

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD'S PREPARING FOR BATTLE

·121·

against them to defend himself with so great a people that he shall put them all to death in such a way that the great Kaan shall never dare to have a wish to send another army against him there to his borders. And then this king makes very great preparation of armed men and of elephants (for he always kept them without number in his realms) as quickly as he could, and I will tell you what. Now you may know quite truly that he had two thousand¹ very large elephants well armed and prepared for war, and made men make on each of these elephants [56a] a castle of wood very strong & very well made and planned for combat; and on each castle he had at least twelve men well armed to shoot arrows and to fight, and in some there were fifteen or sixteen and in some more, who were able conveniently to fight. And he had also gathered together beside these quite sixty thousand armed men on the ground, between those on horses—and some were there on foot.² He makes indeed the preparation so fine that it well seemed that of a powerful king and of a great, as he was. For you may know that it was indeed an army to make a great effort in battle. And what shall I tell you about it? This king, when he had made so great preparation as I have told you to fight with the Tartars, he makes no delay but all immediately sets himself on the road with all his people to go with the greatest speed against the army of the great Kaan which was then at the city of Uncian which is in the kingdom of Cardandan, as I have told you another time before this. They go without finding adventure which does to mention until they were come near by three days marches to the hosts of the Tartars, and there he pitched his camp to stay for some days and to rest himself and his people and his host.

HERE HE TELLS OF THE BATTLE WHICH WAS BETWEEN THE ARMY OF THE GREAT KAAAN AND THE KING OF MIEN. And when in a few days the lord of the hosts of Tartars to whom the great Kaan had given the command of the army, knows certainly that this king of Mien and Bangala was coming upon him with so great a people he has fear indeed, because he had with him only twelve thousand horsemen, but all proved men and expert in the art of war. But without mistake he was a very valiant man in his body and wise and practised in wars and in battles and a very good captain of troops, and he had Nescradin for name. He showed no fear, but arranges and arms and exhorts his men very well. He exerts himself to the utmost of his power to defend the country and his people and himself; for he had very good men at arms with him and valiant fighters; and went with his people to the pass. And why should I make you [56b] a long story of it? You may know quite truly that the Tartars all and twelve thousand horsemen together well mounted came off into the plain of Uncian and waited there for the enemy to come to the battle. And they

·122·

¹ R (below): "about 1000"

² VB: *xl^m homenj armatj a chauallo et moltj pedonj* V omits the number.