

on their heads a great barrel of horn, that they may be known to be married.<sup>1</sup>

Passing hence, and travelling for eighteen days more, through many cities and towns, I came to a certain great river, and I tarried at a certain city [called Belsa]<sup>2</sup> which

strong contrast to those of the Chinese, who call them *Dogmen* and *Wolfmen*. The "barrel of horn" worn on the head may perhaps be identified with the grotesque coiffure of the Meautse women, described by Duhalde as "a light board, more than a foot long and five or six inches wide, which they cover with their hair, and fix it with wax, so that they seem to have a hair hat on. They can't rest the head nor lie down, except by putting something under the neck, and they are obliged constantly to twist the head right or left in passing along the forest paths. And the business of combing the hair is a still greater difficulty; they must then hold their heads for hours by the fire to melt the wax," etc.

The description of this head-dress in the *Minor Ramusian* version, however, rather recalls that of the wooden sugar-loaf headdress worn by the Druze women; and it is curious in connexion with this to remember the Chinese origin of the Druzes, which their traditions maintain (see Mr. Cyril Graham on the Druzes of Bashan, in *J.R.G.S.*)

<sup>1</sup> MIN. RAM. has "wear on the head, in the middle of the forehead, a horn of wood covered with skin, and more than two spans in length."

<sup>2</sup> I suppose it is not possible to determine the city on a great river where Odoric saw the fishing cormorants. Even if the name *Belsa* given in the *Min. Ram.* be genuine, I find nothing nearer it than Wen-chu in Che-Kiang, and it is doubtful if Odoric's route could have lain that way.

The story of the fishing birds is a perfectly accurate account of the practice, as it still exists in China, and is described by Duhalde, Staunton, (these two give plates of the operation), Mendoza, Martini, Father Ripa, Davis, Fortune, and many more. The last-named author says the bird "is as docile as a dog; he swims after his master, and allows himself to be pulled into the sanpan, where he disgorges his prey, and again resumes his labours. And what is more wonderful still, if one of the cormorants gets hold of a fish of a large size, so large that he would have some difficulty in taking it to the boat, some of the others haste to his assistance," etc. (*Three years' Wand.*, p. 110). Fortune procured specimens to carry home, but could not bring them alive to England. The price in China was from six to eight dollars a pair.

The bird, which is called by the Chinese, with contempt for generic accuracy, "Fishing Hawk," or "Fishing Duck," is a cormorant, and has been termed *Phalacrocorax sinensis*, as differing from the English species (*Ph. Carbo*). I learn however that Mr. Swinhoe considers it to be only a variety produced by domestication. The English bird was formerly used for fishing both in England and in Holland quite in the Chinese way. Charles II had a master of the cormorants. (*Knight's Mus. of Animated Nature*, ii, 781).