

## CHAPTER III.

## HOW THE GREAT KAAAN MARCHED AGAINST NAYAN.

WHEN the Great Kaan heard what was afoot, he made his preparations in right good heart, like one who feared not the issue of an attempt so contrary to justice. Confident in his own conduct and prowess, he was in no degree disturbed, but vowed that he would never wear crown again if he brought not those two traitorous and disloyal Tartar chiefs to an ill end. So swiftly and secretly were his preparations made, that no one knew of them but his Privy Council, and all were completed within ten or twelve days. In that time he had assembled good 360,000 horsemen, and 100,000 footmen,—but a small force indeed for him, and consisting only of those that were in the vicinity. For the rest of his vast and innumerable forces were too far off to answer so hasty a summons, being engaged under orders from him on distant expeditions to conquer divers countries and provinces. If he had waited to summon all his troops, the multitude assembled would have been beyond all belief, a multitude such as never was heard of or told of, past all counting. In fact, those 360,000 horsemen that he got together consisted merely of the falconers and whippers-in that were about the court!<sup>1</sup>

And when he had got ready this handful (as it were) of his troops, he ordered his astrologers to declare whether he should gain the battle and get the better of his enemies. After they had made their observations, they told him to go on boldly, for he would conquer and gain a glorious victory: whereat he greatly rejoiced.

So he marched with his army, and after advancing for 20 days they arrived at a great plain where Nayan lay with all his host, amounting to some 400,000 horse.