

of these two Islands. The wives do nothing but nurse their children and gather such fruits as their Island produces; for their husbands do furnish them with all necessaries.<sup>1</sup>

NOTE 1.—It is not perhaps of much use to seek a serious identification of the locality of these Islands, or, as Marsden has done, to rationalise the fable. It ran from time immemorial, and as nobody ever found the Islands, their locality shifted with the horizon, though the legend long hung about Socotra and its vicinity. Coronelli's Atlas (Venice, 1696) identifies these islands with those called Abdul Kuri near Cape Gardafui, and the same notion finds favour with Marsden. No islands indeed exist in the position indicated by Polo if we look to his direction "south of Kesmacoran," but if we take his indication of "half-way between Mekrán and Socotra," the Kuria Muria Islands on the Arabian coast, in which M. Pauthier longs to trace these veritable Male and Female Isles, will be nearer than any others. Marco's statement that they had a bishop subject to the metropolitan of Socotra certainly looks as if certain concrete islands had been associated with the tale. Friar Jordanus (p. 44) also places them between India the Greater and India Tertia (*i.e.* with him Eastern Africa). Conti locates them not more than 5 miles from Socotra, and yet 100 mile distant from one another. "Sometimes the men pass over to the women, and sometimes the women pass over to the men, and each return to their own respective island before the expiration of six months. Those who remain on the island of the others beyond this fatal period die immediately" (p. 21). Fra Mauro places the islands to the south of Zanzibar, and gives them the names of *Mangla* and *Nabila*. One is curious to know whence came these names, one of which seems to be Sanskrit, the other (also in Sanudo's map) Arabic; (*Nabillah*, Ar., "Beautiful"; *Mangala*, Sansk. "Fortunate").

A savour of the story survived to the time of the Portuguese discoveries, and it had by that time attached itself to Socotra. (*De Barros*, Dec. II. Liv. i. cap. 3; *Bartoli*, *H. della Comp. di Gesù*, Asia, I. p. 37; *P. Vincenzo*, p. 443.)

The story was, I imagine, a mere ramification of the ancient and wide-spread fable of the Amazons, and is substantially the same that Palladius tells of the Brahmans; how the men lived on one side of the Ganges and the women on the other. The husbands visited their wives for 40 days only in June, July, and August, "those being their cold months, as the sun was then to the north." And when a wife had once borne a child the husband returned no more. (*Müller's Ps. Callisth.* 105.) The Mahábhárata celebrates the Amazon country of Rána Paramitá, where the regulations were much as in Polo's islands, only male children were put to death, and men if they overstayed a month. (*Wheeler's India*, I. 400.)

Hiuen Tsang's version of the legend agrees with Marco's in placing the Woman's Island to the south of Persia. It was called the *Kingdom of Western Women*. There were none but women to be seen. It was under *Folin* (the Byzantine Empire), and the ruler thereof sent husbands every year; if boys were born, the law prohibited their being brought up. (*Vie et Voyages*, p. 268.) Alexander, in Ferdúsi's poem, visits the City of Women on an island in the sea, where no man was allowed.

The Chinese accounts, dating from the 5th century, of a remote Eastern Land called Fusang, which Neumann fancied to have been Mexico, mention that to the east of that region again there was a Woman's Island, with the usual particulars. (*Lassen*, IV. 751.) [Cf. *G. Schlegel*, *Niu Kouo*, *T'oung Pao*, III. pp. 495-510.—H. C.] Oddly enough, Columbus heard the same story of an island called Matityna or Matinino (apparently Martinique) which he sighted on his second voyage. The Indians on board "asserted that it had no inhabitants but women, who at a certain time of the year were visited by the Cannibals (Caribs); if the children born were