-  
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tain *Smith*, *Mr. Herbert*, *Mr. Sands*, *Sir Tho. Row*, *Mr. Gage*, *Mr. Ligon*, *Mr. Willoubby*, *Mr. Ray*, *Sir George Wheeler*, *Captain Knox*, *Mr. Dampire*, and divers others, and now lastly this of the present Author, who notwithstanding several Writers had been before him, yet few having been in those Parts where he had been, at least had not stayed there so long as he did, has offered divers Novelities either passed over, or not so particularly observed by them as he has done. His Method of Delivery is not bounded by the narrow Limits of an Historian, nor loosely Extravagant like Poetick Fiction, but suited to Time and Place, so as to manifest his Diligence in observing and collecting, and his Sincerity in compiling what may assist the next Adventurers, and satisfy the present Enquirers. He has divided the whole Discourse into Eight Letters, written to a Friend, and dated from several Parts where he then was. The First gives an Account of his Voyage from *England* till he arrived at *Bombaim*, which was a just Year or Twelve Months; taking notice of what occur'd remarkable at Sea, or on the Shoars and Places where he Landed, as at *St. Jago* (which he more particularly describes) as also *Johanna*. Then *Mechlapatan* [where he takes occasion to describe the Kingdom and present Estate of *Golconda*, and the manner of living of the *East-India* Company's Factors at that Place, the Climate, Soyl, Temper of the Air and Seasons, the Animals and Vegetables; the Inhabitants, (Moors and Gentues,) their several Customs and Natures, their Trades, Employments and Arts, their Language, Writing, Religions, Laws, and Punishments, (one of which, though Tragical, is somewhat Comical, by a Drink compounded of *Bang* and *Deutro*) their Servants and Beasts for Service as well as Food; and here he describes more particularly the Elephants]. After this he describes *Fort St. George* and *Maderas*, the Estate of

the *English* there and that of the other Inhabitants; and by the way gives an Account of the *Chinam* or *Betele*; then the City of *St. Thomas* (and a sort of Christians there) then *Trebletoze* (and here takes occasion to relate some Contests of our *English* with the *Dutch*, then at Wars with us) and then proceeds to a Description of the Air and Seasons, the Monsoons, and Rains, and Storms usual in those Parts; taking notice of strange colour'd Fishes in the Sea, and Tuttecorey on the Land, and also of the prodigious Ridge of the *Mountain Gates*, extending North and South Nine Hundred Miles, and severing the Coast of *Coromandel* from that of *Malabar*, and terminated by the Promontory or Cape of *Comorine*; after the passing of which he describes the *Malabar* and *Canatick* Coast as far as *Bombaim*: Here he relates a strange Phenomenon of a Shole of Pilchards passing by, that gave a Light bright enough to read a small Print by it. He takes notice of *Carnapoly* (whence we formerly had Pepper); then of *Cochin*, then *Tanore*, which he more particularly describes; then *Calicut*; then *Phalopatana*, where he took Boat and rowed up the River to *Cutty Cony* (then resigned to the *English* where they have a Fort). Being return'd they passed Northward, leaving the *Malabar* Coast and entring the *Canatick* they Anchored and Landed at *Onor*, from thence they went to *Miria*, where they laded Pepper, Saltpeter and Betele-Nuts. Then passed *Carwar*, *Goa*, *Rajapore* and lastly arrived at *Bombaim*, lying in  $18^{\circ}. 40'$ . whole Bay he Describes and thence Dates this First Letter.

In his Second Letter he gives a more particular Account of the Island of *Bombay*, one of the Islands of *Salset* lying in the middle between *Goa* and *Surat*. This Island and a great Quantity of the low Lands, he observes has been rais'd out of the Sea, for that the Rocks many Miles up the Country, are bestuck with Oyster-  
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Shells and other Trophies of the Sea. Here he gives a History of it how it came into the Possession of the *English*, and of the *East-India* Company, and of what import it is to them with respect to their Trade, &c.

Then he surveys *Canorine*, an Island lying near *Bombaim*, and there describes prodigious Works of Antiquity cut out of the Rocks. From hence he visits *Bascin*, a City of the *Portugals*, which he describes with the Remarkables taken notice of in his going and returning, among which, at *Elephanto* was an Idol Temple cut out of a Rock as the former.

Next he relates the Occurrences that he took notice of in his Journey with an Embassy sent to *Sevagi*, whose residence was on a very high Hill, call'd, *Rairee*, inaccessible but only by one narrow way. By the by he relates the Ceremonies of crowning the *Raya*.

From hence he passes to *Swally*, the Port of *Surat*, which he describes, and the Company's Factory in that Place; and takes notice of the Valour and Success of a President there in repulsing the Power of *Sevagi*, and dates his Letter from *Surat*, Jan. 15. 1674.

In his Third Letter he gives a more particular and more full Account of *Surat*, and its Inhabitants, and first takes Notice of Musselmen-Beggars, ready to do Mischief, and of Scuman, or Soldiers being drunk with Sang mixed with Milk. Then he describes the other Inhabitants, their Houses, Customs, Heathen and Mahometan Rites, their Way of Entertaining, Diet, Cloathing, Religious Ceremonies, Marriages, Burials, &c. then the Vagabond *Fakiers*, or Holy Men, the Pest of the Place, then the Magistrates, Mints, Markets, Fortifications, Soldiers, Moschs, Caravaneras, Stables, &c. Without the Town, he describes the Tombs of the *English*, *Dutch* and *Armenians*, *French*, Musselmen, Pilgrims, Heathens; and here he mentions their *Fakiers*, or Heathen Priests, and their strange  
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and ridiculous Rites and Customs. Then he describes their Tanks, Grottoes, Gardens, the Flowers and Plants; as the Cotton-Tree, Bang, Alluh, (or a Specifick Bark for all Fluxes,) the Sensible Plant, Milk Bushes, Sugar-Canes, Tobacco, &c. And lastly, he describes the River, and its commodiousness for Shipping though they have few Ships of their own, and those managed by unskilful Navigators; nor will the *Dutch* permit them to be taught, lest they should prove Enemies: And then by the way he relates the Story of the late Revolution at *Bantam*; after which he proceeds to describe their Solemnities, on Religious Accounts, their Sports and Recreations, the Education of their Children, their Trade, and particularly their Jewellers. Then he describes their Diseases and ways of curing: by the way, he mentions some Rarities in the *English* Factory, amongst other some Pidgeons, Champore Cocks, White casting a little Yellow Amadavad-Birds; nor does he omit to describe the Vermin they are troubled with, as, Rats as big as our Pigs, burrowing under Houses; Mongoose, a sort of Ferret; Musk-Rats; Guanaes; also Centipedes, Scorpions, vast Spiders, poysonous Snakes, Crocodiles: then he describes the *Parseys* what they are, their worshipping the Sun; their exposing their Dead to be devoured by Birds, their Manner of Living, Their Breeding milk white Oxen and Buffalas; and by the way he describes a sort of Bird call'd a Columbine, making a Noise like a Bittern: and concludes this Section with an Account of the Conveniences the Place affords for the Building Ships, as vast Quantities of Timber, Damar, Cair-yarn, besides good Flax and Hemp, and Iron from the Mountains of the South, so that for Trade, no Place in *India* can equal *Surat*. In his next Section he relates his Passage from *Surat* to *Bombaim*, and thence to *Jenea*; by the way he describes a vast Turtle or Tortoise, and divers other remarkable

markable Occurrances in passing the Mountains, and several Towns and Villages. At *Jenea* he is introduc'd to the Nabob's Presence, where he understands what he was sent for, which was to visit some Patients, *viz.* one of his Wives in the *Haram* the Circumstances of which he relates together with a Description of the *Women*, and their Manner of Living in that Recluse; the other Patient was Brother of the Nabob; he stayed here and visited several Places, as an Emperor's Pallace gone to decay, then an ancient City called, *Dunginessè*, cut out of a Mountainous Rock, with a Temple and other spacious Halls, not inferior for Antiquity, Workmanship, Water, and other Conveniencies to those of *Canorine*, now left a desolate Habitation for Bats and Wasps. From hence he describes his Ascent to the Top of a Hill accessible but by Seven Gates, where the Nabob's Brother was Governour; where how he was treated, and what else he took notice of he relates, as great Granaries hewed out of Stone, at first supposed for some Religious Use, because of their delicate engraving; there are several Tanks fill'd with Butter of Four Hundred Years standing, prized by the Gentiles as high as Gold for its Vertue to cure old Aches and sore Eyes, a present of some of which taken out of one of them opened on purpose, was made him, being a black stinking viscos Balsom; there were also Tanks for Water, also Two unshapen Sakers, each 22 Foot long out of which not long before, a Bullet Shot had kill'd a Rajah at Two Course off, which made a Bonfire of Two of his Ladies, and Twenty Domesticks to attend him in another World, as his Physician, Barber, Washerman, Horse-keeper, &c. a usual Heathen Custom. Descending in his return he observed many Dens and Caverns cut out of the Rocks, which he believes to be the Works of some Zealots in former Ages: In another Place he takes notice of a sort of shining Flies, which made a Tree look as if all  
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in a Flame, and which presently would receive its native Verdure, at which his Coolies were frightned. In a Third he takes notice of Frogs of a prodigious Magnitude, as also of a Tree called the Nury-tree, which always Blofoms in the Night, and sheds them soon after Sun Rising. He describes also the Moor Priests, their Mosks and Service in them: and last of all his Arrival at *Bombaim*, whence he dates his Letter, *Sept. 22. 1675.*

'Tis very remarkable in these Letters, that the Author has given us so many Instances of those Prodigious Works of Antiquity, of cutting such vast Temples or Rooms out of the natural Rock, which seems to have much out-lasted the History of the Authors of them, and possibly all other Heathen History; the Grandure and Magnificence of them seeming to speak them to have been of the first, and now unknown Ages of the World, such as were also the Pyramids of *Ægypt*, and the Labyrinths, concerning which we have no true Records, but only some conjectural Fictions, or groundless Traditions. But indeed of the two, these Subterraneous Cavities seem to be of the greatest Antiquity and Possibly to have given occasion to construct the Superterranean Fabricks, for 'tis probable that the Heat of the Climate where they were first begun, and the natural Cavities in the Mountains and Rocks might administer the first Occasion of the artificial making of them, and that was in Probability first done by the *Æthiopians*, who were the Instructors and Tutors to the *Ægyptians*, from whom they received their Hieroglyphicks, as is testified by *Diodorus Siculus*. Now the *Æthiopians* inhabiting a Climate so very hot, could not well tolerate the Mid-day-Heats, without sheltering themselves under the Shade of some Trees or Rocks, till the Violence thereof was abated; and that Country, especially the Higher *Æthiopia*, affording many natural Caverns in the Mountains, which  
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must necessarily be most refreshing in the Hottest Seasons, by reason of the Exclusion of the Sun-Beams, and by reason of the Body of Stone or Earth over their Heads; as may be manifestly experimented here in Churches Vaulted with Stone, and much more in Vaults under Ground.

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These Caverns in probability invited the Natives there to shelter themselves, and that might put some of the better sort, or the Princes, to make use of Art, to fit and make them more convenient for Use, and by degrees for Ornament, and by further Degrees for Religious or Superstitious Uses; for such we are inform'd were the Places where the Sybilline Oracles were delivered, and by degrees for Sepulture, such as the Guanches in *Teneriff* have appropriated to their Ancestors, and such as the *Ægyptians* made use of for Repositories of their Mummies; and such also seem to have been the Wells and Grottoes for the Mummies, the Labyrinths and the Subterranean Temples of *Ægypt*. Now as the natural Subterraneous Caves seem to have been the Occasion of all these artificial ones, and their Embellishments under the Ground, so the great Rocks, Masses of Stone and Mountains, seem to have given the Occasion of shaping and cutting of them into several Forms, for several Designs; such I conceive were the Rocks shaped into a Sphynxes Head in *Ægypt*, and the Two Rows of Rooms on Two Sides of a Square for the great Pyramid; and the casing of such a shaped Rock with Ashker or Blocks of other Stone, made the great Pyramid it self. Now in Probability this Practice was from *Ægypt* spread far and near into the East, together with Idolatry, Superstition, and other Heathenish Rites and Customs, and there are, it seems, many Relicts of them remaining to this Day in these Places. But besides these Remains of Antiquity in these Western Parts, of *Asia* and *Ægypt*, we find they were not wanting in the Easternmost Parts



of *Asia* likewise, who have as good Reason to pretend to Antiquity, and possibly much better than *Ægypt*, *Æthiopia*, *Chaldea*, &c. for that we are inform'd by the Descriptions of the vast Empire of *China*, that they have many Mountains formed by Art into various Snapes, that they have and do still make use of inaccessible Mountains for their Safe-guard against Incurfions and Invadings of their Enemies, and for living quiet and secure from their Foreign Disturbers; for which Use some of these mentioned by the Doctor, do manifestly seem to have been occasioned. Besides, we find that the Heathen Priests did much affect to make use of the Tops of Hills and Mountains, and the Caverns and Caves of Rocks and Hills, for the places of their Idolatrous Worship, and for delivering of their Oracles; for which, 'tis not unlikely but that some of these were at first design'd, though they have been since deserted or converted to other Uses.

But to leave these Enquiries to the Scrutiny and Judgment of more knowing Antiquaries, I shall proceed to give some farther Account of the Contents of his other Letters. In his Fourth Letter, there he gives an Account of the *Canatick* Country; and first he describes *Carwar*, and the Fleet of *Sevagi* there: next *Goa*, and all that is remarkable in and about that City; then an Excursion to *Gocourn*, where he relates the strange Rites of a Heathen Solemnity, and adds a Discourse of the bordering Princes and Governments, as also of the wild Beasts of the Woods, as Tigers, Apes, &c. and of the Trees and Fruits, as the *Bamboos*, *Cassia Fistula*, *Tamarind-Tree*, *Indian Oak*, *Nux Vomica*, *Mangoes*, *Cheruses*, *Ananas*, &c. then adds a summary Description of the whole Country, and its Products in general, as of its Mountains, Plains, Woods, Rivers, the Minerals, Vegetables, Animals, the People and their Constitutions, and Customs, Housing,  
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Cloathing, Diet, their Occupations, and lastly, a very particular Account of their Weights, Measures, and Coyns, in which he has amassed together so many Remarkables, that 'tis very difficult to give an Abstract or Epitomy of them.

In his Fifth Letter he gives an Account of his leaving this Country, and his sailing to *Persia*, and landing at *Gembroon*, relating all the Particulars he remarkt in his Voyage; and after a Description of this Place, he relates the Particulars he observed in his Travels by Land to *Siras*, and then to *Persopolis* or *Chalminor*, both which he describes, and a multitude of curious Observations which he took notice of by the way: from thence he relates his Progress into *Parthia*, and so to *Spahan*, where he describes all that is remarkable in and about that City, as at *Jelfa* a part of its Suburbs, where live Six Thousand Families of *Armenians*, some *French* Artizans, and the ancient *Gabers*, *Gauraas*, or true old *Persians*, (whose present Condition he relates) as also that of the *Armenians* and *Georgians*, and all their Religious Rates and Ceremonies; in the Place it self he first describes the Emperor's Palace and the Rareties thereof, together with the Diversifements; and adds a Catalogue of Plants he found there to flourish, with the Times and Nature of the Seasons: Then he relates his Journey to *Gombroom*, in the Winter, and his Return to *Spahan* in the Spring; and then his Voyage to *Congo* for Pearl, all whose Sorts he describes with their Values, &c.

After this he gives a more full and particular Account of the present State of all *Persia*, both Geographical, and Political, comprising the Natural and Civil History thereof, and that more fully than I have met with in any other Author.

His Sixth and Seventh Letters give an Account of some Broils and Revolutions that happened in and about *Surat*, during his stay there, and a further Account of the Great Mogul and his Actions and Power.

His Eighth Letter is a Journal of his Voyage in his Return to *England*, wherein he relates the History of *St. Helena*, and describes the Island of *Ascension* more particularly than I have elsewhere found it ; and last of all, his Landing in *Kent*, *August* the 20th. 1682. from whence he dates his last Letter.