

entering his harem, or receiving anyone. He goes to a palace which contains no image or idol, and there, as he says, adores the God of Heaven. This was the day of his return, and he entered his harem again with immense pomp. Elephants walked in procession, handsomely caparisoned, and bearing on their backs a circular-gilded litter; then came flags of seven different colours, and men-at-arms, and then five more handsomely gilt litters carried by men on their shoulders. Musical instruments played the while in a manner of which it is impossible to give an idea. 50,000 men marched before and behind the emperor, keeping perfect step and cadence. Not a voice was heard; nothing but the sound of the music. As soon as the emperor had entered the harem everybody went away."

It was now the time of the Feast of Lanterns, but it was stript of its ordinary splendours, of which the ambassadors had heard much, because the astrologers had predicted that the palace would catch fire.

"The 8th of Rabbi First (13th March), the monarch having sent for Ahmed Shah and Bakshi Malik gave them what is called a *sankish* or present. He gave Sultan Shah eight *balish* of silver,¹ thirty dresses of royal magnificence, a mule, twenty-four pieces of *kala'i*,² two horses, one of them caparisoned, a hundred cane arrows, five three-sided *kaibars*,³ in the Cathayan fashion, and five thousand *chao*.⁴ Bakshi Malik received a similar present, only he had one *balish* less. The wives of the ambassadors received no silver, but were presented with pieces of stuffs. . . .

"The 1st day of the Latter Rabbi (5th April), news was brought that the emperor was on his way back from the hunting field, and that they were expected to meet him. The ambassadors were out riding when the news came, and as he was to arrive next day they returned home at once. The blue *Shonghár* belonging to Sultan Ahmed was dead.⁵ The *Sekjin* visited them, and said: 'Take care to start to night in order that you may be ready to be presented to the emperor the first thing in the morning.' So they mounted in haste, and when they arrived at the post-house they found His Worship the Kazi looking very much put out. Asking what made him so out of spirits, he answered in a low tone: 'The

¹ See pp. 115, and 481 *infra*.

² Tin? Quatremère does not translate it. Astley has "under petticoats"!

³ Quivers?

⁴ Bank notes (see pp. 116, 291).

⁵ The *shonghár* was a species of falcon monopolised by eastern royalty, and was, I believe, that of which Marco Polo speaks as the *gerfalcon*, which bred on the shores of the Arctic Ocean. They were sent in tribute to the Great Khan by the chiefs of the Northern Tartar Tribes. In a passage of the narrative which has been omitted, the emperor had presented several to the envoys for their respective princes, adding the brusque observation that they brought him screws of horses and carried off his good *shonghárs*. Petis de la Croix says of the *shonghár*: "'Tis a mark of homage which the Russians and Crim-Tartars are bound by the last treaty to send annually to the Porte" (*H. de Timur Bec*, ii, 75).