

in all security, without the slightest thought of any one coming thither to do him hurt. In fact, this confidence of his was such that he kept no vedettes whether in front or in rear; for he knew nothing of the coming of the Great Kaan, owing to all the approaches having been completely occupied as I told you. Moreover, the place was in a remote wilderness, more than thirty marches from the Court, though the Kaan had made the distance in twenty, so eager was he to come to battle with Nayan.

And what shall I tell you next? The Kaan was there on the hill, mounted on a great wooden bartizan,¹ which was borne by four well-trained elephants, and over him was hoisted his standard, so high aloft that it could be seen from all sides. His troops were ordered in battles of 30,000 men apiece; and a great part of the horsemen had each a foot-soldier armed with a lance set on the crupper behind him (for it was thus that the footmen were disposed of);² and the whole plain seemed to be covered with his forces. So it was thus that the Great Kaan's army was arrayed for battle.

When Nayan and his people saw what had happened, they were sorely confounded, and rushed in haste to arms. Nevertheless they made them ready in good style and formed their troops in an orderly manner. And when all were in battle array on both sides as I have told you, and nothing remained but to fall to blows, then might you have heard a sound arise of many instruments of various music, and of the voices of the whole of the two hosts loudly singing. For this is a custom of the Tartars, that before they join battle they all unite in singing and playing on a certain two-stringed instrument of theirs, a thing right pleasant to hear. And so they continue in their array of battle, singing and playing in this pleasing manner, until the