

CHAPTER XV.

OF THE GREAT FESTIVAL WHICH THE KAAH HOLDS ON NEW
YEAR'S DAY.

THE beginning of their New Year is the month of February, and on that occasion the Great Kaan and all his subjects made such a Feast as I now shall describe.

It is the custom that on this occasion the Kaan and all his subjects should be clothed entirely in white; so, that day, everybody is in white, men and women, great and small. And this is done in order that they may thrive all through the year, for they deem that white clothing is lucky.¹ On that day also all the people of all the provinces and governments and kingdoms and countries that own allegiance to the Kaan bring him great presents of gold and silver, and pearls and gems, and rich textures of divers kinds. And this they do that the Emperor throughout the year may have abundance of treasure and enjoyment without care. And the people also make presents to each other of white things, and embrace and kiss and make merry, and wish each other happiness and good luck for the coming year. On that day, I can assure you, among the customary presents there shall be offered to the Kaan from various quarters more than 100,000 white horses, beautiful animals, and richly caparisoned. [And you must know 'tis their custom in offering presents to the Great Kaan (at least when the province making the present is able to do so), to present nine times nine articles. For instance, if a province sends horses, it sends nine times nine or 81 horses; of gold, nine times