

coast of the Crimea, west of Kaffa. It had belonged to the Greek Empire, and had a considerable Greek population. After the Frank conquest of 1204 it apparently fell to Trebizond. It was taken by the Mongols in 1223 for the first time, and a second time in 1239, and during that century was the great port of intercourse with what is now Russia. At an uncertain date, but about the middle of the century, the Venetians established a factory there, which in 1287 became the seat of a consul. In 1323 we find Pope John XXII. complaining to Uzbek Khan of Sarai that the Christians had been ejected from Soldaia and their churches turned into mosques. Ibn Batuta, who alludes to this strife, counts Sudak as one of the four great ports of the World. The Genoese got Soldaia in 1365 and built strong defences, still to be seen. Kaffa, with a good anchorage, in the 14th century, and later on Tana, took the place of Soldaia as chief emporium in South Russia. Some of the Arab Geographers call the Sea of Azov the Sea of Sudak.

The Elder Marco Polo in his Will (1280) bequeaths to the Franciscan Friars of the place a house of his in *Soldachia*, reserving life occupation to his own son and daughter, then residing in it. Probably this establishment already existed when the two Brothers went thither. (*Elie de Laprimaudare*, passim; *Gold. Horde*, 87; *Mosheim*, App. 148; *Ibn Bat.* I. 28, II. 414; *Cathay*, 231-33; *Heyd*, II. passim.)

CHAPTER II.

HOW THE TWO BROTHERS WENT ON BEYOND SOLDAIA.

HAVING stayed a while at Soldaia, they considered the matter, and thought it well to extend their journey further. So they set forth from Soldaia and travelled till they came to the Court of a certain Tartar Prince, BARCA KAAAN by name, whose residences were at SARA¹ and at BOLGARA [and who was esteemed one of the most liberal and courteous Princes that ever was among the Tartars.]² This Barca was delighted at the arrival of the Two Brothers, and treated them with great honour; so they presented to him the whole of the jewels that they had brought with them. The Prince was highly pleased with these, and accepted the offering most graciously, causing the Brothers to receive at least twice its value.

After they had spent a twelvemonth at the court of this Prince there broke out a great war between Barca