

born on the 28th day of the September moon, so on that day is held the greatest feast of the year at the Kaan's Court, always excepting that which he holds on New Year's Day, of which I shall tell you afterwards.<sup>1</sup>

Now, on his birthday, the Great Kaan dresses in the best of his robes, all wrought with beaten gold;<sup>2</sup> and full 12,000 Barons and Knights on that day come forth dressed in robes of the same colour, and precisely like those of the Great Kaan, except that they are not so costly; but still they are all of the same colour as his, and are also of silk and gold. Every man so clothed has also a girdle of gold; and this as well as the dress is given him by the Sovereign. And I will aver that there are some of these suits decked with so many pearls and precious stones that a single suit shall be worth full 10,000 golden bezants.

And of such raiment there are several sets. For you must know that the Great Kaan, thirteen times in the year, presents to his Barons and Knights such suits of raiment as I am speaking of.<sup>3</sup> And on each occasion they wear the same colour that he does, a different colour being assigned to each festival. Hence you may see what a huge business it is, and that there is no prince in the world but he alone who could keep up such customs as these.

On his birthday also, all the Tartars in the world, and all the countries and governments that owe allegiance to the Kaan, offer him great presents according to their several ability, and as prescription or orders have fixed the amount. And many other persons also come with great presents to the Kaan, in order to beg for some employment from him. And the Great Kaan has chosen twelve Barons on whom is laid the charge of assigning to each of these supplicants a suitable answer.

On this day likewise all the Idolaters, all the