

of dates, but also olives and vines in great plenty; so also of all field and garden produce, pumpkins, melons, and watermelons.

Then of Babel and Nimrod :

So he began and taught them to bake bricks to serve instead of stone, and, as there are many wells of bitumen there, they had bricks for stone, and bitumen for mortar. And this bitumen is a kind of pitch, very black and liquid, mixt with oil; and when it is used with bricks in building it solidifies and sets so hard that it is scarcely possible by any art to separate the joints, as I have myself seen and felt when I was on that Tower; and some of that hardened bitumen I carried away with me. The people of the country are continually demolishing the Tower, in order to get hold of the bricks. And the foundations of the city were laid upon the most extensive scale, so that every side of the square was, they say, eight Italian miles; and from what one sees this seems highly probable. They set the Tower at the extremity of the walls next the river, as if for a citadel, and as they built up the walls they filled the interior with earth, so that the whole was formed into a round and solid mass. In the morning when the sun is rising it casts an immensely long shadow across that wide plain.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The ruin here identified by Marignolli with the Tower of Babel appears to be that called by Rich *Mujelibé*, and by Layard *Babel*. It is about half a mile from the present channel of the river. Layard speaks of "a line of walls which, leaving the foot of Babel, stretch inland about two miles and a half from the present bed of the Euphrates." It is generally admitted however that these cannot be the real ramparts of old Babylon, though Rich thought they might be the interior enclosure of the palaces; whilst Rennell took them to be the walls of some more recent city. Layard mentions that the excavation of bricks from the remains is still a trade, and they are sold as far as Baghdad. A like trade has thriven for years at Agra in India, where bricks are never made, but *dug for*.

The excavations at the *Mujelibé* or Babel showed that the structure was much as Marignolli describes, viz. an exterior of burnt bricks laid in bitumen enclosing the unburnt bricks which form the interior mass. So Nebuchadnezzar himself says in the Birs Nimrud inscription as ren-