

So when both sides were ready for action the Naccaras began to sound loudly, one on either side. For 'tis their custom never to join battle till the Great Naccara is beaten. And when the Naccaras sounded, then the battle began in fierce and deadly style, and furiously the one host dashed to meet the other. So many fell on either side that in an evil hour for both it was begun! The earth was thickly strewn with the wounded and the slain, men and horses, whilst the uproar and din of battle was so loud you would not have heard God's thunder! Truly King Caidu himself did many a deed of prowess that strengthened the hearts of his people. Nor less on the other side did the Great Kaan's son and Prester John's grandson, for well they proved their valour in the medley, and did astonishing feats of arms, leading their troops with right good judgment.

And what shall I tell you? The battle lasted so long that it was one of the hardest the Tartars ever fought. Either side strove hard to bring the matter to a point and rout the enemy, but to no avail. And so the battle went on till vesper-tide, and without victory on either side. Many a man fell there; many a child was made an orphan there; many a lady widowed; and many another woman plunged in grief and tears for the rest of her days, I mean the mothers and the *araines* of those who fell.²

So when they had fought till the sun was low they left off, and retired each side to its tents. Those who were unhurt were so dead tired that they were like to drop, and the wounded, who were many on both sides, were moaning in their various degrees of pain; but all were more fit for rest than fighting, so gladly they took their repose that night. And when morning approached, King Caidu, who had news from his scouts that the