

first mentioned tribunals are under the orders of the last ; and from it business is transferred to the fifth, which bears the name of *Rusnáyi*, and which has everything that concerns the army under its charge. Lastly, the business arrives at the sixth board, which is called *Siúshtah*.¹ All ambassadors and foreign merchants when arriving and departing have to present themselves at this office, which is the one which issues orders in council and passports. In our days this office is entirely under the management of the Amír Dáshiman.

When matters have passed these six boards, they are remitted to the Council of State, or *Sing*, where they are discussed, and the decision is issued after being verified by the *Khat Angusht* or "finger-signature" of all who have a right to a voice in the council. This "finger-signature" indicates that the act, to which it is attached in attestation, has been discussed and definitively approved by those whose mark has thus been put upon it.

It is usual in Cathay, when any contract is entered into, for the outline of the fingers of the parties to be traced upon the document. For experience shows that no two individuals have fingers precisely alike. The hand of the contracting party is set upon the back of the paper containing the deed, and lines are then traced round his fingers up to the knuckles, in order that if ever one of them should deny his obligation this tracing may be compared with his fingers and he may thus be convicted.

After the matter has thus passed through all the boards, and has been decided on by the supreme authority, it is sent back to the tribunal before which it first came.

The dignitaries mentioned above are expected to attend

¹ These are the six boards of administration which still exist in China, under the names of *King-Pu*, *Hing-Pu*, etc. The titles given by Rashid do not seem to attempt any imitation of the Chinese names, and are probably those in use among the Mahomedans. The third board from the top, called *Pingpu* by the Chinese, has still authority over military affairs.