

and Aláu, the Lord of the Tártars of the Levant, and great hosts were mustered on either side.³

But in the end Barca, the Lord of the Tartars of the Ponent, was defeated, though on both sides there was great slaughter. And by reason of this war no one could travel without peril of being taken; thus it was at least on the road by which the Brothers had come, though there was no obstacle to their travelling forward. So the Brothers, finding they could not retrace their steps, determined to go forward. Quitting Bolgara, therefore, they proceeded to a city called UCACA, which was at the extremity of the kingdom of the Lord of the Ponent;⁴ and thence departing again, and passing the great River Tigris, they travelled across a Desert which extended for seventeen days' journey, and wherein they found neither town nor village, falling in only with the tents of Tartars occupied with their cattle at pasture.⁵

Note 1.—Barka Khan, third son of Jújí, the first-born of Chinghiz, ruled the *Ulus* of Juji and Empire of Kipchak (Southern Russia) from 1257 to 1265. He was the first Musulman sovereign of his race. His chief residence was at SARAI (Sara of the text), a city founded by his brother and predecessor Bátú, on the banks of the Akhtuba branch of the Volga. In the next century Ibn Batuta describes Sarai as a very handsome and populous city, so large that it made half a day's journey to ride through it. The inhabitants were Mongols, Aás (or Alans), Kipchaks, Circassians, Russians, and Greeks, besides the foreign Moslem merchants, who had a walled quarter. Another Mahomedan traveller of the same century says the city itself was not walled, but, "The Khan's Palace was a great edifice surmounted by a golden crescent weighing two *kantars* of Egypt, and encompassed by a wall flanked with towers," etc. Pope John XXII., on the 26th February 1322, defined the limits of the new Bishopric of Kaffa, which were Sarai to the east and Varna to the west.

Sarai became the seat of both a Latin and a Russian metropolitan, and of more than one Franciscan convent. It was destroyed by Timur on his second invasion of Kipchak (1395-6), and extinguished by the Russians a century later. It is the scene of Chaucer's half-told tale of Cambuscan:—

"At *Sarra*, in the Londe of Tartarie,
There dwelt a King that werriëd Russie."

["*Mesalek-al-absar* (285, 287), says Sarai, meaning 'the Palace,' was founded by Bereké, brother of Batu. It stood in a salty plain, and was without walls, though the palace had walls flanked by towers. The town was large, had markets, *madrasas*—and baths. It is usually identified with Selitrennoyé Gorodok, about 70 miles above Astrakhan." (*Rockhill, Rubruck*, p. 260, note.)—H. C.]

Several sites exhibiting extensive ruins near the banks of the Akhtuba have been identified with Sarai; two in particular. One of these is not far from the great