

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD<sup>s</sup> THE TARTARS DISMOUNT

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let them come near to their position. Then they came out immediately with great spirit to the encounter, and they set themselves [56c] on the road all together well and orderly and wisely toward the enemy. And when they were near to them, and that there was nothing wanting but to begin the battle, then the horses of the Tartars, when they saw the elephants so large and with those castles, which were in the front rank, they are very greatly terrified in such a way that their riders the Tartars cannot by any force or skill hold them, nor bring them to go farther forward towards the enemy to battle; but they always turned themselves back in flight. And the king and all his people with the elephants went always forward pursuing them.

HERE HE SPEAKS AGAIN OF THE SAME BATTLE. Now when the Tartars have seen this they have great vexation at it and did not know what they ought to do, for they see clearly that if they cannot bring their horses forward they hold themselves to have lost all. But in the end they behave themselves very wisely, and I will tell you what they did. Now you may know that their prudent captain, seeing this disorder come suddenly upon them, did wisely and as one who had thought of all this. Immediately he commanded that the Tartars, when they see that their horses were so terrified, they all dismount from their horses and put them in the wood which was near them, in which were great trees, and tie them to the trees; and that they lay hands to the bows, of which they knew well how to make use, better than any people in the world. And then they do so immediately and all go on foot against the front line which was that of the elephants, and lay hands to the bows and cock the arrows and begin to let go at the elephants which were advancing. They shot so many arrows at them with so great vigour and shouting that it seemed a wonderful thing, and some of the elephants were severely wounded and killed in a short time, and many of the men also. And those who were in the castles with all the people of the king drew arrows also on the Tartars very liberally, and give them a very vigorous attack. But their arrows did not wound so gravely as did those of the Tartars, which were drawn with greater strength; and the Tartars, who were sufficiently better men of arms & more used to battle than their enemies were and knew better how to draw their bows than those knew, defended themselves very bravely. And what shall I go telling you of it? You may know that so great was the number of arrows in this beginning, and all at the mark of the elephants (for so it was ordered by the captain), that they were wounded on every side of the body. And when the elephants were so wounded as I have told you, all the most [of them], and felt the pain of the wounds of the pellets which came in such numbers like rain, and were frightened by the great noise of the shouting, I tell you that they all turn themselves [56d] in rout & in flight towards the people of the king (while for nothing on earth would they go forward towards the Tartars) with so great an uproar that it seemed that the whole world

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