

4. Fr. Odoric treateth of the manners of the people of Chaldæa; of India within land; and of Ormes.

Departing thence I went into CHALDÆA,<sup>1</sup> which is a great kingdom, and as I went thither I passed by the Tower of Babel, which is distant perchance four days' journey from (the city).<sup>2</sup> And in this land of Chaldæa they have a language of their own; and the men are comely, but the women in sooth of an ill favour.<sup>3</sup> The men indeed go smartly dressed and decked as our women go here, and on their heads they wear a kind of fillet of gold and pearls; whilst the women have nothing on them but a miserable shift reaching to the knees, and with sleeves so long and

or the regions adjoining, if he does not indeed proceed north as far as Mosul, before descending into Chaldæa. The fine hill pastures, abundant manna, profusion of partridges, and fine old men ("many of them," says an authority quoted by Ritter, "attaining a hundred years in full possession of their bodily and mental faculties"), are all characteristic of the mountains of Kurdistan, embracing the Hus of Odoric according to the second interpretation just given, though I can find little of a specific kind on record as to the hill countries of Khuzistan and Luristan. The knitting and spinning of the men I do not find anywhere mentioned; it is a well-known circumstance in the Himalayan villages. (*Ritter*, ix, 611, 622; *J. R. G. S.* ix, 100, 104, etc.)

<sup>1</sup> Though he calls Chaldæa a great kingdom, he would appear to mean the city of Baghdad. The peculiar language would be Arabic. Hitherto he has been in countries that speak Persian chiefly.

<sup>2</sup> *Ab eâ*, i.e., *Chaldæâ*, showing that Baghdad is meant, which is about sixty miles from the Birs Nimrud, and somewhat less from the ruins of Babylon. Probably the mass called *Babel* at the latter is Odoric's Tower (see note to Marignolli *infra*). It is not clear, however, how Odoric should have come by this to Baghdad.

<sup>3</sup> In countries where Mahomedan manners prevail, and now including India, the women in the streets have a much meaner appearance than the men, because women of the better class are so little seen. Of the women of Baghdad Ker Porter says: "The humbler females generally move abroad with faces totally unveiled, having a handkerchief rolled round their heads, from beneath which their hair hangs down over their shoulders; their garment is of a shift form reaching to their ankles, open before, and of a grey colour. Their feet are completely naked." (*Travels*, ii, 268).