

CHAPTER VI.

OF THE GREAT CITY OF BAUDAS, AND HOW IT WAS TAKEN.

BAUDAS is a great city, which used to be the seat of the Calif of all the Saracens in the world, just as Rome is the seat of the Pope of all the Christians.¹ A very great river flows through the city, and by this you can descend to the Sea of India. There is a great traffic of merchants with their goods this way; they descend some eighteen days from Baudas, and then come to a certain city called KISI, where they enter the Sea of India.² There is also on the river, as you go from Baudas to Kisi, a great city called BASTRA, surrounded by woods, in which grow the best dates in the world.³

In Baudas they weave many different kinds of silk stuffs and gold brocades, such as *nasich*, and *nac*, and *cramoisy*, and many another beautiful tissue richly wrought with figures of beasts and birds. It is the noblest and greatest city in all those regions.⁴

Now it came to pass on a day in the year of Christ 1255, that the Lord of the Tartars of the Levant, whose name was Alaü, brother to the Great Kaan now reigning, gathered a mighty host and came up against Baudas and took it by storm.⁵ It was a great enterprise! for in Baudas there were more than 100,000 horse, besides foot soldiers. And when Alaü had taken the place he found therein a tower of the Calif's, which was full of gold and silver and other treasure; in fact the greatest accumulation of treasure in one spot that ever was known.⁶ When he beheld that great heap of treasure he was astonished, and, summoning the Calif to his presence, he said to him: "Calif, tell me now why thou