

CHAPTER XXV.

OF THE WAR THAT AROSE BETWEEN ALAU AND BARCA, AND THE BATTLES THAT THEY FOUGHT.

IT was in the year 1261 of Christ's incarnation that there arose a great discord between King Alau the Lord of the Tartars of the Levant, and Barca the King of the Tartars of the Ponent; the occasion whereof was a province that lay on the confines of both.¹

‡ (They exchange defiances, and make vast preparations.)

And when his preparations were complete, Alau the Lord of Levant set forth with all his people. They marched for many days without any adventure to speak of, and at last they reached a great plain which extends between the IRON GATES and the SEA OF SARAIN.² In this plain he pitched his camp in beautiful order; and I can assure you there was many a rich tent and pavilion therein, so that it looked indeed like a camp of the wealthy. Alau said he would tarry there to see if Barca and his people would come; so there they tarried, abiding the enemy's arrival. This place where the camp was pitched was on the frontier of the two kings. Now let us speak of Barca and his people.³

NOTE 1.—“*Que marcesoit à le un et à le autre;*” in Scotch phrase, “which marched with both.”

NOTE 2.—Respecting the Iron Gates, see vol. i. p. 53. The Caspian is here called the Sea of *Sarain*, probably for *Sarai*, after the great city on the Volga. For we find it in the Catalan Map of 1375 termed the Sea of *Sarra*. Otherwise *Sarain* might have been taken for some corruption of *Shirwán*. (See vol. i. p. 59, note 8.)

NOTE 3.—The war here spoken of is the same which is mentioned in the very beginning of the book, as having compelled the two Elder Polos to travel much further eastward than they had contemplated.

Many jealousies and heart-burnings between the cousins Hulaku and Barka had existed for several years. The Mameluke Sultan Bibars seems also to have stimulated Barka to hostility with Hulaku. War broke out in 1262, when 30,000 men from