

good diamonds too are found and many other good stones.<sup>1</sup> And where that water descends into the sea there be found fine pearls. Wherefore the saying goes that this king hath more precious stones than any other king in the world.

In this island there be sundry kinds of animals, both of birds and other creatures; and the country folk say that the wild beasts never hurt a foreigner, but only those who are natives of the island. There be also certain birds as big as geese, which have two heads.<sup>2</sup> And this island hath also great store of victuals, and of many other good things whereof I do not write.

26. Of the island called Dondin and the evil manners there.

Departing from that island and going towards the south, I landed at a certain great island which is called DONDIN,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There are no diamonds in Ceylon, but some of the Arabian geographers say that there are. The gems were a royal monopoly under the native dynasties. (*Tennent*, i, 38.)

<sup>2</sup> The history of this bird with two heads is a good example of the gradual resolution of a fable.

In 1330 Odoric tells of a bird, as big as a goose, with *two heads*.

In 1672 P. Vincenzo Maria describes a bird, also as big as a goose, but with *two beaks*, the two being perfectly distinct, one going up and the other down; with the upper one he crows or croaks, with the lower he feeds, etc. (*Viaggio*, p. 401.)

In 1796 Padre Paolino, who is usually more accurate, retrogrades; for he calls the bird "as big as an ostrich". According to him, this bird, living on high mountains where water is scarce, has the second beak as a reservoir for a supply of water. He says the Portuguese call it *Passaro di duos bicos*. (*Viag.*, p. 153.)

Lastly, Lieut. Charles White describes the same bird in the *Asiatic Researches*: "It has a large double beak, or a large beak surmounted by a horn-like shaped mandible," etc. (*Asiat. Res.*, iv, 401.) The bird is a hornbill, of which there are various species having casques or protuberances on the top of the bill, the office of which does not appear to be ascertained. How easy here to call Odoric a liar! but how unjust, when the matter has been explained.

<sup>3</sup> Much of what has been said on the chapter about Necuveran applies here. These two narratives are destitute, it seems to me, of the appearance of being drawn from experience. I cannot identify Dondin with any known island, nor trace the etymology which the traveller assigns to