

THE SECOND CRUSADE.

31. The fall of Edessa, and the petitions of the people of Palestine for aid, produced a sensation throughout Europe, and especially in France. Nor was an apostle wanting worthy to fill the place of Peter, and to summon the chivalry of Europe to a second crusade. Commissioned by Pope Eugenius for that purpose, the famous Saint Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux in Champagne, traveled through France and Germany, exerting the power of his marvelous eloquence in recruiting the armies of the cross. The chiefs of the second crusade were two of the most powerful princes of Europe, Louis VII, King of France, and Conrad III, Emperor of Germany. Under their command upward of one million two hundred thousand men, collected from all parts of Europe, marched toward Palestine in two great armies, early in 1147.

32. Notwithstanding the vastness of the preparations, the expedition was a total failure. The events of the last fifty years had rendered the policy of the Greek princes hostile to the crusades. Manuel Comnenus, the grandson of Alexius, who now occupied the throne, suffered both armies to pass into Asia Minor, where, misled by Greek scouts, the army of Conrad was all but destroyed by the Turks, near Iconium, while the army of Louis, after undergoing infinite hardships, was wrecked in the defiles of the Pisidian mountains. The fragments of the two armies uniting made their way to Syria, where they cooperated with forces of the princes of Jerusalem and Antioch, in laying seige to Damascus, but without effect. In 1149 Conrad and Louis returned to Europe, and the second crusade was at an end, having attained nothing but the expenditure of more than a million of lives.

THE THIRD CRUSADE.

33. A period of forty years elapsed before Europe fitted out another crusade. Meanwhile the struggle between the Christian and the Turks in Syria was carried on without intermission. Nouredin, the son of the conqueror of Edessa, displayed a genius which astonished both Christians and Turks. Keeping possession of Edessa, he aimed at extending his conquest at the expense of the Christians still further. For some time he was kept in check by the abilities of Baldwin III, King of Jerusalem. On his death, in 1162, his brother Amalric, far inferior to Baldwin in ability, succeeded to the throne.

34. At this crisis, while Nouredin, the Sultan of Aleppo, and Amalric, the Christian King of Jerusalem, were the rival powers in Syria, occurred a circumstance which exercised considerable influence on the subsequent course of events, and which makes necessary a retrospective glance.

35. At the time of the first crusade Palestine was the scene of a violent contest between the Turks, who had poured down from the North, conquering as they went, and the Fatimites of Egypt, who had possessed Syria for nearly a century. The Turks had at first been irresistible. The Fatimites, however, had been able to recover Jerusalem from the hands of their enemies, and held it when besieged by the Christians. Interrupted in their conflict with each other for the sovereignty of Palestine, the Fatimites and Turks turned their arms with one accord against the invader. In the person of Nouredin the Turkish power was now increasing. The Fatimite dynasty of Egypt, meanwhile, had long been showing signs of decay, the caliphs having become mere tools in the hands of their viziers. In 1163 one of these viziers, Shawer, finding

himself expelled from his post by a rival, sought refuge at the court of Aleppo, and applied to the sultan for assistance. Nouredin eagerly embraced an opportunity for obtaining a footing in Egypt, and sent two persons, Chyrkouh and his nephew Saladin, to displace the usurping vizier and re-establish Shower. They, however, usurped the government, and Shower applied to the King of Jerusalem, Amalric, for assistance. Amalric in turn attempted usurpation, and again the officers of Nouredin came to the aid of Shower. The vizier paid the penalty of his fickleness by losing his head, and his post was occupied by Chyrkouh, who, while ruling Egypt as a vizier of the Fatimite caliph, was in reality the lieutenant of Nouredin.

36. On the death of Chyrkouh, Saladin was appointed to the viziership. The caliph fancied that he would now regain the control of his own dominions, but he little knew the character of his new vizier. Saladin soon effected a revolution in Egypt, declared the Fatimite dynasty to be at an end, and subjected the country once more to the nominal authority of the Bagdad caliphs, whom Nouredin professed to reverence as the supreme heads of the Mohammedan Empire. Nor did he stop here. He soon showed a disposition to shake off the supremacy of Nouredin, and the sultan of Aleppo was marching into Egypt to vindicate his authority, when he suddenly died in the year 1171.

37. Saladin now saw the great obstacle to his ambition removed, and began to aim at realizing those schemes of sovereignty which Nouredin had projected. The state of the Christian kingdom during the ten or twelve years which followed directly favored his plans. Civil dissensions arose which the keen eye of Saladin discovered, and, already master of all Syria, he resolved to complete his

greatness by the conquest of Palestine. Accordingly, when in the year 1187 it was known that he was on his march against Jerusalem, the Christian crusaders saw the necessity of abandoning their dissensions and uniting cordially against the invader. Town after town surrendered to the victorious Saracen, and, in October, 1187, Jerusalem itself, after fourteen days' defense, was obliged to submit to his mercy. The conduct of Saladin on this occasion was more generous than might have been expected. A moderate ransom was fixed for every individual, on the payment of which he was at liberty to remove with his goods to whatever place he chose. To the Christian ladies, Saladin's conduct was courteous in the extreme, so that it became a remark among the Latins of Palestine that Saladin was a barbarian only in name.

38. Thus, after ninety years, was the Holy City again inhabited by the infidel, and all the fruits of the first crusade lost, as it seemed to the world. Saladin now possessed the whole of Palestine, with the single exception of the city of Tyre, which was gallantly defended by Conrad, Marquis of Montferrat.

39. The epidemic frenzy which had been gradually cooling was now extinct, or nearly so, and the nations of Europe looked with cold indifference upon the armaments of their princes. But chivalry was now in all its glory, and it continued to supply armies for the Holy Land. Poetry more than religion inspired the Third Crusade. The knights and their retainers listened with delight to the martial and amatory strains of the minstrels, minnesingers, and troubadors. Men fought not so much for the holy sepulchre as to gain glory for themselves in the best and only field where glory could be obtained. They fought not as zealots, but as soldiers, not for religion, but for honor.

40. The first to take the field was the illustrious German emperor, Frederick Barbarossa. Marching from Ratisbon at the head of a magnificent army in 1189, he fought his way through the Greek dominions, advanced through Asia Minor, conquering as he went, and was already on the borders of Palestine, when, imprudently bathing, he was cut off in the seventieth year of his age. His army suffered greatly from the difficulties of their march and the attacks of the Saracens. The wrecks of it under Frederick's son, the Duke of Swabia, proved a most valuable reinforcement to the Christians in Syria, who had by this time rallied and combined against the domination of Saladin, laying siege to the city of Acre on the sea-coast, a town of so much importance that the possession of it was considered almost equivalent to being master of the whole country.

41. Upon this siege, commenced in August, 1189, was concentrated all the force at the command of the Christians in Palestine, the remnants of the two great military orders the Knights Templars and the Knights Hospitalers, the survivors of Frederick's army, together with such bodies of crusaders as were continually arriving from Europe by sea. Guy de Lusignan was the commander of the besieging forces, and so skillfully was his army fortified that Saladin was unable to dislodge him. For two-and-twenty months the siege continued, and many engagements had taken place between the Christian army and that of Saladin, which occupied the mountains to the south, but without visible advantage on either side.

42. Such was the position of affairs when, early in the summer of 1191, Philip, of France, and Richard Cœur de Lion, of England, arrived with their fleets. The struggle was soon over, and on the 12th of July, 1191, Acre surrendered to the Christians. Had the crusaders

been united among themselves, the fall of this city might have been but preliminary to the recovery of the whole country. The rivalry of the kings of France and England, however, prevented their cordial co-operation, and, not long after the capture of Acre, Philip ruined the cause of the crusade by returning to Europe.

43. After gaining many important successes against Saladin, and earning for himself the reputation of the most valiant knight of the age, Richard, involved in disputes with the other chiefs of the crusade, and anxious to revisit England, where his presence was becoming daily more necessary, was glad to conclude an honorable peace. Saladin, on his part, was equally willing to end a struggle which had cost him so much. A truce was concluded for three years and eight months, during which Christian pilgrims were to enjoy the liberty of visiting Jerusalem without hindrance.

44. Saladin entertained many Christians in his own palace, from which they returned, their tongues laden with praises of the noble infidel. Richard and Saladin never met, but each admired the prowess and nobleness of soul of his rival.

45. The Christians and Moslems no longer looked upon each other as barbarians, to whom merey was a crime. Each host entertained the highest admiration for the bravery and magnanimity of the other, and in their occasional truces met upon the most friendly terms. When Richard, the lion-hearted king of England, lay in his tent consumed by a fever, there came into the camp camels laden with snow, sent by his enemy, the Sultan Saladin, to assuage his disease, the homage of one brave soldier to another. But, when Richard was returning to England, it was by a Christian prince that he was treacherously seized and secretly confined.

46. It was on the 25th of October, 1192, that Richard set sail for Europe. Forced by stress of weather to land at Zara, he made the attempt to journey through the continent, and was arrested and held a prisoner while passing through the dominions of his enemy and former fellow-crusader, the archduke of Austria, and remained in prison in Vienna for several months. He returned to England in 1194, and died in 1199. His great antagonist, Saladin, had died in 1193, not long after the Christian armies left Palestine. At the end of the crusade, the Crescent waved as defiantly as ever over the land of Israel.

THE FOURTH CRUSADE.

47. The fourth crusade, from 1195 to 1198, led by Henry VI of Germany, was equally a failure. There were gained some brilliant victories, but dissensions divided the armies, and at last a truce was made with the Mohammedans. It is true that these victories made the crusaders masters of the sea-coast, but, when the armies departed, the Christian king found himself in possession of cities which he was unable to garrison, and which he felt would be held only by the sufferance of the enemy.

THE FIFTH CRUSADE.

48. In the year 1203 a new crusade was set on foot, commanded by several of the most powerful nobles of Italy and France. Instead of marching at once against the infidels, the crusaders suffered themselves to be drawn into a contest with the Greek empire. Just at this time the emperor of the Greeks had been deposed and deprived of his eyes by his own brother. His son, Alexius, fled to Europe, and petitioned the assistance of the Latin

princes against the usurper, promising in return to use his efforts to bring about a union of the Greek with the Latin church, and to employ all the resources of his kingdom against the infidels of Syria. The temptation of such a prospect could not be resisted; the crusaders marched into Greece, laid siege to Constantinople, and took the city by storm A. D. 1204, thereby establishing Latin Christianity in the eastern metropolis, but at what a cost. Neither the works of God nor man were respected by the invaders; they vented their brutal ferocity upon the one, and satisfied their avarice upon the other. "In St. Sophia, the silver was stripped from the pulpit, an exquisite and highly-prized table of oblation was broken in pieces, the sacred chalices were turned into drinking-cups, the gold fringe was ripped off the veil of the sanctuary. Asses and horses were led into the churches to carry off the spoil.

49. "Many beautiful bronze pieces, above all price as works of art, were broken into pieces to be sold as old metal. The finely chiseled marble was also destroyed by the same spirit of vandalism. Two thousand people were put to the sword; had there been less plunder, the slaughter would in all probability have been much greater."

50. For fifty years the empire was ruled over by the Franks. Meanwhile the knights, plunged in the luxury of the city, heeded not the appeals from Palestine, but allowed the besieged and suffering, for whose rescue they had enlisted, to linger and die without an effort on their behalf. Moved to desperation, in this emergency, the Christians sent to Europe a heart-rending cry for help.

THE SIXTH CRUSADE.

51. The urgent appeal from Palestine caused Pope Innocent III to earnestly preach a new crusade, and he

crowned his labors and appeals with his famous exclamation, "Sword, sword, start from thy scabbard, and sharpen thyself to kill." Though the many disastrous and fruitless expeditions had so dampened the ardor of men that they gave little heed to his appeals, the zeal of the young was kindled for the cause to which their elders seemed so indifferent.

52. The children of Germany and France caught the madness of the hour, and resolved upon a crusade of their own. Inspired by the preaching of a fanatical priest named Nicholas, twenty thousand boys of the average age of twelve years assembled at Cologne. They came from all ranks of life, and the heir of the proud noble marched side by side with the son of the humblest peasant. Sisters, priests, and servants joined the throng, swelling the numbers and adding to the confusion.

53. Their journey began in July, 1212, and their destination was Palestine, and they were to go by way of Rome, so as to obtain the assistance and the blessing of the Pope. In their ignorance these poor children thought that Palestine was but a few miles distant, and before the close of the first day's march excited voices were heard asking if the holy sepulchre was in sight. Slowly onward the multitude moved up the Rhine, and over the Mont Cenis pass of the Alps, into Italy.

54. But day by day hearts became sick with continued disappointment, and little feet weary with the never-ending miles which stretched before. The weak and the sickly were the first to give out, and, though they struggled to keep their places in the ranks, one by one they fell by the wayside to die alone, with no loving hands to soothe their last moments or to moisten their parched lips with a drop of cold water. The path of the youthful crusaders might be traced by the marks left by thou-

sands of bleeding feet and by the victims stretched in death along the course.

55. Death, disease, and desertion soon thinned their ranks to such an extent that only one half of their original number lived to reach the summit of the Alps and look down into Italy. The journey across the mountains was a fearful one. They had left home in summer, when their raiment was thin; it had become scanty and ragged in the long and dusty march, so that they were exposed to the full severity of the cold. The rocks cut their shoeless feet, but nothing remained but to press onward or to lie down and die.

56. Only seven thousand lived to reach Genoa, where they were received coldly, but where they were at last permitted to stay a week to rest. Then again onward through the plains of Italy, until all that survived made their way to Rome. Pope Innocent partook of the fanaticism which affected all Europe, but the sight of these little victims of the universal delusion, reduced to mere spectres by hardships, disease, and famine, aroused in him an unexpected human sympathy. He blessed the children, forbade them to go farther, and when rested sent them back to their German homes.

57. The winter had passed and the spring had come again before the few survivors reached their beloved fatherland. Day by day there came straggling into the German cities groups of these victims, their heads drooping for shame, their eyes red with tears, their clothing in rags. Many died upon realizing the last hope which had sustained them so long. Sad-eyed mothers looked in vain among the thin ranks for their beloved ones, and time only soothed the untold misery of this wild enterprise.

58. Soon after the departure of the German children on their crusade under Nicholas, another of about equal

numbers set out from Cologne by a different route. They crossed the Alps by the pass of St. Gothard, and descended into Eastern Italy. Keeping along the coast of the Adriatic, they at last came to the southern front of the peninsula, and could go no farther. They met with a fate similar to that of the first band, with the additional horror that many of them were seized by Turkish pirates and carried away into life-long slavery. The few who survived to reach Southern Italy embarked on a vessel, and never were heard of more. No messenger even returned to the vine-clad hills of the Rhine to report the fate of the little ones, and they all disappeared from the aching gaze of anxious mothers as though the earth had swallowed them up.

59. The third children's crusade set out from France under the leadership of a bare-footed friar named Stephen. They numbered thirty thousand, and their first destination was Marseilles, whence they were to take shipping for Palestine through means directly provided by the Lord. Through the broad fields of France, during the hot summer days, the crusaders marched, every mile marked by victims; and, when the white walls of the city of their destination became visible, their numbers were reduced one half.

60. The charity of Marseilles was taxed to its utmost to provide for the fifteen thousand mouths open to receive it. Through weary weeks the children waited in vain for the promised aid from the Lord. Despair was more fatal than famine, and soon two thirds of those who had reached the city perished. When their numbers were reduced to five thousand, apparently the promise of Divine aid was fulfilled. Two wealthy and benevolent merchants volunteered to send the children on to their destination. Seven ships were prepared, and into these

the five thousand crowded, believing their troubles were at an end.

61. The ships sailed out of port, freighted with mother love and religious blessings. To anxious eyes that watched their departure, their white sails, lessening in the distance, wafted back messages of hope and assurance. At the dawn of another day the last speck had disappeared, and the blue waves of the Mediterranean rolled tranquilly, as if jealously guarding the secrets of fate. But time went on. Homeward-bound vessels, direct from the scene of conflict, saw the precious fleet. News of stern conflicts with the infidels was brought by wandering palmers; but from sailor merchant, from peasant warrior, and from noble, scarred with Saracenic wounds, there was a death-like silence in regard to the little wanderers. Streaming eyes fixed upon the East looked in vain until all tears were quenched in death.

62. Eighteen years passed since the children's fleet sailed out of European life. Then a vague rumor of treachery began to circulate, and, little by little, the details came out of one of the most inhuman crimes that ever shocked the hearts of men. The benevolent merchants who furnished the ships had sold the children to the barbarous Moslems, and the course of the fleet was turned from east to south. On the second day out a great storm arose, and two of the ships foundered, and all on board perished. A more horrible fate awaited the survivors. Landing in a city of the Moors in northern Africa, they were conducted to a secure prison, and from the gloomy portals they passed out into distant and perpetual slavery. One by one the captives died, some by disease, some by cruelty, others passed away in old age. At length all dropped their weary burdens, and their toils and sorrows ended. Not one of the hundreds that sailed

out of Marseilles on that sunny afternoon ever saw Europe again. Rarely in the history of the world has a story in real life been freighted with so much woe as fell to the lot of the victims of the strange madness which swept over Europe less than seven hundred years ago. Peace to their memories!

63. At last an army was organized, and Innocent announced that he himself would lead the host to the defense of the holy sepulchre; but his death intervened before the project was ripe. Andrew, king of Hungary, was the only monarch who had leisure or inclination to leave his dominions. He led the army to Palestine and defeated the Saracens, but failed to follow up his victory, and soon after abandoned the enterprise. The Duke of Austria, who succeeded him as leader, directed the whole energy of the crusade against Egypt; and Damietta, which commanded the river Nile, was chosen as the first point of attack. Finding themselves unable to successfully defend the city, the Moslems offered to yield the whole of Palestine to the Christians upon the condition of the evacuation of Egypt. With a blindness almost incredible these terms were refused; and a last attack made on the walls of Damietta. The besieged made but slight resistance, and the Christians entered the city, to find out of seventy thousand but three thousand remaining, so fearful had been the scourge of plague and famine. Several months were spent in Damietta. The climate either weakened the frames or obscured the understandings of the Christians, for after their conquest they remained inactive until the Moslems recuperated their army and were able to recapture Damietta and expel the Crusaders from Egypt.

64. With a view to the recovery of the Holy Land, Frederick II, of Germany, had been married to Yolande, the heiress of the kingdom of Jerusalem. His early

life was spent in Sicily, in familiar intercourse with Jews and Arabs, and Sicily was to the last the favored portion of his dominion. The emperor's court was given up to unpardonable frivolities in the eyes of Pope Gregory IX, one of whose first pontifical acts was to summon Frederick to a new crusade. The emperor paid little heed to the aged Pope's exhortations and commands, postponing from time to time the period of his departure. He embarked at last, but in ten days returned. The Pope was not to be trifled with, and pronounced his excommunication. Frederick treated it with contempt, and appealed to Christendom to sustain him. For this he underwent a more tremendous excommunication, but his partisans in Rome raised an insurrection and expelled the Pope.

65. And now Frederick set sail of his own accord on his crusading expedition. On reaching the Holy Land he was received with joy by the knights and pilgrims, but the clergy held aloof from him as under the ban of the Church. He negotiated privately with the Sultan of Egypt. The Christian camp was thronged with Saracens. The emperor wore a Saracen dress. In his privacy he did not hesitate to say, "I came not here to deliver the Holy City, but to maintain my estimation among the Franks." To the Sultan he appealed: "Out of your goodness surrender to me Jerusalem as it is, that I may be able to lift up my head among the kings of Christendom." Accordingly, the city was surrendered to him. The Pope repudiated the transaction.

66. While the emperor proclaimed his successes to Europe, the pope denounced them. Frederick crowned himself at Jerusalem, being unable to find any ecclesiastic who dared to perform the ceremony, and departed from the Holy Land. He prepared to enter on his conflict with