

CHAPTER IV.

OF GEORGIANA AND THE KINGS THEREOF.

IN GEORGIANA there is a King called David Melic, which is as much as to say "David King"; he is subject to the Tartar.¹ In old times all the kings were born with the figure of an eagle upon the right shoulder. The people are very handsome, capital archers, and most valiant soldiers. They are Christians of the Greek Rite, and have a fashion of wearing their hair cropped, like Churchmen.²

This is the country beyond which Alexander could not pass when he wished to penetrate to the region of the Pont, because that the defile was so narrow and perilous, the sea lying on the one hand, and on the other lofty mountains impassable to horsemen. The strait extends like this for four leagues, and a handful of people might hold it against all the world. Alexander caused a very strong tower to be built there, to prevent the people beyond from passing to attack him, and this got the name of the IRON GATE. This is the place that the Book of Alexander speaks of, when it tells us how he shut up the Tartars between two mountains; not that they were really Tartars, however, for there were no Tartars in those days, but they consisted of a race of people called COMANIANS and many besides.³

[In this province all the forests are of box-wood.⁴] There are numerous towns and villages, and silk is produced in great abundance. They also weave cloths of gold, and all kinds of very fine silk stuffs. The country produces the best goshawks in the world [which are called *Avigi*].⁵ It has indeed no lack of anything, and