

therein sundry kinds of music, but chiefly nakers, which strange sounds, like those of kettle drums (*nakkaras* again) were heard to rise from the earth, without any discoverable cause.

The awful and gigantic face in the cliff by the valley side, might perhaps have been suggested by the great figures at Bamian in the same region as the Regruwan, or some like image. Burnes gives a formidable description of the valley north of Bamian; the precipitous sides of the defile rising to two thousand and three thousand feet, and so closely as in some places to exclude the midday sun. It is not unlikely that Odoric crossed Hindu Kush on his journey from Tibet of which we have no particulars. It was through Badakshan that the Persian merchants used to go into Tibet (*D'Ohsson*, i, 272), and Badakshan would probably be entered and left by one of the passes of the Hindu Kush. It is just about this quarter that Fra Mauro's map places the *Valle dita Fausta, ne la quale se vede e aldesse spiriti e altre cose monstruose*," etc. If we could trace what Odoric means by the *Flumen Deliciarum*, it might enable us to fix the locality better. The name may be either a translation, or (more probably) a misapprehension of the amanuensis. Suppose that Odoric in dictating called it (as Ramusio does in his Italian version) *Fiume di Piaceri*, we might perhaps recognize in this the river PANCHSHIR, which the Reg Rawán immediately adjoins. And Wood tells us that the valley of Koh-Daman, into which the Panchshir debouches, is full of places to which superstitious legends attach. Moreover Baber tells us that the Pass of Panchshir was that by which were constantly made the inroads of the robbers of Kafiristan, *who used to slay great numbers of the people* in the neighbourhood.

The belief that wildernesses are haunted places is a very old and general one. Our blessed Lord himself in a very solemn passage adopts the Jewish phraseology as to this matter (Luke xi, 24.) Pliny says that in the deserts of Africa phantoms in human shape appear to travellers and immediately vanish again (vii, 2). But the belief is especially prevalent among the nations of Central Asia. By them "deserts.....and the like, where nature shows herself in vast forms, and in all the terrors of her influences, are held to be the especial headquarters and rendezvous of malignant spirits.....hence the wildernesses of Turan, and particularly the great sand-waste of Gobi, have from hoar antiquity had an evil fame" (*Schmidt*, p. 352). The Turks have a saying that evil spirits play at ball in desert places; both Fahian and Marco Polo allude to the evil genii of the deserts of Central Asia, and Rubruquis tells of a frightful defile, where the demons were said to snatch travellers off their horses. The Afghans believe each of the numerous solitudes in the mountains and deserts of their country to be inhabited by a lonely demon, whom they call the *Ghodlee Beaban*, or Spirit of the Waste; a gigantic and frightful spectre which devours passengers.

In an interesting little book, *The Romance of Travel*, which has a chapter upon Odoric, the story of the dreadful valley is alleged to be still part of the staple of the professed story-teller in Turkey. The author also refers to gigantic rock-sculptures as one of the elements at the base of