

it furnishes the material for a most precious medicine. Thus if a person is bitten by a mad dog, and they give him but a small pennyweight of this medicine to drink, he is cured in a moment. Again if a woman is hard in labour they give her just such another dose and she is delivered at once. Yet again if one has any disease like the itch, or it may be worse, and applies a small quantity of this gall he shall speedily be cured. So you see why it sells at such a high price.

They also sell the flesh of this serpent, for it is excellent eating, and the people are very fond of it. And when these serpents are very hungry, sometimes they will seek out the lairs of lions or bears or other large wild beasts, and devour their cubs, without the sire and dam being able to prevent it. Indeed if they catch the big ones themselves they devour them too; they can make no resistance.³

In this province also are bred large and excellent horses which are taken to India for sale. And you must know that the people dock two or three joints of the tail from their horses, to prevent them from flipping



"Riding long like Frenchmen."

"Et encore sachié qe ceste gens che-
vauchent lonc come franchois."

their riders, a thing which they consider very unseemly. They ride long like Frenchmen, and wear armour of boiled leather, and carry spears and shields and arb-lasts, and all their quarrels are poisoned.⁴ [And I was told as a fact that many persons, especially those meditating mischief, constantly carry this poison about with them, so that if by any chance they should be taken, and be threatened with