

with great goblets of gold and silver, etc., and the like at the tent of the Great Kaan. At a festival at the court of Oljaitu, we are told, "Before the throne stood golden buffets . . . set out with full flagons and goblets." Even in the private huts of the Mongols there was a buffet of a humbler kind exhibiting a skin of *Kumiz*, with other kinds of drink, and cups standing ready; and in a later age at the banquets of Shah Abbas we find the great buffet in a slightly different form, and the golden flagon still set to every two persons, though it no longer contained the liquor, which was handed round. (*Cathay*, clxiv., cci.; *Rubr.* 224, 268, 305; *Ilch.* II. 183; *Della Valle*, I. 654 and 750-751.)

[Referring to the "large and very beautiful piece of workmanship," Mr. Rockhill, *Rubruck*, 208-209, writes: "Similar works of art and mechanical contrivances were often seen in Eastern courts. The earliest I know of is the golden plane-tree and grape vine with bunches of grapes in precious stones, which was given to Darius by Pythius the Lydian, and which shaded the king's couch. (Herodotus, IV. 24.) The most celebrated, however, and that which may have inspired Mangu with the desire to have something like it at his court, was the famous Throne of Solomon (*Σολομώντεος Θρόνος*) of the Emperor of Constantinople, Theophilus (A.D. 829-842). . . . Abulfeda states that in A.D. 917 the envoys of Constantine Porphyrogenitus to the Caliph el Moktader saw in the palace of Bagdad a tree with eighteen branches, some of gold, some of silver, and on them were gold and silver birds, and the leaves of the tree were of gold and silver. By means of machinery, the leaves were made to rustle and the birds to sing. Mirkhond speaks also of a tree of gold and precious stones in the city of Sultanieh, in the interior of which were conduits through which flowed drinks of different kinds. Clavijo describes a somewhat similar tree at the court of Timur."

Dr. Bretschneider (*Peking*, 28, 29) mentions a clepsydra with a lantern. By means of machinery put in motion by water, at fixed times a little man comes forward exhibiting a tablet, which announces the hours. He speaks also of a musical instrument which is connected, by means of a tube, with two peacocks sitting on a cross-bar, and when it plays, the mechanism causes the peacocks to dance.—H. C.]

Odoric describes the great jar of liquor in the middle of the palace hall, but in his time it was made of a great mass of jade (p. 130).

NOTE 4.—This etiquette is specially noticed also by Odoric, as well as by Makrizi, by Rubruquis, and by Plano Carpini. According to the latter the breach of it was liable to be punished with death. The prohibition to tread on the threshold is also specially mentioned in a Mahomedan account of an embassy to the court of Barka Khan. And in regard to the tents, Rubruquis says he was warned not to touch the ropes, for these were regarded as representing the threshold. A Russo-Mongol author of our day says that the memory of this etiquette or superstition is still preserved by a Mongol proverb: "Step not on the threshold; it is a sin!" But among some of the Mongols more than this survives, as is evident from a passage in Mr. Michie's narrative: "There is a right and a wrong way of approaching a *yourt* also. Outside the door there are generally ropes lying on the ground, held down by stakes, for the purpose of tying up the animals when they want to keep them together. There is a way of getting over or round these ropes that I never learned, but on one occasion the ignorant breach of the rule on our part excluded us from the hospitality of the family." The feeling or superstition was in full force in Persia in the 17th century, at least in regard to the threshold of the king's palace. It was held a sin to tread upon it in entering. (*Cathay*, 132; *Rubr.* 255, 268, 319; *Plan. Carp.* 625, 741; *Makrizi*, I. 214; *Mél. Asiat. Ac. St. Petersb.* II. 660; *The Siberian Overland Route*, p. 97; *P. Della Valle*, II. 171.)

[Mr. Rockhill writes (*Rubruck*, p. 104): "The same custom existed among the Fijians, I believe. I may note that it also prevailed in ancient China. It is said of Confucius 'when he was standing he did not occupy the middle of the gate-way; when he passed in or out, he did not tread on the threshold.' (*Lun-yü*, Bk. X. ch.