

and New Babylon. Here also are still to be seen the ruins of the ancient Tower of Babel, which, being upon plain ground, seems very large from afar; but the nearer you come towards it, it seems to grow less and less. I have gone sundry times to see it, and found the remnants still standing above a quarter of a mile in circuit, and almost as high as the stone-work of St Paul's steeple in London, but much bigger.² The bricks remaining in this most ancient monument are half a yard thick, and three quarters long, having been dried in the sun only; and between every course of bricks there is a course of matts made of canes, which still remain as sound as if they had only lain one year.

The new city of Babylon, or Bagdat, joins to the before-mentioned small desert, in which was the old city, the river Tigris running close under the walls, so that they might easily open a ditch, and make the waters of the river encompass the city.³ Bagdat is above two English miles in circumference. The inhabitants, who generally speak three languages, Persian, Arabic, and Turkish, are much of the same complexion with the Spaniards. The women mostly wear, in the gristle of the nose, a ring like a wedding-ring, but rather larger, having a pearl and a turquoise stone set in it; and this however poor they may be. This is a place of great trade, being the thoroughfare from the East Indies to Aleppo. The town is well supplied with provisions, which are brought down the river Tigris from Mosul, in Diarbekir, or Mesopotamia, where stood the ancient city of Nineveh. These provisions, and various other kinds of goods, are brought down the river Tigris on rafts of wood, borne up by a great number of goat-skin bags, blown up with wind like bladders. When the goods are discharged, the rafts are sold for fuel, and letting the wind out of the goat skins, they carry them home again upon asses, to serve for other voyages down the river.

The buildings here are mostly of brick, dried in the sun, as little or no stone is to be found, and their houses are all low

² It is hardly necessary to observe, that this refers to the old St Paul's before the great fire, and has no reference to the present magnificent structure, built long after the date of this journey.—E.

³ It may be proper to remark, as not very distinctly marked here, though expressed afterwards in the text, that Bagdat is on the east side of the Tigris, whereas the plain, or desert of ancient Babylon, is on the west, between that river and the Euphrates.—E.