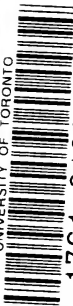


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THE KNIGHTS OF MALTA VOL. I.



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THE
ACHIEVEMENTS
OF
THE KNIGHTS OF MALTA.

By ALEXANDER SUTHERLAND, Esq.

AUTHOR OF "TALES OF A PILGRIM," &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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TO
HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY
NICHOLAS,
EMPEROR AND AUTOCRAT OF ALL THE RUSSIAS,
UNDER WHOSE IMMEDIATE PREDECESSORS
THE KNIGHTS OF MALTA
FOUND REFUGE,
WHEN ALL THE OTHER MONARCHS OF CHRISTENDOM
DENIED THEM AN ASYLUM, AND UNDER
WHOSE IMPERIAL PROTECTION
THE BANNER OF
THAT ANCIENT AND ILLUSTRIOUS ORDER
IS STILL UNFURLED,
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PREFACE.

THOUGH the days of chivalry are gone, the author of the following work trusts that the admiration of martial renown is still sufficiently general to secure some degree of favour for a history of the achievements of one of the most illustrious institutions that originated in knightly daring and pious zeal. Scarcely thirty years have elapsed, since foreign violence and political craft, combined with their own degeneracy, deprived the Knights of Malta of their independence, and ejected them from the insular fastness which remains to this day, and will remain, to the latest posterity, a monument of their military skill; yet, in that short space of time, so completely has their name been blotted from the records of the day, that their very place of retreat has become, generally speaking, a matter of uncertainty. When it is considered, that, for seven centuries, these military friars were regarded as one of the

chief bulwarks of Christendom against the progress of the Mohammedan arms, and that their annals embrace a series of chivalrous exploits, unparalleled in the history of any other sovereignty, there is surely room for hope, that an attempt to revive the memory of their institution will not prove altogether unacceptable.

As the Order of the Knights-Hospitalers of Saint John of Jerusalem—for such was the original title of the Institution, though better known, in modern times, as the Order of Rhodes and Malta—was cradled and fostered by the crusades, it was indispensable that the following narrative should embrace a regular detail of these memorable expeditions. But as several able and comprehensive works on the Crusades have lately been offered to the public, particularly those of Mills and Stebbing, the author conceived it incumbent on him to treat that part of his subject very briefly, and to devote the greater portion of his book to the subsequent vicissitudes of the Order.

In offering to the Public an historical sketch of the achievements of the soldier-monks of Saint John, it is almost needless to say, that the voluminous annals of the Order,

compiled by the Abbé Vertot, and the materials furnished, in later times, by the Chevalier Boisgelin, are the standard authorities upon which it is framed. The former having fallen into occasional inaccuracies in point of dates, and being at the same time more fervent in his style than historical composition strictly warrants, is generally regarded as more amusing than correct; and such is the character which Gibbon, who has, notwithstanding, drawn largely on him, gives his history. It is, moreover, on record against him, that, after he had sent his book to press, he was offered some additional information regarding the great siege of Malta; but declined it, with a churlish remark, that *his* siege was finished. But Boisgelin, who had access to the archives of the Order, while he corrects Vertot on many points, bears testimony to the general veracity of his work, and attributes his refusal of the proffered information to the knowledge, that it comprised nothing more than unauthenticated anecdotes of particular knights whom their families were anxious to immortalize. Vertot brings down the history of the Order only to the beginning of last century; while Boisgelin, passing over the Crusades, and the

residence of the Knights in Rhodes, confines himself solely to their sojourn in Malta. Thus, neither of these, the only popular histories of the Order extant, are complete; and the present is the first attempt to arrange in a regular narration the exploits of the Knights, from their institution, in 1099, to their political extinction in 1800. In addition to the two authors above named, many other works of high authority, and, among them, those of Knolles, Fuller, Hakluyt, Gibbon, Savary, Pococke, Froissart, Brydone, Mills, Hallam, and Sonnini, have been carefully consulted.

The author has only to add, that he did not take up the pen till after much laborious study; and that he was stimulated to his task by a sincere admiration of the many noble and heroic actions which it was his duty to record—an admiration which has perhaps occasionally given his language too ambitious a tone. All that he desires is, that his attempt to unite the broken links of a very brilliant and extraordinary chain of historical facts may be tolerated, until some abler hand shall effect their perfect and indestructible union.

THE
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CHAPTER I.

Decline of the Roman Power—Mohammed and his Successors—Foundation of the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem—The Turkomans—Peter the Hermit—The First Crusade—Conquest of Nice and Antioch—Conquest of Jerusalem—Ferocity of the Conquerors—Godfrey of Bouillon elected King.

THE viscissitudes which prognosticated the fall of the Byzantine Cæsars, rank among the most impressive and affecting lessons which the annals of mankind embrace. Rome had remained for centuries the mistress of the world; her eagles, everywhere victorious, had been interrupted in their flight only by the sands of Mauritania, the Steppes of Tartary, and the waves of the Deucalionian Sea; and it was only when she had nothing more to conquer that her vigour began to decline. The division of the Empire by the effeminate sons of the great Theodosius, the last ruler of the whole Roman world, was a fatal

blow to its strength. For a short space longer the western portion continued to present a crumbling barrier to the advance of the barbarians of central Germany; but at last the formidable Alaric, at the head of a whole nation, burst over the frontier, and dashed into fragments the structure of a thousand years, (A. D. 409.) Sixty-seven years afterwards, the spectre of imperial dignity which that warlike Goth permitted to remain undethroned, vanished before the fierce Odoacer and his hyperborean bands; and the last Emperor of the West voluntarily became the captive of the Herulian leader, and laid down his crown at his feet.

The Eastern empire, though equally cursed with a succession of slothful and feeble-minded princes, continued to hold together for several centuries, supported rather by the memory of its departed greatness, than by actual strength. A latent vigour indeed lingered at the core; but the extremities were paralyzed, and ready to drop away. Idle pageants and voluptuous enjoyments emasculated the imperial despots, who left their power to be usurped by venal parasites, and their frontiers to be defended by hireling swords. Those famous Cæsars, the kings of the world, were no longer to be found under the imperial purple. Their degenerate representatives retained nothing of their majesty or their valour, save the diadem that crowned them; and, like luxurious dastards, sought to hide, under the vain trappings of imperial pride, their pusillanimous debasement. The triumphs of Belisarius, the famous general of Justinian, cast a transient radiance over that Emperor's reign; but, though he partly restored Italy to the Roman dominion, and brought its Gotho-German king in chains to the foot of the Byzantine throne, that country was shortly

afterwards overwhelmed by the tide of Lombard invasion, and for ever separated from the imperial sway. Rome itself, indeed, and part of the eastern coast, were exempted from subjugation ; but even there the imperial authority gradually declined, and the papal power rose on its ruins.

At the beginning of the seventh century, the Euphrates was still the Asiatic boundary of the Eastern empire, which stretched southward as far as the Arabian sands. But every province was ripe for insurrection ; and when Heraclius succeeded to the diadem, he found the Persians masters of Syria and Palestine. Heraclius was one of the few princes who, in the latter days of Roman glory, proved himself worthy of the crown he wore ; and, after surmounting many dangers, he had the triumph of partially reviving the splendour of the empire, by carrying off the victor's wreath in a series of sanguinary campaigns. Under this heroic emperor, the Roman eagles were unfurled beyond the Tigris, and partially subjugated the Assyrian plains. It was at this juncture, when the Roman and the Persian were competing in mortal strife, that the wilds of Arabia sent forth one of those ambitious and restless men, whom Providence seems to have specially appointed to scourge nations and humble kings, and whose successors not only wrested the richest of the Asiatic provinces from the Roman dominion, but ultimately buried that empire in its own ruins.

That man was Mohammed, the most crafty and most successful impostor that ever assailed the faith of Christ. He was born about the end of the sixth century, at Mecca, in Stony Arabia, and as a Koreishite, descended from Kedar the son of Ishmael, was esteemed to be of the progeny of Abraham. His

parents, who were idolators in common with all their tribe, left him an orphan at an early age, and he rose to manhood under the protection of Aboo Taleeb his uncle, who instructed him in the rude principles of commerce, as then carried on in the East. Afterwards he entered the service of a rich widow named Khadijah, who first made him her factor, and then bestowed on him her hand and her whole wealth. His marriage with Khadijah, stimulating an inordinately ambitious and subtle mind, gave birth to that gigantic scheme of imposture which subsequently spread bloodshed and error over the East. Arabia was at that time peopled by tribes professing a great diversity of creeds. Idolators, Jews, Christians, and Schismatics, dwelt in promiscuous community; and the acute mind of Mohammed quickly perceived how easily a new religion might be introduced. Hitherto he had led a voluptuous yet not disreputable life; but, all at once, he affected to become a strict penitent, and retired to a cave in Mount Hira, a hill near Mecca, where, under the guise of great austerity, he revolved and perfected the gigantic project with which his brain was pregnant. Having brought it to maturity, he affected to make a confidant of his wife, by declaring to her, that, through the ministrations of the angel Gabriel, he had been favoured with special revelations from heaven. Fits of entrancement, to which he affected to be subject, were described by him as divine extacies, arising from the presence of the celestial messenger, and were regarded by his credulous wife as incontrovertible proofs of the truth of his affirmations. Khadijah was enjoined to secrecy; but he relied on her natural vanity betraying her into disclosures which would noise his fame far and wide. As he anticipated, in the pride of her heart, she

made confidants of several of her particular friends. It of course became currently reported that Mohammed was a prophet, and in a little time the whole city resounded with his fame.

Nature, if we may credit the Arabian historians, had moulded Mohammed for a supreme station. His port was noble—his countenance serene and modest—his wit docile and ready—his manner courteous—his conversation complaisant and sweet. He was, moreover, liberal to profusion, endowed with keen discernment, and possessed of the kingly faculty of placing men in the situations for which their talents exactly suited them. Consummate craft—impenetrable reserve—and invincible constancy and courage—were also among his qualifications. No sooner did he find himself surrounded by a few sincere disciples, than he openly proclaimed the divinity of his mission; and his prelections, clothed in the richest Oriental imagery, and redundant with allegorical illustrations, secured him at the very outset a high degree of popular admiration. Regulating his imposture by the prevalent diversity of creeds, he was careful that every man should find in his doctrines the shadow of his own faith. A Persian Jew and a Nestorian monk, both apostates, but profoundly skilled in their respective religions, assisted him to ingraft on it portions of the Mosaic and Christian laws.

The civic authorities of Mecca at length became alarmed at the success of this extraordinary imposition. Aboo Taleeb died; and Mohammed was proscribed, by his successor in the magistracy, as a blasphemer and disturber of the public peace, and had to seek an asylum in the city of Yatrib; on which he afterwards, as a token of gratitude, bestowed the name of Medina-al-nabi, or the City of the Prophet.

This flight is the memorable Hejira of Mohammed—an chronology ; and the first year of the Moslem era corresponds with the twenty-second year of the seventh century, (A. D. 622.)

His proscription by the magistrates of Mecca, convinced the false prophet that eloquence alone would never disseminate his doctrines with the rapidity which he contemplated ; and he finally resolved that the sword should aid their propagation. He informed his disciples that his ministering angel had brought him a scimitar from heaven, with injunctions to employ it for the subjugation of his enemies, and that, in obedience to this divine message, he was prepared to draw it boldly with a persecutor's hand. No resolution could have been in stricter unison with the peculiar spirit which distinguished the Arabian tribes. Addicted to predatory warfare, they flocked to his standard in thousands ; and, from the insignificant leader of a horde of desert-robbers, who at first trembled to attack a defenceless caravan, he gradually acquired the fame and dignity of a powerful military chief. Mecca was one of the first places that confessed the supremacy of his arms ; and in the course of time, he made himself master of all the principal cities and strongholds of Arabia.

These conquests were not achieved without the co-operation of several lieutenants—all of them men of talents and bravery. These were, Abubeker, his father-in-law ; Ali, his cousin and son-in-law ; and Omar and Othman—all of whom had been among his first converts ; and were fanatically devoted to his creed. In the space of three-and-twenty years—some historians say ten—all Arabia submitted to his yoke, and recognised the divinity of his law.

It was the implied wish of Mohammed that Ali,

the husband of his daughter Fatima, should succeed him as Commander of the Faithful; "but Ali soon found," says the chronicler, * "that the last wishes of even the most absolute princes are generally buried in their graves." Omar and Othman gave their suffrage in favour of Abubeker, the father of Ayesha, Mohammed's favourite wife, who was an older man than Ali; and, through their influence, he was advanced to the Kalifate—an election which afterwards gave rise to violent schisms and sanguinary wars among the followers of the prophet. Actuated by a fanatical zeal, and quenchless thirst for blood, the successors of the arch-impostor—who assumed the title of Kalifs, or Vicars of the Prophet—made their conquests and the creed of which they gloried in being the propagators, keep pace together. Arabia subjugated, they invaded Palestine and Syria, took Jerusalem, Damascus, and Antioch, subdued Egypt, subverted the Persian monarchy, and extended their dominion over Media, Mesopotamia, and Khorassan. Even the terrors of the Lybian desert were defied by these restless warriors. The whole of northern Africa acknowledged the invincibility of their arms; and the islands of Cyprus, Rhodes, Candia, Sicily, and Malta, were either partially desolated by their descents, or reduced to permanent bondage. In the beginning of the eighth century, they carried their banner and their creed beyond the Pillars of Hercules, and founded a new empire on the ruins of the Gothic monarchy of Spain; and, but for the valour of Charles Martel, the Pyrenees themselves would have presented but a feeble barrier to their domination. Happily for the Christian world—the whole of which was

* Vertot. Hist. des Chev. de Saint Jean de Jerusalem.

threatened with their chains—the bond of union which rendered these barbarians so formidable was of short endurance. The supreme authority became a fertile subject of contest; and the intestine struggles that followed, left them neither leisure nor power to prosecute distant wars. Each chief assumed a regal title in his own province; and at various times the Moslem world was cursed with no less than five Kalifs, all pretending to be the legitimate successors of the prophet, and the veracious interpreters of his creed.

The conquest of Jerusalem by these barbarians filled Christendom with lamentation and dismay. For nearly three centuries, the Cross, protected by the Christian emperors of Byzantium, had remained firmly planted on its towers, and the worshippers of the Redeemer knelt in consecrated temples built on the ruins of heathen shrines. From the time of Constantine the Great, both the Greek and Latin Christians had made Jerusalem their favourite place of pilgrimage, and emulated each other in a devout anxiety to obtain remission of their sins at their Saviour's tomb. Prior to the capture of the Holy City by the Mohammedans, the access to it had been comparatively easy; but the Infidels, though they professed to reverence Christ as a prophet, scrupled not to impose a tribute on the votaries who flocked to his sepulchre; while the constant struggles between the Kalifs of Bagdad and Egypt for the sovereignty of Judea, rendered the pilgrimage intimidating and dangerous. Christian zeal, however, was rather fanned than smothered by oppression and peril. A superstitious belief prevailed throughout Christendom, in the tenth century, that the reign of Antichrist was at hand, and the archangel about to

sound his terrible trumpet ; and, notwithstanding the cruel thrall to which the Holy City was subjected, crowds of palmers continued to visit it from the remotest countries of the West. These pilgrims carried each a staff and leathern scrip ; and when they set out on their distant and toilsome journey, their friends and kindred hallowed their departure with benedictions and tears. It was not unusual for them to carry back to their homes some of the dust of Palestine ; and the sacred palm-bough with which each provided himself at Jerusalem, and from which the title " palmer " was derived, was suspended over the altar of his parish-church as a pious and honourable trophy. Several Kalifs granted their special protection to the pilgrims, and ensured them accommodation within the walls ; but in the lapse of years, these privileges came to be abrogated or forgotten ; and a violent doctrinal dispute having divided the Greek and Latin Christians, and rendered them almost as obnoxious in each other's eyes as were the unbelievers, the devotees from Western Europe came to find it exceedingly difficult to procure shelter. At length, in the middle of the eleventh century (1050), some Italian merchants, natives of Amalfi, a rich commercial city in the kingdom of Naples, who had experienced the inhumanity of both Greeks and Arabians, undertook to provide an asylum for the Latin pilgrims. Commerce carried them frequently to Egypt, where, by means of presents, they obtained access to the Kalif Monstaser-billah, and won him to consent to the erection of a Latin church within the Holy City. A chapel was accordingly built near the holy sepulchre, and dedicated to the Virgin, under the title of Saint Mary ad Latinos ; and at the same time two hospitals, or houses

of reception for pilgrims of both sexes, were erected in the same quarter, and placed under the protection of Saint John the Almoner* and Saint Mary Magdalen. Several pious pilgrims, abandoning the idea of returning to their native country, devoted themselves in these establishments to the service of the destitute and sickly wanderers who were continually arriving from the West. The expenses of the Hospitals were defrayed chiefly by alms annually collected in Italy by the benevolent founders; and all Latin pilgrims were sheltered and relieved, without distinction of nation or condition. Those whom robbers had plundered were reclothed; those whom disease had debilitated were tended with skill and tenderness; and those who died were buried with Christian rites. The Hospital of the Almoner was the cradle of the illustrious confraternity whose achievements we are about to indite, and who, as Knights of Saint John, of Rhodes, and of Malta, continued to be, for seven centuries, the sword and buckler of Christendom in Paynim war.

The Latins had enjoyed the security and comfort of this humane institution scarcely seventeen years, when a new enemy burst into Palestine. The Turkomans—a powerful barbarian nation, originally from

* This Saint John was neither the Evangelist nor the Baptist, but a certain Cypriot, surnamed the Charitable, who had been Patriarch of Alexandria.—*Hallam's Middle Ages*, vol. i. p. 54. In the seventh century, when Jerusalem first fell into the hands of the Saracens, he sent money and provisions to the afflicted Christians, and supplied such as fled into Egypt.—*Butler's Lives of the Saints*, vol. i. p. 274, ed. 1812. Subsequently, when the order became military, the knights renounced the patronage of the Almoner, and placed themselves under the more august tutelage of Saint John the Baptist.—*Mill's Hist. of the Crusades*, v. i. p. 347.

the wild regions beyond the Caspian, after having made themselves masters of all the countries bordering on the Euphrates, suddenly extended their conquests towards the west. In the course of their sojourn in Persia and Mesopotamia, several of these fierce tribes had become proselytes to the Mohammedan faith. Three renowned chiefs led them to victory, all of whom were descended from Seljook, a famous warrior, whose name the whole race gloried in as a national boast. The most distinguished of these leaders was Togrul-beg, who, in 1055, made himself master of Bagdad, and overturned the throne of the Arabian Kalifs. He was a brave and noble-hearted barbarian, who adored valour in battle as the first of virtues; and his nation, accordingly, revered him as a hero. His cousin, Jafaar-beg, was chief of the second branch, and subjugated the countries adjacent to the Persian Sea; while Cultimissis, another kinsman, who might be said to command the vanguard of these irresistible hordes, ravaged nearly the whole of Anatolia, and chose the city of Iconium for his capital. Togrul died without issue, about the year 1063; but Alp Arslan, his nephew and successor, inherited his valour, and not only gained a signal victory over the Greeks on their Asiatic frontier, but took their emperor, Romanus Diogenes, captive. Malek Shah, the son of Alp Arslan, was the most puissant prince of the Seljookian race; and it was his lieutenants who, in 1065, chased the Saracens out of Jerusalem, and massacred the Egyptian garrison. The barbarities inflicted on the inhabitants of the Holy City were too terrible to be told. Many were put to the sword—the hospital of Saint John was despoiled—and even the Holy Sepulchre itself would have been subjected to the foulest sacrilege,

had not avarice suggested its preservation. The conquerors augmented the tribute exacted from the Christian pilgrims, and many, unable to discharge it, perished at the very gates, without the solace of having seen the hallowed crypt which they had journeyed so far to behold. Those who had the fortune to survive the perils of the pilgrimage, carried back to Europe lamentable reports of the cruelties and oppressions to which Christians were exposed, and of the pollution which had fallen on the places sanctified by the acts and death of Christ. In the course of a few years, these pious incendiaries kindled a flame throughout Europe, which oceans of blood, spilt in the course of several centuries of ferocious warfare, could scarcely extinguish. At the name of Palestine, every Christian warrior grasped his lance; and a chief of renown alone was wanted to lead the braver half of Christendom to its redemption.

At length, Peter, a poor ascetic, surnamed the Hermit, who had emaciated his body, and inflamed his fancy by abstinence and austere seclusion, applied himself to accomplish an enterprise, which the most puissant princes dared not undertake. This enthusiast, who was a Frenchman by birth, had personally experienced the indignities which the unbelievers delighted to inflict on the wayworn Christians who thronged to the Holy City; and, fortified by recommendatory letters from Simeon, the Greek Patriarch of Jerusalem, a prelate of honourable reputation, and Gerard, rector of the Hospital of Saint John, * he threw himself at the feet of Pope Urban the Second, who then occupied the Papal chair, and adjured him to rouse the Princes of the West to the

* Knolles' Hist. of the Turks, vol. i. p. 9.

deliverance of the heritage of Christ. The humane and genuinely pious heart of Urban was greatly troubled by the Hermit's moving narration; but policy forbade him giving a positive pledge that he would encourage a project of such magnitude, until he had ascertained the sentiments of the various potentates, whose co-operation was indispensable towards forming an effective league. Nevertheless, he greatly commended the suppliant's zeal, and exhorted him in the meanwhile to traverse Christendom as his apostle, and endeavour to stir up the Princes of the West to vengeance. Fortified by this injunction, and steadfastly devoted to his purpose, the holy man, or "accomplished fanatic," as an eminent historian* has denominated him, departed on his mission, and Europe soon resounded with his pious clamour.

In less than a year, the orations of the Hermit, who excelled in stimulating the enthusiasm of the times, were crowned with signal success. He was, says a popular historian, † "a little low hard-favoured fellow, and therefore, in show, more to be contemned than feared; yet, under such simple and homely feature lay unregarded a most subtil, sharp, and piercing wit, fraught with discretion and sound judgment, still applying to some use what he had in his long and painful travel most curiously observed." The oppressions and profanations that were his theme—his long uncouth beard—his naked feet—his extreme abstinence—and his austere and holy life, won for him the reverence of a saint, and the fame of a prophet; and prince and peasant alike burned with pious impatience to hasten to the East, and deliver Palestine from the unbelieving race. In the interim, the

* Gibbon.

† Knolles.

Pope had been encouraged by Bohemond, Prince of Tarentum, to direct the martial energies of Europe, in accordance with the Hermit's prayer; and on learning the effect of his prelections, he openly avowed his resolution to espouse the crusade. For this purpose, he decreed the assembly of two grand councils—the one at Placentia in Italy, the other at Clermont in Auvergne. He honoured both of these august meetings with his presence, and personally exhorted the enthusiastic multitudes who composed them, to join in a league for the expulsion of the Infidels from the country of Christ. At Clermont, where the whole chivalry of France were congregated, the assembly answered his pathetic and forcible address, by shouting, "God wills it! God wills it!"* words which were afterwards used by the crusaders as a battle-cry on many a hard contested-field.

The ecclesiastics, who assisted at these councils, returned to their dioceses inflamed with the theme which the head of the church had thus publicly recommended; and, at their call, men of every degree hastened to enrol themselves under the banner of the Cross. "There was no nation so remote," says William of Malmsbury, in coarse but forcible language, "no people so retired, as did not respond to the Papal wishes. The Welshman left his hunting—the Scot his fellowship with vermin—the Dane his drinking party—the Norwegian his raw fish."—"Neither, surely," adds another historian, † "did the Irishmens' feet stick in their bogs, though we find no particular mention of their achievements." All were more or less actuated by a generous and noble im-

* "Deus vult! Deus vult!" Robertus Monachus.

† Fuller, Hist. of the Holy War, B. i. c. 13.

pulse; yet it would be arrogating too much to humanity, to assume that the baser passions had not also extensive sway. While some, in the fervour of their zeal, cut the holy sign of the cross on the flesh itself, * others cherished hopes of winning princely possessions in the rich countries of Asia, and rioting, like voluptuaries, in the exhaustless pleasures of the East. Some, again, were ashamed to remain at home, like dastards, while their brethren were in arms for Paynim war; and some donned the hauberk and grasped the lance, merely because they could not sit listless in their own halls, while all the rest of the world was in motion.

So gigantic an expedition could not take the field with a rational prospect of success, without ample preparation; and the arrangements of the warriors, who were to lead the crusade, appearing too dilatory to the inconsiderate multitudes whom the Hermit had fired with a fanatical eagerness to depart, sixty thousand persons, chiefly men of low estate, plunged, with the missionary at their head, into the wild and desolate countries bordering on the Lower Danube. The majority had sold their lands, and even their instruments of handicraft and husbandry, and provided themselves with arms—the only property esteemed valuable. Husbands deserted their wives, and the wives gloried in being so deserted;—sons turned their backs on their widowed mothers, and the mothers blessed them as the beloved of God as they departed. Those persons, whom circumstances not to be controlled prevented from engaging in the crusade, bewailed their destiny as signally untoward and disastrous. In many instances, the poor hind shod

* Du Cange. Note on the Alexiad.

his oxen like horses, and, placing his whole family in a waggon, journied in contented ignorance towards the Holy City, which his children fancied they descried in every town or fortress that rose before them. Had not a few bodies of regular troops, commanded by chiefs of renown, watched over the safety of this mighty rabble, it would have been scattered at the very outset.

Under the guidance of the Hermit, and his lieutenant, Walter Sensavier, surnamed the Moneyless, a brave and nobly born, but needy soldier, about a third part of these devoted men, whose steps were closely tracked by other herds, not a whit better prepared to cope with the barbarian chivalry against whom they were so eager to dash themselves, reached Constantinople. Rapine, prostitution, and intemperance, had marked their march; and the morasses and forests of Hungary and Bulgaria were whitened with the bones of those whom the enraged natives immolated at the shrine of vengeance. Alexius, the Greek Emperor, though forewarned of their disorderly inroad, received them with an appearance of friendly courtesy; but the depredations, which they scrupled not to commit in the vicinage of his capital, impelled him to expedite their passage into Asia by a series of fallacious representations. A convenient station was assigned them on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus, where the Hermit, disgusted by their atrocities, abandoned them. For a time, Walter, his lieutenant, who, though a poor man, wanted neither the courage nor the experience of a soldier, endeavoured to restore subordination, and restrain their impetuosity; but his efforts proved of no avail. Deceived by a report, which Soliman, the Turkish Sultan of Nice, had propagated, that their vanguard

were rioting in the spoils of that city, they rushed down, an undisciplined rabble, into the plain before it, and were instantly assailed and hemmed in by an Infidel army. Walter, their leader, fell gallantly fighting in their front; and they were slain, almost to a man, by the Turkish arrows.

It was well for the cause of the Cross, that this miserable multitude did not procrastinate their departure until the movement of the disciplined feudatories, whom the Western Princes stood engaged to furnish. Had so fanatical and disorderly a host hung on the skirts of the grand army, its progress would, in all probability, have had an equally disastrous termination. None of the great sovereigns of Europe embarked personally in the first crusade. The most illustrious leaders were, Godfrey of Bouillon, an accomplished knight, lineally descended from Charlemagne, who had already won a proud name in battle; his brothers Eustace and Baldwin; Baldwin du Bourg, their cousin; Hugh Count of Vermandois, brother of Philip King of France; Robert Duke of Normandy, brother of William Rufus, King of England; Raymond Count of St Giles and Toulouse, a veteran soldier, who had torn many trophies from the Saracen chivalry of Spain; Robert Count of Flanders, whom the crusaders surnamed their Sword and Lance; and Stephen Count of Chartres and Blois, a potent French baron, famed alike for his eloquence and wealth. The formidable Bohemond, Lord of Tarentum in Calabria, son of Robert Guiscard, the first Norman Duke of Apulia; * Tancred, nephew of Bo-

* This Robert Guiscard, was a Norman gentleman, who made a trade of war, and at the head of fifteen knights of his own country, established himself in Magna Grecia, and by arms and

hemond, the most accomplished knight of the age; and the Counts Ranulf and Richard, his cousins, also joined their forces to the Christian host. So transported was Bohemond, who from the first had strenuously advocated the war, to hear that Christendom was in arms, that, in presence of a confederate army then besieging Amalfi, he tore his war-cloak into crosses for himself and his principal officers, and departed for Constantinople at the head of ten thousand men. †

It was in the neighbourhood of Constantinople that the various divisions of the Christian army united. Godfrey of Bouillon directed his march through Hungary and Bulgaria, where he was exposed to constant annoyance and danger, from the fierce and warlike tribes whose wrath the followers of the Hermit had so inopportunately kindled. Raymond of Toulouse, passed through Dalmatia and Sclavonia, a rugged and perilous route; and the other leaders proceeded to the Hellespont by sea, in Venetian, Genoese, and Pisan vessels. The Greek Emperor, Alexius Comnenus, had made a forcible appeal to the Latin princes for succour against the Infidel, at the grand convocation at Placentia; but the flagitious outrages of the Hermit's disciples had destroyed his confidence in Frankish aid; and it was with secret dismay, rather than joy, that he beheld this resistless torrent of French, English, German, and Italian warriors, roll

address became, about the year 1058, master of all the country which forms the present kingdom of Naples.

† Among the leaders of less renown who engaged in this crusade, was Guelpho, the fifth Duke of Upper and Lower Bavaria, one of the progenitors of the illustrious family which at this day enjoys the British throne. He died at Paphos, in Cyprus, on his return from the Holy Land, in 1101.—*Burke's Peerage.*

from the westward on his startled capital. Suspicious that they might be tempted to disposses him of his crown, and actuated by that insidious and crooked policy, which almost all the emperors of the East were so prone to mistake for sagacity, he made the Duke de Vermandois a prisoner; and, though Godfrey no sooner descended into the plains of Thrace than his colleague was set at liberty, this breach of faith, combined with many other ambiguous proceedings, engendered a bitter enmity between the crusaders and their entertainers. So implacable were these differences, that Alexius is charged with having formed a horrible plot to destroy the whole Christian army; and certain it is, that a sharp conflict, originating from an apprehension of that nature entertained by Godfrey, took place at the gates of Constantinople. Instructed by this event, that it was perilous to incense the western strangers, the Emperor renewed his engagements to support them, and they passed the winter in the neighbourhood of his capital. In this slothful interval, the Greek monarch won so far upon the Christian chiefs as to obtain from all of them—even from the single-hearted Godfrey—an oath of fidelity, and a solemn but early-violated pledge, that those countries which they reconquered from the Paynim foe, should be held by them as vassals of his empire. Gifts and flattery, and promises never fulfilled, of succours of men, arms and provisions, achieved this victory over Latin pride; and Alexius was recognised as their liege lord, in a public assembly characterized by all the pomp and splendour of the Byzantine court. One sturdy Frank alone protested against the degeneracy of his companions. Robert of Paris, seeing Alexius sit mute and immoveable on his throne while the Latin warriors

knelt before him, boldly ascended the steps, and, placing himself by his side, remarked, that he alone, a simple rustic, had the hardihood to seat himself in presence of the churl who disdained to rise, though so many valiant captains were standing round him. Alexius, when informed by his interpreter of the meaning of the baron's words, perplexed by his audacity, asked of him his name and birthplace. "I am a Frenchman," answered Robert, "of the purest and most ancient nobility of my country; and further, near the place where I reside, there is a spot contiguous to my church, to which all persons resort who are desirous to signalize themselves in feats of arms. Till an enemy appears, they address God before the altar. In that church I have often waited, but never yet found an antagonist who would accept my defiance." Alexius turned off this insult with a cold sneer, that the time had now arrived when he would no longer search for an enemy in vain. This bold Frank was afterwards slain at Dorylæum, fighting gallantly in the van of battle.

With the arrival of spring, the Emperor renewed his plots to rid himself of the troublesome visitors, who lingered like a locust swarm in the neighbourhood of his capital; and at length the crusaders broke up their encampment, and passed the Bosphorus, into the pleasant and fertile plains of Asia. So anxious was Alexius to prevent the possibility of their return; that he interdicted the barks which carried them across from bringing any of them back again; and by the feast of Pentecost, not a crusader remained on the European strand.

The Latins being thus fairly flung into Asia, marshalled themselves gallantly for the conflicts that awaited them; and, quitting their first station in the

environs of Nicomedia, passed in successive divisions the frontier of the Greek empire. A more glorious army the sun never beheld.* The knights and their martial attendants alone, amounted to a hundred thousand fighting men, and the pilgrims able to bear arms, to about six hundred thousand.† The Princess Anna Comnena, the historian of her father's reign, compares the myriads that pressed forward to the war to the sands of the sea and the stars of heaven.‡ The knights and their squires were mounted on richly caparisoned horses, and completely sheathed in gleaming steel. The former were further armed with an iron mace, a long lance, and a sword and buckler; and each independent chieftain was known by his banner, his armorial bearings, and his cry of battle. In these equestrian cohorts lay the pride and strength of the army. The infantry, whose principal weapon was the bow, were a plebeian rabble, who, though accustomed to fight bravely under the eyes of their liege lords, were contemned by them and their special attendants, as peasant or burgher churls, who had no claim to the honourable name of soldier, and could rarely or never aspire to the sword and spurs of a true knight.

The first operation of this mighty army was to invest Nice, one of the chief cities of the Turkish kingdom of Roum, which extended from the Hellespont to the frontiers of Syria. Soliman, or Kilidge-Arslan, the king of this extensive territory, a prince of the Seljookian race, had thrown a numerous garrison into the city, which was strongly fortified; and the ardour of the crusaders was subdued before a dart had been hurled against it, by the spectacle of a pyramid, form-

* Fuller, c. 16. p. 24. † Gibbon, vol. ii. p. 53. ‡ Alexias.

ed of the bones of the Hermit's fanatical host. The Turkomans maintained the fortress with great bravery ; but after a siege of seven weeks it surrendered, and, pursuant to treaty, was delivered up to the Greeks. This victory, far from removing the fears of the Emperor, only increased his dread of the formidable army which had achieved it. He viewed it as the commencement of a series of conquests which threatened to end in the subjugation of all Asia ; and several historians have not scrupled to assert, that a desire to interrupt the crusaders' triumphs, subsequently induced him to become a traitor to the Christian cause.

The storm of Christian steel rolled onward. The whole chivalry of western Europe had armed for the crusade ; and, on the other hand, all the warlike tribes of Asia rose up to repel the invasion. The Sultans of Antioch, Aleppo, Bagdad, and Persia, levied vast armies to support their brother of Iconium ; but the Latin princes, contemning the barbarian myriads who were gathering in their front, marched boldly forward. At Dorylæum, in Phrygia, after a sanguinary combat, in which four thousand Christians were slain by the long Tartar bow and javelin, and three thousand Paynim captains fell under the Latin broadsword, crossbow and lance, the camp of Soliman was taken, and his army completely disbanded. This victory, which was gained chiefly by the impetuous valour of Bohemond of Tarentum, was followed by the conquest of most of the towns of Anatolia ; and, surmounting the precipices of Mount Taurus, the croises at length, after many hundred miles of toilsome and perilous marching, descended into the Syrian plains. Tarsus had previously opened its gates before the banners of Tancred

the cousin of Bohemond, and Baldwin the brother of the Count of Bouillon. Baldwin afterwards withdrew from the army with his adherents, on a selfish expedition beyond the Euphrates; and by craft, rather than valour, secured to himself the principality of Edessa in Mesopotamia.

The summer and autumn had been spent in traversing the wilds of Lesser Asia, and it was the beginning of winter before the Christian army drew its leaguer round Antioch, the once magnificent capital of Syria, and still even at that date one of the mightiest cities of the East. It was compassed by a double wall strengthened by several hundred towers, and garrisoned by upwards of twenty thousand troops commanded by Baghisian, a veteran chief. The resistance it made was desperate; and during the siege the Christian army was so narrowly observed by several Turkish commanders, that the besiegers themselves were in a manner besieged. At the end of seven months the siege was on the point of being abandoned, when the artful and ambitious Bohemond contrived to subvert the fidelity of Phirouz, one of the principal inhabitants, who basely threw open a gate to him under the cloud of night. Bohemond, who had previously stipulated with the Christian chiefs, that the sovereignty of Antioch should be the reward of his services, entered the city at the head of his Calabrians, and was the first to plant his standard on the ramparts, (1098). A victory which he shortly afterwards contributed to achieve over the Sultan of Mosul, to the infinite relief of the Christian army, rendered the croisés a second time his debtors, and cleared the route to Jerusalem.

The privations to which the troops were subjected during this protracted siege, drove many recreants,

“divers of them men of great account,” homeward from the war, and, among others, the Counts Hugh of Vermandois, and Stephen of Chartres and Blois. But there still remained with the army a sufficient number of redoubted warriors to conduct the crusade in triumph to the gates of Jerusalem—though the exhausted and insubordinate state of the troops occasioned a delay of seven months in the Syrian capital. Pestilence and famine wasted the Christian ranks. In the course of a few months the former swept off above one hundred thousand men; and the latter reduced the miserable survivors to feed on offal and carrion, and even on human flesh. Discord too prevailed among the leaders to a frightful extent; and crimes of the most atrocious magnitude disgraced the sacred banner under which the army marched. Had not the chiefs and spiritual lords, who accompanied the crusade, resorted to pious frauds to keep the host together, the conquest of Antioch would, in all probability, have been its last triumph.

When the Christian princes first began to contemplate a crusade in Asia, the Holy City was in the hands of the Turks. But at that juncture, when prudence required the Seljookian princes to preserve the closest union, private ambition violated the fraternal bond; and the veterans, who had subjugated the half of the East, were sacrificed in intestine strife. Mostali, Khalif of Egypt, though driven more than once from Jerusalem, had never ceased to regard it as his inheritance; and, no sooner did he see the Turkomans weakened by fratricidal disputes, and on the point of being called to encounter a new and puissant foe, than he despatched Afdal his Vizier across the desert with a powerful body of troops; and not only the Holy City, but all Palestine, was once

more brought under the civil and ecclesiastical authority of the Fatimite dynasty.* The crusaders had left Europe prepared to find the Turks masters in Jerusalem; but on their arrival in Syria, ambassadors from Mostali undeceived them. The negotiations which subsequently took place varied with the fortune of the war. At one time Mostali admitted that he could not cope with his Tartarian antagonists without foreign succour; but this was ultimately followed by a declaration, that he was able and determined to maintain his sovereignty without Christian aid. He was willing to enter into a league with the crusaders for the utter expulsion of the Tartarian spoliators; but neither his politics nor his religion permitted him to accord them a permanent settlement in the land. The Christians, contemning what they held to be a breach of faith, and reckless whether their swords drank Turkish or Saracen blood, rejected the proposed treaty with disdain; and sent him for answer, that with the same keys with which they had opened the gates of Nice, Tarsus, Antioch and Edessa, they would open those of Jerusalem.

In the middle of May 1099, the relics of the Christian host quitted Antioch, and, advancing by easy marches between Mount Libanus and the sea, successively passed Tripoli, Sidon, Tyre, Acre, Cæsarea, and Jaffa.† The emirs of all these places, instigated by a dread of being ultimately reduced to capitulate, contributed largely to subsist the army; and abundant supplies were also furnished by squadrons of Genoese and Pisan vessels, which incessantly hovered on the coast. At Jaffa the army bade

* Renaudot. Hist. Patriarch. Alexandrin.

† Maundrell's Journey.

adieu to the sea, and by way of Ramla, at length arrived before the sacred towers which they had encountered so many dangers to redeem.

Jerusalem, the most ancient and most famous city of the world, is situated in a rugged and arid country; and the crusaders sought in vain, in its neighbourhood, for those signs of fertility, which they had been accustomed to consider as indicative of the "promised land." Towards the north it presented an apparently impregnable aspect; and on all sides it was strengthened by deep vallies and steep ascents. But, though encompassed by a defensible wall, it was no longer the proudly fortified city that had defied long and obstinately the warriors of Babylon and of Rome. It still possessed the advantage of a rugged, and, in some places, almost impregnable site; but the Saracen engineers had only imperfectly repaired the bulwarks; and the fated tribes, who had in former times so resolutely defended them, were no longer numbered among the inhabitants. From the days of the Emperor Adrian, the Jews, forlorn and scattered over the face of the earth, had been destitute of a country; and the descendants of the miserable remnant which escaped the persecuting zeal of that monarch, had small cause to reckon, whether the Christian or Saracen sword reaped the victory; for from neither party had they aught to anticipate but stripes and chains. At this epoch, the walls embraced the hills of Golgotha, Bezetha, Moria and Acra; but Mount Sion, one of the early seats of population, was no longer within their sweep. The city was garrisoned by forty thousand regular troops, under the command of Istakar, a favourite general of the Khalif; and twenty thousand Mohammedan inhabitants also took up arms. All the Christians within the

walls were thrown into prison, and, among the rest, Peter Gerard, the administrator of the Hospital of Saint John—a pious and benevolent Frenchman, who had long devoted himself to the service of the pilgrims, and whom the Moslems themselves revered for his indiscriminate benefactions. In consonance with the usages of war, the wells and cisterns in the environs were filled up, and the suburbs razed; while the timber which had been employed in the ruined houses was consumed by fire, in order to prevent it from being used by the invaders in the construction of military engines.

On the 7th of June 1099, the Christian army encamped before the city. Battle, desertion and disease, had frightfully thinned its ranks; and of the seven hundred thousand fighting men who had marshalled in the plains of Bithynia, there remained, exclusive of the garrisons left in the conquered cities, scarcely twenty-two thousand fit for the field. The pious zeal of the crusaders, however, had survived all the vicissitudes of their long and toilsome march. When they beheld the hallowed city from afar, the vanguard uttered a shout, which, rolling backward on the line of march, was echoed by the whole host.* The more devout manifested their rapture by kneeling down in the dust, and shedding tears of joy; and many bared their feet on approaching the sacred walls. The Counts of Flanders and Normandy pitched their tents to the northward of the city, near the church erected on the spot where Stephen the proto-martyr died. Godfrey and Tancred erected their standards on the first swell of Mount Calvary—and Raymond of Toulouse occupied a position to

* Knolles, vol. i. p. 15.

the south of Mount Sion. On the fifth day of the siege, the crusaders made a furious attack; and, amid a storm of arrows and fireballs, burst the first barrier, and strove to surmount the walls by escalade. The want of engines to batter them down, and ladders to scale them, rendered the assault abortive; and the croises were driven back with shame and slaughter to their camp. This defeat was followed by a grievous scarcity of provisions and water; and the excessive privations which this deficiency occasioned, overwhelmed the whole army with suffering and anguish. So extreme was the thirst of the soldiers, who vainly sought for water in the stony ravines that seamed the country, that they dug holes in the ground, and pressed the damp clods to their lips to moisten them. On the 15th of July, the army again advanced to the assault. Through the exertions of Godfrey and Raymond, some Genoese mariners from Jaffa constructed two huge moveable towers, of timber brought from Sichem, a place thirty miles distant,* and rolled them with immense labour to the foot of the fortifications. Drawbridges were made to extend from the top of these turrets to the battlement; and when the sun rose on the beleagured city, they were seen crowded with chosen warriors, eager to grapple hand to hand with the Moslem foe. Raymond's tower was burned to ashes by the fire which the besieged hurled against it; but the Count of Bouillon's fully answered the purpose for which it had been constructed. Armed as an archer, Godfrey posted himself on its summit, and for a considerable time his bowmen alone maintained the battle. "But at the hour," says the Chroni-

* The enchanted grove of Tasso.

cler,* “when the Saviour of the world gave up the ghost, a warrior named Letolde, who fought in Godfrey’s tower, leaped the first upon the ramparts. He was followed by Guicher—the Guicher who had vanquished a lion; † Godfrey was the third, and all the other knights rushed on after their chief. Throwing aside their bows and arrows, they now drew their swords; at sight of which the enemy abandoned the walls, and ran down into the city, whither the soldiers of Christ with loud shouts pursued them.” At three in afternoon, the standard of the Cross waved in triumph on the walls; and, after four hundred and sixty years of bondage, the Holy City passed from under the Mohammedan yoke.

The victory thus bravely won was tarnished by the ferocity of the conquerors. All who showed the smallest disposition to resist were hewn down; and, for three whole days, promiscuous massacre and pillage prevailed. Ten thousand miserable beings, who had been promised quarter, were barbarously put to the sword; and infants even were butchered in the cradle, and at their mother’s breast. In the court of the Mosque of Omar, a structure built on the site of the famous Temple of Solomon, to which thousands of fugitives fled as a sanctuary, the Latin knights rode fetlock-deep in Saracen gore. The whole city swam with blood; and the victors, sated at last with slaughter, looked themselves with horror on the desolation which their own inhuman fury had made.

When the work of death was over, the chief crusaders, in accordance with the devout zeal which

* The Monk Robert. Vide Chateaubriand’s Travels in Palestine.

† These warriors are designated “The Brothers Rudolph and Engelbert,” by other writers.

animated them, laid aside their arms, washed their bloody hands, and, barefooted and uncovered, repaired in solemn procession to the Redeemer's tomb. The fierce warriors who had so recently abandoned themselves to the most revolting atrocities, were seen kissing with pious fervour the memorials of the sufferings of Him who had been the messenger of peace to man; and the Holy Sepulchre resounded with their triumphant anthems and repentant groans. In the height of their enthusiasm, they fell at Peter the Hermit's feet, praising God as glorified in his servant. Their religious duties discharged, they proceeded to regulate the government of the conquered territory; and several leaders were named as worthy of the sovereignty. Raymond of Toulouse, and Robert of Normandy, had each their supporters; but the piety and valour of Godfrey of Bouillon procured him the general suffrage, as the worthiest champion of the Cross. He was conducted with solemn pomp to the church of the Holy Sepulchre, where a magnificent diadem was offered him; but he put it aside with the declaration, that where Christ had worn a crown of thorns, he would never wear a crown of gold. He also rejected the august title of King, and modestly contented himself with that of Defender and Lord of the Holy Tomb.

CHAPTER II.

The Hospitallers constituted a military body—Raymond Du Puis, Grandmaster—Wars in Antioch and Edessa—The Second Crusade—Siege of Ascalon—Battle of Sueta—Death of Raymond Du Puis.

THE Egyptian Khalif, unconscious of the capture of Jerusalem, had despatched a large army to its succour; but the crusaders routed this force on the edge of the desert that separates Palestine from Egypt—a victory which enabled the leaders afterwards to devote themselves exclusively to the consolidation of the infant state. In consonance with the established principles of feudal polity, the conquered territory was divided among the chief crusaders, who, betaking themselves to the towns, suffered the Moslem peasantry to remain in precarious vassalage in the open country. One of the first acts of Godfrey, who was signally devout, was to found several new churches; and he also made it his duty personally to inspect the house of the Hospitallers of Saint John, which he found crowded with wounded soldiers, who loudly extolled the humane attentions that had been bestowed on them. Several illustrious crusaders were so deeply affected by the example of the Hospitallers, that, in the pious fervour of their souls, they abandoned the idea of returning to their native land, and voluntarily devoted themselves to the same cha-

ritable duties. Among those who took the habit of the fraternity, were Raymond du Puis, and Dudon de Comps, gentlemen of Dauphiny—Gastus of Berdiz, and Canon de Montaigu of Auvergne. To contribute to the endowment of the Hospital, Godfrey bestowed on it the lordship of Montboire in Brabant, with all its dependencies. His example was followed by the principal chiefs of the crusade; and, in a short time, the Hospitallers had the revenues of a great number of rich manors, both in Europe and Asia, at their command.

Hitherto, the Hospital of Saint John had been merely a secular establishment; but Gerard, the rector, to whom the administration of these munificent benefactions was intrusted, impressed with the sanctity of the office which had devolved on him, and actuated, say his biographers, “by a desire of attaining greater perfection,” suggested, after the tranquillization of the city, that the brothers and sisters should become religious fraternities, and formally dedicate themselves at the altar, as the servants of the poor and of Christ. They accordingly formally abjured the world. The brotherhood assumed a regular habit, which was simply a black robe, having a white linen cross of eight points fastened on the left breast; and took upon themselves, at the same time, the customary monastic vows. The institution was subsequently recognised and confirmed in all its endowments by Pope Paschal the Second, as head of the Christian church. The same pontiff also exempted the property of the Hospital from tythes, and conferred on the brethren the special privilege of electing their superior, independent of all ecclesiastical or secular interposition.

As the deliverance of Jerusalem was the final a-

chievement which the crusaders contemplated, they no sooner saw it accomplished, than the greater part of them prepared to carry back to Europe the joyful tidings of its redemption. Of the mighty army that had crossed the Bosphorus, by far the larger half had perished long before the Cross was planted on the sacred ramparts; and when the homeward-bound princes and their vassals departed, there remained with Godfrey only two thousand infantry and three hundred horse. Among this remnant, however, was the chivalrous Tancred, the nephew of Bohemond, in himself a host. Baldwin, Godfrey's brother, returned to his principality of Edessa in Mesopotamia—and Bohemond fixed his residence in Antioch, the sovereignty of which he had managed to retain in defiance of the intrigues and reproaches of the less fortunate chiefs. Both these princes were attended by the feudal retainers who had fought their way from the distant shores of Europe under their banners; and many of these ultimately succeeded to ample possessions in the territories which had fallen to the share of their liege lords.

The return of the crusaders to Europe with their tale of triumph, gave a new stimulus to that ardent zeal which had filled Christendom with martial clamour. Supplemental crusades poured from the west; and, though famine and disease swept down the adventurers in thousands and tens of thousands in their passage through Lesser Asia, a considerable number still survived to reach Jerusalem, and recruit the Christian ranks. Multitudes of pilgrims, filled with religious transport, also abandoned their homes, and bent their way towards the distant country in which Christian valour had achieved such marvels. These wanderers, in many instances, reached the Holy

City wayworn and penniless; and the Hospitallers found constant employment in mitigating their condition. The palmers, who were thus relieved, could rarely make pecuniary remuneration to their benevolent entertainers; but they carried back with them to their homes the most vivid recollection of the kind offices of which they had been the objects; and so universally was the gratitude of Christendom excited towards the benevolent friars, that there was soon scarcely a province within its confines in which the House of Saint John did not enjoy manorial rights. The rapid enrichment of the Hospital exalted the piety, and perhaps the pride, of the rector; and, in accordance with the spirit of the times, he manifested his zeal by the erection of a superb church, situated on the spot which tradition pointed out as the retreat of Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, to whom the structure was dedicated. He also erected extensive buildings for the accommodation of the brotherhood, and the pilgrims to whose service they had devoted themselves. There the brethren washed the feet of the weary—dressed the wounded—watched the sick—succoured the destitute—and, when it came to the last sad struggle, consoled the dying. Placed at the head of a rich and popular association, and anxious to connect it more closely with the countries from whence its treasury was replenished, Gerard ultimately extended the sphere of his labours, and founded subordinate hospitals in the principal maritime provinces of the West. These were the first commanderies of the Order. They were the palmer's special asylums—the places where he found guides and convoys, and heard of ships and caravans to carry him to his destination. Such were the houses of St Giles in Provence, Tarento in Apulia, Messina in Sicily,

and latterly Seville in Andalusia; all of which were honoured with abundant privileges from the successive occupants of the Papal chair.

Meanwhile Godfrey—the Lord of the conquered city—after having extended his rule over the greater part of Palestine, was cut off by disease in the midst of his triumphs. He had been barely a year a king, when he was smitten by the hand of death; but his manes were propitiated by being interred beneath the shadow of the tomb of Christ. By his death the Infidels were relieved from a formidable enemy, and the Christians lost a noble champion and great commander. He was succeeded by Baldwin, his younger brother, Count of Edessa, who took precedence of Eustace the elder, in consequence of the latter having voluntarily abandoned the crusade. The pious scruples which had restrained Godfrey from assuming the regal title, found no abode in the breast of Baldwin, who was inferior to him in every quality save valour and physical strength. He was proclaimed the first Christian king of Jerusalem; and in the course of a warlike and tumultuous reign of eighteen years, the famous city of Acre or Ptolemais, and indeed, with the exception of Tyre, and Ascalon which the Moslems had recovered, all the maritime strongholds, from the borders of Egypt to the Gulf of Scanderoon, were reduced by his arms. Often beaten, but oftener victorious, he never allowed either his own troops or his enemies a moment's respite; and it was the fatigues of war, during an expedition to the frontiers of Egypt, that ultimately consigned him to the grave (1118.) Like his brother Godfrey, he was interred in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The remains of the Latin Kings, were the only mortal ashes that were ever deposited under that hallowed fane.

Baldwin du Bourg, his cousin, who had succeed-

ed him in the principality of Edessa, succeeded him also on the throne of Jerusalem. The two brothers had died childless, and a feeble effort was made by the advocates of hereditary right, to confer the crown on the absent Eustace; but it was defeated principally through the exertions of Joscelyn de Courtenay, an illustrious French crusader; and Baldwin du Bourg, in gratitude for this good service, remunerated that lord with the Mesopotamian principedom, which he conceived it necessary to vacate. Eustace, when he heard of his brother's death, contemplated for a time advancing a claim to the throne; but when he learnt that Baldwin du Bourg had been called to it by popular nomination, he exclaimed, "God forbid that I should stir up strife in a country where Christ offered up his life to reconcile guilty man to heaven!" and generously resigned his right.

The reign of Baldwin the Second was, like that of his immediate predecessor, chequered by warlike vicissitudes. Almost at its commencement Gerard, the venerable father of the Hospital of Saint John, terminated his useful career, when the Hospitallers unanimously elected Raymond du Puis to succeed him as their chief (1118.)* Gerard was, in the strictest sense of the word, a man of peace; and charity and humility were the only obligations which he imposed on the fraternity. But Du Puis had been bred in courts and camps; and the simple robe of a Hospitaller could not repress the proud beating of a heart, which had long throbbled responsive to the breath of the battle-trumpet and the clang of arms. He formed the chivalrous project of combining the duties of the monk with those of the soldier, by giving a martial constitution to the establishment, which

* Vertot. Boisgelin says 1120.

should bind the brotherhood to defend the holy places, and to wage a perpetual crusade against the enemies of Christ. Though the Christian arms were triumphant throughout the whole of Syria and Palestine, the Infidels still held many mountain fortresses and strongholds in various parts of both countries; and the peasantry being almost entirely of Saracen or Turkish descent—for the Hebrew had long been a stranger in the land—plundered and murdered the Christian pilgrims wherever they could do so with a prospect of impunity. So insecure was the internal situation of the kingdom, that bands of Saracen robbers, regularly organized, frequently entered the unfortified places at night, and despoiled and slaughtered the inhabitants; while, like thunder-clouds ready to cover the land with desolation, the Turkomans hovered on the one frontier, and the Egyptians on the other. These alarms left the Latins no respite; and though they may be said to have slept in harness, bloody inroads were occasionally made by the Saracens to the very gates of Jerusalem, and crowds of helpless women and children carried into slavery. It was a generous anxiety to mitigate these calamities,—to give the palmer security in his journeyings, and the peasant peace in his possessions,—that impelled the Master of the Hospitallers to encourage his brethren to resume the lance and buckler, and become once more the terror of the Moslem hosts.

Raymond, though a man of illustrious birth, owed his elevation to the Mastership of Saint John solely to his moral pre-eminence; and at his call—a call which many of his cowed compeers had often heard in the shock of battle—the Hospitallers eagerly grasped the arms, and braced on the mail which, in a moment of devout zeal, they had flung away.

Without abandoning their original engagements to cherish the sick and unfortunate, they solemnly took upon themselves a new obligation, to be at all times prepared to leap into their war-saddles, and encounter the Infidels at the point of the lance. A large sum from the funds of the Order was declared exigible for the hire of mercenary troops, whenever the emergencies of the kingdom should require the appropriation; and by this provision, the Hospitallers were afterwards enabled not only repeatedly to give potent succour to the Latin Kings, but, in several instances, to prop and preserve from absolute ruin, the tottering throne which the sword of Godfrey had won.

Raymond organized his warrior-monks into three classes or bands, all differing in birth, rank, and profession. The first class consisted of men of patrician ancestry and high military station; the second of priests; and the third of serving-brothers. The first class, or Knights of Justice, were appointed to bear arms, and monopolized the dignities of the Order. The priests, or chaplains, performed the services of religion both in church and camp, and ministered in the hospital to the sick and the destitute. The *serjens*, or half knights, served either in the field or in the infirmary, as was required of them; and, in after times, they contributed greatly to enhance the glory and power of the Order. No candidate could be received into the first class, unless he were of noble extraction; but it was not required of the priests, or of the serving-brothers, to produce proofs of gentilitical descent. The latter, however, enjoyed many honourable privileges in common with the knights; and, when their utility became better known, a certain number of com-

manderies were specially reserved for them.* At his profession each brother took the usual monkish vows of chastity, obedience, and poverty; and the knights further solemnly engaged to advance the true faith, and defend, with their swords, the Christian name. The banner of Saint John bore a white cross on a red field; and it was declared, that any knight who should abandon it, or otherwise dishonour himself in Paynim war, should be publicly stripped of the sacred sign, and the habit of the Order.

In the middle ages, the quality of chevalier or knight—or, in other words, the privilege of serving on horseback in war—was confined exclusively to persons of noble birth. Knighthood was usually conferred on the field, either before or after battle, as the noblest recompense of valour; and the proudest day of the warrior's life, was that in which his leader publicly proclaimed that he had won his spurs. The constitution of the Order of Saint John, therefore, blending as it did the grave and rigorous obligations of the monk with the stirring and perilous duties of the soldier, was eminently consonant with the superstitious and warlike spirit of the age; and the youthful chivalry of Europe emulated each other in anxiety to be enrolled under the White Cross banner. In a little time, the Order was crowded with valiant knights from every country in Christendom; and this influx of members suggested a new distinction; namely, the division of the Order into seven languages—those of Provence, Auvergne, France, Italy, Arragon, Germany, and England. To that

* *Serjiens*, or *serjens*, is an old French word signifying an inferior person. The modern word "sergeant" is synonymous.

of Arragon was subsequently added the language of Castile and Portugal. A hundred and twenty-five years after this division (1259), it was found necessary to propitiate the pride and pretence of the Knights, by the introduction of an aristocratical distinction in point of dress between them and the serving-brothers. By this regulation, the Knights were authorized to wear in the convent a black mantle, and in the camp a sopra vest, or coat of arms, with a white cross upon a red field.* The proofs required of aristocratical parentage, varied according to the country of the postulant. The Italian did not require to go farther back than his grandmothers; and candidates from the commercial states of Genoa, Lucca and Florence, where wealth in some degree counterbalanced birth, might aspire to the grand cross though they could not boast of a single quartering. The Frenchman had to prove eight quarters of gentility, which included his great-grandfathers. The Spaniard and Portuguese, like the Italian, had to prove that his grandmothers were noble—being four quarters; and the German had to produce no less than sixteen. The government of the Order was strictly aristocratical. The Master was president of the council, which exercised a supreme jurisdiction; and, as such, he had a double vote. The veteran knights, who, when the Order waxed potent over the whole of Christendom, were intrusted with

* The crusaders wore this sacred emblem commonly on their shoulders, sewed on their garments. In the first crusade, all of them were red; in the third, the French alone preserved that colour; while green crosses were adopted by the Flemings, and white by the English.—*Ducange*. In England, however, as would appear from the national ensigns, red has always been the favourite colour.

the charge of the European commanderies, held their authority entirely at the council's pleasure—being regarded merely as the stewards of the fraternity, from whom a strict and conscientious report of their intrusions with the public revenue was periodically expected.

Baldwin du Bourg accepted with gratitude the services of Du Puis and his knightly companions. Three powerful tribes—one Turkoman, the others Saracen—were at the moment in union, for the purpose of expelling the Latin Christians from Syria; and a part of the principality of Antioch had just been laid waste by their inroads. While the King, in compliance with an application for succour, was collecting troops to oppose them, Roger, Seneschal of Apulia, who ruled Antioch as regent, in the absence of Bohemond the Second, a minor, son and successor of the warlike prince of Tarentum, was ensnared by the Damascene Saracens, and slain before the walls of his own capital (1119.) Inflated by this victory, the Infidels endeavoured to circumvent by strategy the advance of the King into the devastated province; and their operations terminated in a protracted and sanguinary battle. The knights of Saint John gathered their first laurels in this engagement. Baldwin, with the ardour of a redoubted soldier, flung himself into the thickest of the fight, followed by Du Puis and his hospitallers, and the bravest of the Christian Lords. At the head of this intrepid phalanx, he repeatedly pierced the enemy's ranks; and the Moslems, despite the example and menaces of their chiefs, who strove in vain to reanimate them, were routed with great slaughter, and compelled to seek safety in flight.

This victory enabled the King to relieve and re-

garrison Antioch ; and he returned in triumph to Jerusalem. But in less than three years (1122), he was again called upon to take the field in behalf of his old brother-crusader and kinsman, Joscelyn de Courtenay, Prince of Edessa, who had been surprised and taken prisoner by Balak, one of the most puissant of the Turkoman emirs. Dreading that the captivity of De Courtenay would expose Edessa to a siege at a disadvantage, the King made haste to lead a considerable body of troops to its relief. Having, by forced marches, advanced into the principality, he undertook to reconnoitre the enemy's position in person ; and, either through treachery or imprudence, was surrounded, his escort cut in pieces, and himself reduced to the humiliating situation of a captive. His troops, filled with dismay at this disastrous event, considered it as decisive of the campaign ; and the majority of them quitted their colours and disbanded. The Hospitallers, finding it impracticable to keep the field with the few that continued firm, threw themselves into Edessa and the adjacent strongholds, and in these made a gallant stand in defence of the imprisoned Courtenay's right.

Meanwhile, the rumour of Baldwin's captivity spread far and wide, and speedily reached the ears of the Khalif of Egypt, who forthwith instructed one of his generals to enter Judæa on the side of Ascalon, and invest Jaffa, which he closely blockaded both by land and sea. To repel this formidable invasion, Eustace Garnier, Lord of Cæsarea and Sidon, and Constable of Palestine, supported by Pontius, Count of Tripoli, grandson of the famous Raymond of Toulouse, whose descendants enjoyed that territory, hastily drew together seven thousand men, and such knights as were left in the convent of Saint

John, and at their head marched directly to the relief of the beleagured fortress. The Infidels, unsuspecting of his approach, were taken by surprise, and their lines stormed. The Christians, in accordance with the sanguinary policy which both armies generally practised, gave no quarter; and the fugitives who escaped their swords, owed their safety to the refuge afforded them on board the blockading fleet, which, in its turn, was scattered on the voyage to Alexandria by a Venetian squadron. Without allowing his troops time to rest, the Christian leader next led them against the garrison of Ascalon, part of which he encountered on a marauding excursion, and, after a sanguinary conflict, drove it back into that fortress. In this expedition the venerable Lord of Sidon died, and William Des Barres, Lord of Tiberias, succeeded him in the chief command. The new leader, aware of the good service recently done to the Christian cause by the Venetian fleet, invited its Admiral, the noble Henry Micheli, to a conference, at which they arranged that a combined attack by sea and land should be made on Tyre, which still resisted the Christian arms. Micheli, with the far-seeing policy peculiar to the republic whose argosy he commanded, took care that the reward secured to Venice should be commensurate to the peril and magnitude of the enterprise. By a special clause in the treaty, it was stipulated that Venice should enjoy a third part of the city in perpetual sovereignty; and, this difficult point arranged, it was closely invested. Tyre, once one of the most magnificent cities of the East, though fallen from its ancient grandeur, was still celebrated for its riches, and the strength of its defences; and five months elapsed before it surrendered to the Christian arms (1124). In this

service, the valour of the Hospitallers was as conspicuous as in the battle that led to the relief of Antioch.

The capitulation of Tyre was followed by an event, calculated of itself to give a triumphant aspect to the war. While the issue of the siege was yet doubtful, Joscelyn de Courtenay escaped from durance, and, regaining his own territories, drew together a handful of chosen men, gave his captor battle at Hircapolis, and slew him in fair fight with his own lance. Humbled by this reverse, or rather, according to some historians, captivated by the merit of her royal prisoner, Balak's widow made a truce with the Christians, and agreed to liberate the King of Jerusalem on payment of a considerable ransom. Half the money was paid down before he left his prison; and one of his daughters, an infant of five years of age, was given up as a hostage for the remainder. His return to Jerusalem was the harbinger of prosperity to his kingdom. From the accession of Baldwin the First, the Christian families scattered throughout Arabia and other Mohammedan countries, had been encouraged to settle in Syria and Palestine; and all merchants, whether Christian or Infidel, were allowed to trade with the Holy City, exempt from the customary burdens. A new race too, called Pullani or Poulains, children of Syrian mothers and European fathers, had sprung up to repeople the land; * and yet the whole legal militia of the kingdom did not exceed eleven thousand men. † At the same time, on pressing occasions, the barons voluntarily increased their aid, otherwise the sovereign would have found it impracticable to make head against the myriads of Turks and Saracens who continually beset him.

* Ducange sur Joinville.

† Gibbon.

Soon after his liberation, the King again took the field, and not only routed Barsequin and Doldequin, two restless Turkoman emirs, who had invaded the principality of Antioch, but captured so many of their followers, that their ransom served to redeem the child whom he had been necessitated to place in bondage. A second victory put him in possession of Rapha, a fortress in the county of Tripoli, which the Turks had till then retained. The Hospitallers were in constant attendance on the King during the whole of this expedition. At their head, as a volunteer, and always in the front of battle, fought Fulk, Count of Anjou, one of the most redoubted soldiers of the age. * Death having deprived him of a wife whom he fondly loved, he had made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, in order to dissipate his grief; and, while he remained in it, munificently maintained a hundred knights at his own expense. Time, and the stir and excitement of military emprise, having subdued his sorrow, he prepared to return to his children and his native country; but Baldwin, anxious to retain so distinguished a leader in his service, exerted all his influence to procrastinate his departure, and finally attached him to his fortunes by promising him the hand of the princess Millescent his eldest daughter, with the crown of Jerusalem in reversion. The Count returned to France; but it was only to arrange his affairs preparatory to bidding it an eternal farewell, that he might afterwards fix his residence permanently in his adopted country.

A few years prior to this period, the utility and popularity of the order of Saint John had suggest-

* This crusader was the father of Geoffrey, the head of the English Plantagenets.

ed a new institution for kindred purposes. About the year 1119, * Hugh de Payens, Geoffrey de Saint Omer, and seven other gentlemen of France, formed the chivalrous project of giving the companies of palmers, who were perpetually passing through the country, a regular escort ; and to render this voluntarily imposed duty the more binding and fraternal, they agreed, like the Hospitallers, to unite monkhood and knight-hood, in honour of the " sweet mother of God." For several years, these worthy knights pursued, in poverty and obscurity, but with unrelaxed zeal, their benevolent purpose. No new members joined them—they were clothed by the hand of charity—and the two leaders could only boast of one battle-charger, which they rode in common. The King, nevertheless, vouchsafed them his special countenance ; and they were lodged in a part of his palace near the site of the Temple. The history of their union being communicated to Pope Honorius the Second, he granted his sanction, that, in imitation of the Knights of Saint John, they should constitute themselves a military association ; and from this humble origin sprang the Templars, that knightly band, which, for two centuries, rivalled the Hospitallers in power and renown. The Hospitallers encouraged with generous zeal the formation of this new fraternity, and granted it pecuniary assistance, until the munificence of secular patrons placed it above the condition of a dependent institution. These soldiers of the pilgrims, as they were primitively called, wore a white mantle

* Vertot.—In the MSS. of Father Hay, preserved in the Advocates' Library, the date of the Templars' Institution is said to be 1117. Vide Maidment's *Templaria*. Brompton, the English historian, affirms, that the Knights who founded the order were originally brethren of the Hospital of Saint John.

over their chivalric harness, as their peculiar habit, to which was afterwards added a red cross, emblazoned on the left breast, as the symbol of martyrdom. Their helmet, in token of humility, had no crest, and their beards were suffered to remain uncut, after the custom of the Eastern nations.* Their great banner was of white linen striped with black, and ornamented with the cross of the Order; and the old French word *Bauseant*, by which name it was commonly known, was also their war-cry. Fulk, Count of Anjou, was one of the earliest benefactors of the Order; and the founder, Hugh de Payens, traversed a great part of Christendom, to excite an interest in its behalf. On his return to Palestine (1129), he brought in his train three hundred gentlemen of the noblest families of the West. The duties of the Templars being more strictly military than those of the brethren of Saint John, many cavaliers, whose piety and benevolence were not sufficiently ardent to carry them through the charitable cares of the Hospital, espoused the *Bauseant* for their banner. The basis of the institution, like that of the Hospitallers, was chastity and obedience; and the ancient Templars are said to have been so outrageously virtuous, that they held it a tempting of Providence to look a fair woman in the face, and scrupled even to kiss their own mothers! † The influence of the famous Bernard of Clairvaux, the great advocate of the second crusade, who accorded his special patronage to the Knights of the Temple, greatly enriched their treasury, and swelled their ranks; and, in the course of time, the Order became so wealthy and puissant, that, says the historian Brompton, "this daugh-

* Statutes of the Templars. † Mill's Hist. of Chivalry.

ter of the house of Saint John almost eclipsed her mother, and threatened to throw her into perpetual shade." *

The King of Jerusalem beheld with joy this new bulwark rise round his throne; and the return of Fulk of Anjou, with a numerous body of vassals, added another boss to his buckler. Faithful to his promise, he gave his daughter in marriage to the Count; but, in the midst of the bridal feasts, his quiet was disturbed by the intelligence, that young Bohemond of Antioch, the second of that name, who had espoused his daughter Alice, had fallen in a rencontre with the Infidels, leaving an infant princess to inherit his possessions, and the cares and perils inseparable from regal state. The King instantly hastened to Antioch in order to assume the regency during her minority; but, on presenting himself at the gates of that city, he found them shut against him, and learned with sorrow, that the Princess Alice, indignant at being excluded from the throne of Jerusalem by the conditions of her sister's marriage with the Count of Anjou, and actuated by ambitious designs, had resolved to dispute his authority, and rule the principality in her daughter's name. The inhabitants, however, aware that the constant jeopardy to which they were exposed by the incursions of the Turkomans, required them to choose a warrior, not a woman for their sovereign, admitted the King se-

* Another charitable and religious society became military about the same period, under the name of the Order of Saint Lazarus; but, though it obtained various privileges, and was well endowed, it never attained any fame. The cure of leprosy was the grand object of the Knights of Saint Lazarus, and their Grandmaster was always a leper. Their cross was green, and their hospitals were styled Lazarettos, in honour of their titular saint.

cretly into the city, which instantly acknowledged his authority (1131); and the Princess Dowager was sent into honourable retirement at Laodicea. This expedition was the last important act of Baldwin's reign. On his return to Jerusalem, he was siezed with a violent distemper, brought on by the mental uneasiness which his daughter's conduct had occasioned. Some historians say, that, before his death, he so far gave way to the despondency that oppressed him, as to renounce the world and assume a religious habit; * but, be this as it may, the tears and lamentations of his people followed him to the grave.

In accordance with the will of the departed monarch, the Count of Anjou, by virtue of his marriage with the Princess Millescent, succeeded to the crown. Scarcely had he laid the dead king in his tomb, when Antioch again became the theatre of cabals and conspiracies, through the machinations of the Princess Alice. Despairing of making good her claim as co-heiress of Jerusalem, that ambitious woman exerted all her ingenuity to dispossess her infant daughter of her paternal inheritance. Several Latin Lords espoused her cause, which, though she was the younger of Baldwin's daughters, was not without a semblance of justice; and the rights of the infant Princess being at the same time contested by her cousin, Roger Duke of Apulia, nothing but the promptitude with which the King of Jerusalem interposed in her behalf could have preserved her patrimony. Accompanied by a small but chosen band of knights, he advanced on Antioch by forced marches. The Counts of Tripoli and Edessa, both of whom

* Fuller.

were adverse to his interference, endeavoured to intercept his progress ; but he scattered their forces ; and, entering the disturbed city, speedily suppressed the incipient revolt. It was soon evident to the King, that a state like Antioch, threatened with hostile inroads from without, and intestine tumults within, could neither enjoy prosperity nor peace, unless the sovereignty devolved on a warlike and rigorous prince ; and, actuated by this impression, he resolved on betrothing the young Constance to some Christian knight, whose fame in arms would be as a buckler between her and her enemies. The choice fell on Raymond of Poitiers, youngest son of William, the seventh Duke of Aquitaine—a cavalier with whom he had long been in habits of friendship, and who was honoured throughout Europe as a redoubted soldier. Joubert, a Hospitaller in great favour with the King, was intrusted with this delicate negotiation ; and he accordingly repaired to the court of Henry the First of England, where Count Raymond then was, to invite him to enter into this illustrious alliance. The Hospitaller discharged his mission with fidelity and discretion. Raymond accepted the offer with transport, and prepared with gallant alacrity to throw himself at the feet of his mistress, who, in point of age, was a mere child ; but as a pleasant and quaint historian * justly remarks, “ they never want years to marry, who have a kingdom for their portion.” The Duke of Apulia, when he became aware of the contemplated alliance, stationed emissaries at all the European ports, for the purpose of intercepting the young bridegroom-elect on his journey ; but Raymond, through the address of his conductor, e-

* Fuller, h. ii. ch. xx.

luded all the snares laid for his apprehension, and actually made the voyage to Syria, in one of the vessels which his rival had employed to carry troops thither for the establishment of his rights. Disguised as merchants, he and the trusty Joubert were safely conveyed to Antioch ; and on the solemnization of his nuptials with the Princess, he was formally installed in the sovereignty.

While the King of Jerusalem was thus employed in establishing Count Raymond in the government of Antioch, the Egyptian Saracens, who still held Ascalon, the key of Palestine towards Egypt, burst over his own frontier, and spread death and desolation to the walls of his capital. The energetic measures adopted by Queen Millescent, who held the reins of government in her consort's absence, repelled this inroad ; and, to check the future incursions of the Infidels, she refortified the ancient city of Beersheba, on the edge of the desert, and intrusted its defence to the Hospitallers, who made it a place of arms and of refuge to the Christians who inhabited the district. From this time forward, the Egyptian frontier became the arena of perpetual combats between the Infidels and the Christian knights. The *bauseant* and the banner of Saint John waved, in fraternal rivalry, on the same ensanguined fields ; and Christendom resounded with the chivalrous deeds of the soldiers of the Cross. Princes supplicated to be buried in the habit and harness of these warrior monks ; and kings were proud to be enrolled under their victorious standards. Alphonso the First, King of Arragon and Navarre, having no offspring, carried his enthusiasm so far, as to name the Knights of the Hospital and Temple heirs and successors to both his crowns, with the simple stipulation that they

should support him in all his wars against the Moorish princes who had established themselves in Spain. This munificent bequest—a bequest which, in modern days, would justly be pronounced surpassing the legal largess even of a crowned king—was renewed and ratified a few days before the Moriscoes cut him and his whole army to pieces in a pitched battle (1133). The will of Alphonso, however, obtained but small respect from his subjects; and the claims of the military orders were formally set aside by the grandees of the two kingdoms, who, as the natural custodiers of the crowns, conferred them on princes of their own election. On intelligence of these proceedings reaching Jerusalem, the Knights, who regarded themselves as wronged, held several councils; and it was determined to send deputies into Spain to enforce their rights. The Hospitallers deputed their Grandmaster, Du Puis, to represent them; and, accompanied by several experienced knights, and the deputies of the Templars, he sailed for the West. All his vigilance and zeal, however, failed to bring the negotiation to a successful issue. The Prince of Arragon indeed entered into a partial compromise, by which he secured to himself the unfettered sovereignty, and awarded to the knights only a few manors and castles; but the King of Navarre refused to accede to any treaty whatever, and the deputies had to abandon the negotiation in despair.

The Grandmaster returned to Palestine in 1141; and in the same year, Fulk of Anjou closed his reign. While following the chase on the plains of Acre, he was thrown from his horse, and found, in a peaceful pastime, the death which he had so often defied in the brunt of battle. This prince was nearly sixty years of age when he married the Princess Millescent; and, though renowned for valour and

physical strength, had so treacherous a memory, that he scarcely knew his own servants. "Yet, though he had a bad memorie whilst he lived," says Fuller, "he hath a good one now he is dead; and his virtues are famous to posteritie." He left two sons behind him—Baldwin, a boy of thirteen, and Americ, or Amaury, a child scarcely seven years of age. The Queen, their mother, who inherited all the ambition and love of enterprise of her race, made an effort to vest not merely the regency, but the unfettered sovereignty in her own person; but the grandees of the kingdom were urgent for a captain and king; and, at the risk of a sanguinary rupture, Baldwin, after much contention, ascended the throne, with the understanding that his mother was to share the supreme power along with him.

While Millescent and her son's partisans were engaged in this unprofitable contest, Zenghi, a redoubted Turkoman leader, Sultan of Mosul and Aleppo, overran the principality of Edessa. Joscelyn de Courtenay, the friend of Baldwin du Bourg, was no more. He had died, like a warrior, of an unhealed wound, while watching the flight of the Infidels from a battle-field to which he had been borne in a horse-litter; and the son whom he left to inherit his possessions, and who had turned like a craven from the plain on which his father honourably closed his life, had neither the capacity nor the martial enterprise requisite in a prince whose territories were begirt by warlike and implacable enemies. The Edessenes, though deserted in their extremity by him who ought to have been the last to abandon their shattered walls, held out seventeen, some writers say twenty-eight days, against the Infidel army, supported by the hope that the Latins of Syria and

Palestine would hasten to their relief. But, at length, the Moslems entered the breaches sword in hand; the city was given up to pillage; and, had not the career of Zenghi been soon after cut short by the poniard of a slave, who assassinated him in his tent, the effeminate Courtenay, who had abandoned himself to the pursuits of a voluptuary in the town of Turbessel, would have been stripped of his whole possessions.

The loss of Edessa, which Nouredin, the son and successor of Zenghi, finally subjugated, was a fatal blow to the Latin power in the East; and from that day historians date the commencement of its decline. The heroes of the crusade had all sunk into the grave; and their descendants, emasculated by the voluptuous climate of the East, inherited the lands their fathers' swords had won, without the knightly qualities requisite to preserve them. The young King alone, and the military orders, stood staunchly by the Christian banner; but the valour of a handful of resolute men was as dust in the balance against the countless hordes who incessantly hovered on the confines of the kingdom. In these critical circumstances, the Latins resolved to supplicate the Princes of the West to undertake a new crusade; and the Bishop of Zabulon was despatched to Europe with instructions to spare no effort to awaken their latent zeal. The inexperienced and versatile Louis the Seventh was then seated on the French throne; and having, shortly before the envoy's arrival, in a moment of ferocious exasperation, put the whole inhabitants of a rebellious city* to the sword, the prelate found him weighed down with remorse, and quite eager to

* Vitri.

expiate his crime by any warlike penance which the church might impose. Pope Eugenius the Third, the pontiff of that era, confirmed him in the pious impression, that he could not render a more acceptable service to heaven, than by periling his body in Paynim war, for the solace of his soul; and forthwith papal briefs were scattered thickly throughout Christendom, exhorting all ranks to take up arms for the defence of the Holy Land. Among others, Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux, the oracle of the age, whose pious labours were subsequently rewarded with canonization, espoused the popular theme; and, following in the footsteps of Peter the Hermit, he made France and Germany resound with his miraculous eloquence.* In the same breath he reproached the multitudes, who crowded to hear his prelections, with indifference to the fate of the heritage of Christ, and enlarged, with the transport of a prophet, on the triumphs that awaited the faithful soldiers of the Cross. The exertions of this holy enthusiast not only strengthened the French King in his chivalrous determination to take the field, but stirred up Conrad the Third, Emperor of Germany, and the majority of his barons, to engage in the enterprise. Shining miracles, say the chronicles of the times, were not wanting to compass this great event. Saint Bernard, in the Emperor's presence, took hold of a

* Saint Bernard's austerity of life is a favourite theme with the monkish chroniclers. On one occasion, he happened to fix his eyes on the face of a woman; but immediately reflecting that this was temptation, he ran to a pond, and leaped up to the neck into the water, which was then as cold as ice, to punish himself, and to vanquish the enemy. This freak nearly cost him his life.—*Vide Butler's Lives of the Saints*, vol. viii. p. 229.

lame child, and, having sanctified it by the sign of the Cross, adjured it, in the name of the Redeemer, to rise and walk, that the monarch might know that God approved of his zeal. The lameter rose as commanded; and the Emperor, won upon by the pious fraud, solemnly engaged to give his utmost support to the crusade. So high was the reverence in which the Saint was held, that many of the principal crusaders, regarding him as another Moses, called upon him to head the enterprise in person, and lead them to the land of promise. But the Abbot was not less prudent than he was pious. He declined mingling in the shock of spears; and retired into his abbey, leaving to the mailed multitudes whom his eloquence and miracles had inflamed, the toil and peril attendant on the campaign.

The united hosts of the two regal crusaders exceeded two hundred thousand men. France and Germany poured forth the pride of their population; and bands of high-born dames, at the head of whom rode Eleanor of Guienne, the consort of the French King, appeared in arms, like the Amazons of ancient fable, and, by their presence at the reviews and musterings of the troops, incited them to deeds of noble enterprise. But the fate of this army, which left Europe burning with the proudest hopes, was scarcely less disastrous than that of the mighty rabble led by the Hermit, which had been hewn down to a man in the wilds of Anatolia. Conrad, who set out first, and who calculated on being received with princely hospitality by his brother-in-law, Manuel Comnenus, Emperor of the East, found the Greeks filled with dismay at the arrival of so great an armament, and every way disposed to deport

themselves with their characteristic perfidy. Conrad, indeed, had no reason to complain personally of his treatment in Constantinople ; but not so his followers. They were, if credit may be placed in the annalists of the time, fed with bread mixed with lime and plaster, which they were compelled to purchase at an exorbitant price ; and the wells and cisterns of all the places through which they passed were poisoned. The guides whom Manuel furnished to lead them into Anatolia, betrayed them into the hands of the Infidels ; and Conrad at last saw his half-starved and worn-out host cut in pieces before his face, in the mountains of Cappadocia. The expedition of the French King was scarcely more fortunate. It reached Syria, however, after many sanguinary conflicts, and, in concert with the soldiery of Jerusalem, and the broken remains of Conrad's army, besieged Damascus. The Knights of the Hospital and Temple were foremost in this war ; and Damascus would have seen the yoke of five centuries severed by their victorious swords, had not intrigues and cabals regarding the future sovereignty of the contemplated conquest agitated the Christian camp. The Syrian Lords, jealous of an avowed intention to bestow it on Thierri, Count of Flanders, one of the new crusade, entered into a treasonable correspondence with the enemy ; and, through their machinations, the enterprise miscarried.* The two monarchs, disgusted with this atrocious proceeding, abandoned the sacred territory to its fate, and returned to Europe (1148), leaving the countries which they had aspired to conquer whitened with their vassals' bones. It is computed that, in

* William, Archbishop of Tyre.

this crusade, nearly two hundred thousand men perished. Several of the most illustrious families of France and Germany were rooted up by it; and Saint Bernard, denounced by bereaved Christendom as a false prophet, found all his eloquence barely sufficient to rescue him from martyrdom.

The Latin Christians of Syria and Palestine had soon reason to repent their betrayal of the two sovereigns who had come from such a distance, and at the expense of so much blood and treasure, to fight their battles. The peril of their situation was increased by the brawls which incessantly prevailed between the young King and his mother, who had submitted herself entirely to the guidance of a favourite Lord. This domestic strife ended in an open rupture; and had not the Queen ultimately resigned her moiety of the kingdom, and retired altogether from the cares of government, her son would have forcibly deposed her. As to foreign foes—on the one side, Nouredin, son of the famous Zenghi, invaded the principality of Antioch, and routed and slew Count Raymond its sovereign; while, on the other, the Sultan of Iconium entered Turbessel, and took young Courtenay, the titular prince of Edessa, prisoner, who soon after died in chains (1150.)* These barbarians, blood-thirsty and merciless, wasted the land far and wide; and the King of Jerusalem made haste to interpose such troops as he could marshal between the fugitive Christians, who fled towards his capital, and the marauders. At the head of his nobles, and escorted by the two military orders, who formed by far the most efficient part of his army, he directed his march towards Antioch. Nouredin,

* Archbishop of Tyre.

regarding him as delivered into his hands, hemmed in his little band on every side, and incessantly assailed it ; but so impenetrable a front did it present, that the Infidels retired discomfited from every charge. The young King, animated by the example of his knights, deported himself with great bravery throughout the whole of this perilous march, and, despite the vigilance of Noureddin, safely entered Antioch. While he was yet employed in driving the barbarians from that principality, an incursion of two other Turkoman leaders, at a different point, almost deprived him of his own capital. These chiefs, aware of the defenceless state in which Jerusalem had been left, suddenly burst into the Christian territory, and, almost before the inhabitants were aware of their advance, presented themselves in the vicinage of the capital. It was evening when the Christians beheld them encamp on Mount Olivet, and prepare to carry the city, which was almost ungarrisoned, by escalade, on the ensuing day. Speedily recovering, however, from the panic which their arrival occasioned, and encouraged to make a resolute defence by the few Hospitallers and Templars who had remained behind for their protection, they flew to arms, and, without waiting to be assailed within the ramparts, which they were not sufficiently numerous to defend, sallied out at midnight on the enemy, burned their camp, and completely routed them. The fugitives who escaped their swords, were subsequently scattered by a body of cavalry, headed by the King in person, on its way back to Jerusalem ; and the few who lived to reach the Jordan, were drowned in attempting to swim across that sacred stream. *

* Archbishop of Tyre.

The King, enraged at the devastations of these barbarians, soon after made a reprisal on the side of Ascalon, and carried fire and sword to the gates of that fortress, which he closely invested by land, while Gerard, Lord of Sidon, blockaded it by sea. This frontier city, which reposed at the base of a hill, and stretched in a semicircle along the seashore, was strongly fortified, and well supplied with warlike engines; and so desperate was the defence it made, that, at the end of five months, the Christians, dispirited at seeing the blockade raised by an Egyptian armament, and ample succours thrown into the place, called upon their King to abandon the siege. Baldwin, though one of the bravest princes that had reigned in Palestine since the days of Godfrey of Bouillon, would probably have yielded to this advice, had not the Grandmaster of the Hospitallers, and other valiant men, represented to him the peril inseparable from such a proceeding, and the likelihood that the Sultan would, in revenge, insult him within the very walls of Jerusalem. Fortified by these representations, the King resolved to continue the siege; and, for a time, the Infidels were allowed to waste their ardour in sallies, which cost them much blood, without being attended with any signal advantage. Seeing them chafed at length by this fruitless waste of life, the Christians felt their courage revive, and became more desperate in their assaults. The Templars, having succeeded in filling up a part of the ditch opposite their position, rolled a huge wooden tower close to the walls, from the summit of which, by means of a railed drawbridge, they hoped to throw themselves sword in hand into the city. The Saracens, startled at these preparations, endeavoured to burn the tower, by setting fire to a great quantity of

combustibles, which they had cast down near it at the foot of the rampart. But in the night, while the conflagration was raging, a strong wind rose and blew the flames fiercely against the wall, and so completely calcined the mortar that the solid bulwark gave way. In the morning, the Templars, who, nothing doubted that their tower had been destroyed, beheld it not only uninjured, but frowning over the fallen rampart, which was thrown down in such a manner as to leave a practicable breach. Their Grandmaster, transported with joy, and anxious to retain all the honour of the achievement to his own fraternity, without intimating the circumstance to the King, ordered his knights to marshal, and advance to the assault. He was promptly obeyed; and, sword in hand, shouting the Christian war-cry, the Templars rushed tumultuously into the beleaguered city. The inhabitants, panic-stricken, and thinking the fortress taken, at first made no effort to defend it; but the Grandmaster, more anxious to prevent the rest of the Christian army from entering the breach, and sharing in the renown of the exploit, than to succour his friends, whom he regarded as the special purveyors of his order, failed to give them due assistance; and the Infidels, speedily discovering the insignificant force with which they had to contend, rallied, and made a stout resistance. Missiles of every description were showered from the house-tops on the heads of the Templars, by which many of them were slain; and the remnant at last had to retreat in the utmost confusion to the breach. In vain the Grandmaster endeavoured to keep possession of that important gap. The furious charges of the Infidels were irresistible; and, no sooner were the Christians completely dislodged, than new defences were thrown

up in their very teeth, and the breach thereby rendered impracticable.

While the Christian army was yet smarting under this untoward repulse, for which the Templars were sharply and generally reprobated, the garrison of Ascalon made a fierce sally, boldly threw themselves into the Christian camp, and penetrated even to the King's tent. Baldwin, girt by the chivalry of his army, deported himself like a brave soldier, and, by his valorous resistance, gave his troops time to recover their panic. The Templars, covered with shame at their recent disaster, flung themselves, reckless of life, into the hottest of the battle; and the Hospitallers, equally prodigal of their blood, dashed with the same desperate onset into the centre of the Saracen ranks. Though the sally was made early in the day, it was evening before either party showed a disposition to retire from the field. At length, a charge, headed by the Christian King in person, turned the tide of battle in his favour. The Saracens gave way, and fled towards the ramparts of Ascalon, hotly pursued by the victors. No quarter was given, and the Christian lines swam with Infidel blood. The garrison, filled with dismay at this signal defeat, in which the flower of the Egyptian succours perished, held council as to the necessity of capitulating; and their deliberations were quickened by a huge stone being thrown into the city, which, falling on a beam that forty men were carrying to construct a barricade within the rampart, crushed nearly all of them to death. On the 12th of August 1154, the Saracens evacuated the town by treaty, and retired with their effects into the desert; and the Cross was planted on the towers which they had so bravely defended—a triumph, than which, the Chris-

tian arms had achieved none greater since the conquest of Jerusalem.

The capture of Ascalon showered new honours on the Hospitallers ; for, in token of his sense of their services on that occasion, Pope Anastasius the Fourth greatly extended the privileges of the order—a proceeding which gave much offence to the secular clergy of Palestine, who spurned at the idea of these military friars being exempted from the episcopal jurisdiction. Both parties ultimately appealed to the Holy See ; when the reigning Pope, more anxious to engage a powerful military body like the Hospitallers in his interest, than a few discontented bishops, gave judgment in favour of the Knights—not without suspicion of having been accessible to corruption. Whether this suspicion was just, it were now idle to inquire ; but the chivalrous and generous spirit that had actuated the Order in its infancy, certainly began about this period to give indications of decline. Rendered avaricious by the munificent donations that were continually poured into their treasury, these Christian soldiers so far forgot their knightly character, as to refuse to march to the defence of Paneas, unless Humfrey de Thoron, Constable of the kingdom, to whom that place appertained in fief, would consent to divide the revenues with them ; to which condition, which can only be defended on the supposition that the service was of a private nature, he had no alternative but to assent. Paneas, at one time called Cæsarea Philippi, was situated at the foot of Mount Libanus, and was the frontier fortress of the Christian territory on the side of Damascus, which acknowledged the formidable Nouredin for its sovereign. The Hospitallers departed with great pomp on this mercenary enterprise ;

but on the march Noureddin burst on them from an ambush, and, though they fought with their usual bravery, cut them down almost to a man, and completed his triumph by the capture of the city which they had hired themselves to defend. In an attempt to retrieve this disaster, another Christian force, commanded by the King in person, was attacked by the Infidels under similar circumstances; and so totally routed, that the flower of the Christian lances, including Bertrand de Blanchfort, Grandmaster of the Templars, were taken prisoners, and Baldwin himself narrowly escaped the same fate.

In their next rencontre with Noureddin, the Christians had better fortune. That restless Turkoman having invested Sueta, an ancient and strongly fortified place in one of the mountainous defiles leading to Damascus, the King of Jerusalem, aware of the importance of the position, drew together all the troops he could marshal, and, reinforced by an efficient body of cavalry, furnished by his brother-in-law Thierry, Count of Flanders, again took the field. No sooner was Noureddin aware of the advance of the Christian army, than, with the usual impetuosity of his race, he left his mountain camp, and rushed down to battle in the plains. Both armies were keen for the strife; and, so deadly was their detestation of each other, that, without once drawing the bow, they closed sword in hand in mortal conflict. Baldwin, at the head of his nobles, and supported by the military orders, whom he justly regarded as the *elite* of his army, flung himself on the Turkoman vanguard, which being, in accordance with the tactics of the barbarians, composed of their worst troops, instantly gave way. Behind this line, however, on which the Infidel leaders placed no reliance, and which was spe-

cially devoted as a sacrifice to the first burst of Christian valour, stood another, composed of veteran soldiers, and commanded by Shiracouh, Noureddin's bravest general. For a long time the Christians made no impression on this human rampart. In vain their swords hewed gaps in it;—new combatants continually rushed into the places of those who were struck down. At length, the Latins, stung by the reproaches of their leaders, made a last desperate charge, and the Infidels, apprehending that they had been reinforced by a fresh body of troops, gave ground. The King and the Count of Flanders, taking advantage of this resilement, pressed them hotly at the head of a choice band of cavalry; and the retrograde movement ultimately became a rout. In this great battle, say the chroniclers, which was fought on the plains of Putaha (1158), six thousand Infidels lay dead on the field; and the victory was mainly ascribed to the excellent valour of the King. It was the last great fight from which the venerable Raymond Du Puis saw his knights return. Scared with wounds, and worn out with years, upwards of forty of which he had filled the office of Grandmaster, he terminated his days in the sanctuary of his Order (1160), revered as of the number of the blessed not only by his brethren, but by all the Latin Christians of the East.

CHAPTER III.

Invasion of Egypt—Conquest of Belbeis—Unsuccessful issue of the War—Saladin—Apostasy of Melier the Templar—The Assassins—Battle of Jacob's Ford—Embassy to Europe—Guy de Lusignan—Death of Roger de Moulins—Battle of Tiberias—Death of Renaud de Chatillon—Surrender of Jerusalem.

BROTHER AUGER DE BALBEN, a knight of Dauphiny, an old companion in arms of Raymond Du Puis, succeeded the latter by the unanimous suffrages of the Chapter. During his Grandmastership, * the young and chivalric Baldwin the Third closed a glorious reign of twenty years, being poisoned, at the age of thirty-three, by a Jewish or Arabian physician. It is told of the Turkoman, Nourreddin, that, when his officers counselled him to take advantage of this event, and invade the Christian territory, he nobly answered, "God forbid that I should profit by the misfortune of the unbelievers, from whom, after the death of so great a Prince, I have nothing more to dread."

Baldwin died without issue (1163), and, in ac-

* Brompton and Roger Hoveden call Raymond Du Puis "*Grandmaster*;" but it was not till the government of Hugh de Revel, in 1267, that the chief of the Order was so designated, "Master" being previously his common title. — *Boisgelin. Chron. Malta.* Vertot uniformly styles Du Puis, and all his successors, "*Grandmaster.*"

cordance with the established law of succession, the crown descended upon Almeric, or Amaury, his brother, though not without some efforts on the part of several ambitious Lords to set aside his right. Had not the Grandmaster of the Hospitallers, and several other wise and temperate men, represented to the malecontents, that intestine division would inevitably place the disputed diadem on the head of one or other of the barbarian princes who continually harassed the kingdom, the matter would have been decided by an appeal to the sword. This useful service was the last public act of De Balben's life, as the Order lost him by death, after a government of scarcely three years.

Arnaud de Comps, * also a knight of Dauphiny, succeeded De Balben. He was far advanced in years when his brethren chose him for their head; and, scarcely had he assumed the honourable station of Grandmaster, when a fresh inroad of the Saracens, on the side of Gaza, compelled him to repair with his knights to that frontier. Amaury led this expedition in person; but, disturbances breaking out in Egypt, the Infidel leader hastily retired with his troops into that country, and the Christian sword was allowed to remain a short time longer in the scabbard. But this was only a temporary pause. A new enemy quickly started up in the person of Dhar-gam, the ringleader of the conspirators whose machinations had alarmed the Egyptian Sultan, who, having superseded that Prince, the virtual sovereign of the country—for the Khalifs were mere non-

* According to several historians, this is a supposititious Grandmaster; but Vertot and Pacciaudi (*Memorie di Gran-Maestri del Sacro Ordine Gerosolimitano*) recognise him.

entities—in the command of his army, instantly led it against the King of Jerusalem. The Egyptians, half naked, and armed only with bows and arrows, were no match, however, for the Latin chivalry of the East. The Hospitallers and Templars, clothed in mail, and marshalled in formidable squadrons, broke the ranks of these miserable barbarians in the first charge, and scattered them like chaff over the desert. Dhargam, intimidated by a demonstration on the part of the victors of pursuing him into Egypt, and harassed by a new enemy in the person of the famous Nouredin, whom Shower, the deposed Sultan, had stirred up to make a diversion in his favour, sued for peace. Amaury accepted the overture, on condition that he should be paid a stipulated tribute, and reimbursed for the expenses of the war. Soon afterwards, Shiracouh, Nouredin's general, defeated and slew Dhargam in battle, and Shower was reinstated in his dignity; but, with signal ingratitude, immediately turned his arms against his benefactor, and, speciously invited the King of Jerusalem to enter into a league against that formidable Prince (1166). Amaury consented; and, in conjunction with the Sultan's troops, gave Shiracouh battle, routed him, and, after chasing him into Belbeis, the ancient Pelusium, besieged and took that city. In a second campaign, Alexandria, which had fallen to Shiracouh, surrendered to his victorious arms; and, as at Belbeis, the standards of Egypt and Jerusalem were displayed in friendly union on its walls. Among the defenders of that celebrated city was Saladin, or Salahebdin, Shiracouh's nephew, a warrior whose name afterwards became redoubted, not only in the Moslem countries, but over the whole West. This young hero, full of chivalrous emprise, and loving war chiefly for

the renown to be won in it, made a brave defence ; and for three months the Christian King was foiled by his energetic resistance ; but famine, at length, produced that submission which force could not compass, and the gates were thrown open to the Christian and Egyptian banners. It is told of Saladin, that, when quitting the city at the head of the troops who had stood him so true in the siege, he was so charmed with the bravery which Humfrey of Thoron, Constable of the kingdom of Jerusalem, had displayed in the various assaults, that he entreated him, as the most valorous chevalier whom he had encountered, to knight him with his own hand ; which honourable mark of esteem the Constable, with the King's permission, instantly conferred, in consideration of the gallant defence which the youthful Moslem had made.

Amaury returned from this expedition laden with spoil, and covered with glory ; but the glimpse which he had obtained of the riches and resources of Egypt, and a convenient impression, that it behoved the Latins, out of consideration for their own safety, to subjugate every heathen land, soon afterwards instigated him to form, like his formidable and implacable enemy Nouredin, a project of appending it to his kingdom. Aware that he possessed neither men nor money sufficient for this enterprise ; he invited Manuel Comnenus, Emperor of the Greeks, to join in the expedition, and share the conquest. His ambassador, on this occasion, was the celebrated William Archbishop of Tyre, the historian of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem, on whose authority the modern annalists of the Crusades place their chief reliance. The Archbishop succeeded in affecting a favourable treaty ; in pursuance of which, an armament, with a stipulated quota of troops on board, and of

strength sufficient to blockade the Egyptian ports, sailed from the Hellespont for the Nile. Having formed this important alliance, Amaury next endeavoured to prevail on the Hospitallers to support him in the same enterprise. Gilbert D'Assalit, or De Saily, had just succeeded Arnaud de Comps as Grandmaster; and, being a man of sanguine temperament and impetuous valour, the King had no difficulty in winning him over individually to his designs. But the Grandmaster, though a person of great power in virtue of his office, and exercising, as a man of acknowledged ability, a considerable influence over many of the knights, was under the control of the council, whose duty it was to see the statutes of the Order preserved inviolate; and, before he could come to a definitive understanding with the King, he had to submit the whole project to that body. Though Amaury, at the Grandmaster's suggestion, pledged himself that, in the event of victory crowning his arms, and the city of Belbeis falling into his possession, he would convey it in perpetuity to the Order, many of the Hospitallers, actuated by a nice sense of honour, and a scrupulous respect for their statutes, contemned the bribe, and deprecated the projected expedition as one which they could not engage in with honour; seeing it had no immediate reference to the defence of the holy places, and was, besides, a direct breach of a treaty recently and solemnly ratified. The representations of the King and the Grandmaster, however, ultimately triumphed; for the knights, with shame be it told, were little loth to stretch a point of conscience for the sake of engaging in a lucrative campaign. Amaury and his counsellors argued, that the Infidels respected no treaties themselves, and were therefore not entitled to have the benefit of

them from others—a base and fallacious doctrine, at once unworthy of a Christian knight, and a crowned king; and the council, by a majority of votes, decided that the Grandmaster, and all the troops whom he could muster, should embark in the war, and that the expense of the armament should be defrayed with money borrowed from the banks of Florence and Genoa, which were at that time, in common with those of other Italian States, the treasuries of the Christian world.

The Grandmaster, having the sinews of war thus placed at his disposal, speedily enlisted a great number of mercenaries into the service of the Order; and, by his flattering representations of the wealth and renown to be won in the enterprise, also drew to his banner many young aspirants for knightly honours. The Templars, like the Hospitallers, were strenuously entreated by the King to join him in this expedition; but, jealous of the superior means of the Hospitallers, or, say their historians, regarding the war, as unprovoked and unjust, they pertinaciously refused to have any share in it. Notwithstanding the proud passiveness, however, of this powerful body, Amaury took the field with a numerous and efficient army. In the short space of ten days, he passed the desert that separates Palestine from Egypt, and invested Belbeis. The governor, on being summoned to surrender, expressed the greatest astonishment at seeing a prince, who had so recently been in the strictest alliance with the Sultan his master, appear before the city in the character of an enemy; and when the King endeavoured to excuse his breach of faith by some idle tales of Saracen aggression, clearly proved that they were fabrications. But Amaury's resolution was not to be shaken by mere arguments,

however just and well supported. He had determined on war, and obstinately refused to entertain any reasons that were calculated to turn him aside from it. Impatient to prosecute his march, he made immediate preparations for carrying Belbeis by escalade, in preference to subjecting it to a regular beleaguerment. In two days time he provided the necessary ladders and engines, and on the third morning at dawn his troops moved to the assault. The Christian army suddenly encompassed the whole city; while the inhabitants, resolved on a brave resistance, rushed to the walls, prepared to hurl darts, stones and fire, on the heads of the assailants. The storm-band, led by chosen knights, no sooner advanced the ladders to the fortifications, than they were crowded with warriors eager to be foremost in the desperate adventure. Many, hurried away by their valour, leapt upon the shoulders of their comrades where the wall was lowest, and endeavoured to vault upon the battlement; but it was bristled with Saracen lances, and death awaited all who had sufficient agility to make the spring. Enormous stones, too, were cast down on the climbers, and swept them in hundreds into the ditch, while incessant showers of javelins, and artificial fire, trebled the perils which they had to surmount. In these circumstances, Amaury, seeing the bravest of his troops piled in bloody heaps at the base of the rampart, ordered fresh assailants to advance, who finally made their way through falling darts and fireballs, to the top of the battlements, from which they flung themselves sword in hand into the city. The gates were speedily won, and the whole Christian army, breathing revenge for the blood that had been shed, poured like a torrent within the barriers. Imi-

tating the barbarians, from whom it was their boast that their fathers had recovered the sepulchre of Christ, the Latin soldiery placed no limits to their ferocity. Neither age, sex, nor condition, redeemed a victim from their swords; and had not avarice suggested to their leaders the policy of putting an end to the carnage, in order that there might be left a remnant for the Infidels to ransom, the conquest of the place would have been followed by its depopulation.

The Hospitallers, in terms of their agreement with the King, were instantly put in possession of the conquered city; and Amaury, at the head of his victorious troops, continued his march on Grand Cairo. The Sultan, filled with consternation at the fall of Belbeis, in which both his son and nephew had been made captive, in his despair despatched a swift messenger to Nouredin, once more imploring his assistance, notwithstanding the great reason he had to dread the vengeance of a chief, whom he had in the former war so foully deceived. To gain time to concentrate his forces, and give Nouredin's army opportunity to advance, he sent an embassy to the Christian camp; and, knowing Amaury's avaricious disposition, offered to purchase peace, and the liberty of his son and nephew, at an enormous ransom, to be paid in gold. Amaury, dazzled with the prospect of obtaining so much treasure—for a love of lucre was his besetting sin—preferred accepting these conditions to periling his army in an uncertain campaign. Two hundred thousand pieces of gold—the first instalment of the two millions which the Sultan offered—were instantly paid into his coffers; and he agreed to remain inactive in the position in which the embassy found him, until

Shawer had time to make up, by a general contribution throughout his territories, the prodigious sum he had engaged to pay. Amaury's officers, more clear-sighted than their sovereign, endeavoured, but in vain, to convince him that the Egyptian was merely trifling with him to gain time. The King could not bring himself to forego the hope of receiving so vast a ransom; and it was not till the Syrian Turkomans, with the famous Shiracouh at their head, rapidly skirting Arabia, arrived in his immediate vicinage, that he became fully sensible of his error.

Noureddin, at all times ready to enter into treaties having for their object the subversion of the Christian power in the East, lent a favourable ear to Shawer's applications; but he had not forgotten the former treachery of his old ally, and took care that the force which he now poured into Egypt, despite Amaury's efforts to bring him to an engagement, should be equal not only to compete with his Christian adversaries, but to enforce, on the part of the Sultan, a strict observance of their new treaty. It was the Christian monarch's wish to give the army of Shiracouh battle before it had formed a junction with the Egyptian forces; but the subtle Turkomans, thoroughly acquainted with the country, easily out-manœuvred him; and to increase the King's vexation, the Greek armament from the Hellespont was dispersed in a great storm, and many of the vessels cast away. Intimidated by these disasters, and ashamed of having been outwitted by Shawer, Amaury gave up the enterprise in despair, and, full of confusion at the failure of his ignoble plans, returned to Jerusalem, followed by the Hospitallers, who dared not attempt to retain Belbeis, and hotly pursued to his own frontier by

roving squadrons detached from Shiracouh's army, (1169).

This unfortunate expedition, in which the Grandmaster, Gilbert D'Assalit, took so active an interest, was fatal to the reputation of that knight. His brethren, exasperated at the recollection of the fallacious arguments by which he had won their consent, and humbled by the sense of having engaged in a war which their noble rivals, the Templars, had contemned as leading to dishonour, and which had burdened the Order with a debt of two hundred thousand ducats, were loud in their accusations; and the Grandmaster, overwhelmed by the blow given to his fame, resigned his dignity in a full chapter, and returned to Europe.* Hoveden the historian relates, that he subsequently presented himself in Normandy, at the court of Henry the Second of England, from whom, notwithstanding the untoward rumour that followed him from the East, he met with a gracious reception. Soon afterwards, intending to visit England, he took shipping at Dieppe; but the bark being old, and unable to withstand the shock of the waves, went down before she had well left the port, and the unfortunate D'Assalit was one of those who perished. Vertot conjectures, from these facts, that this knight was a native of England; but the supposition rests on very slender authority, particularly as, according to Sebastian Paoli, he declared himself a native of Tyre.

Shiracouh, having chased the Christian army beyond the desert, now turned his attention to the false ally who had claimed his support after he had no longer a title to rely on it. The Sultan knew his jeo-

* William of Tyre.

pardy, and tried, by magnificent gifts and subtle negotiations, to disarm the wrath of the Turkoman leader ; but it was not to be averted. Shiracouh, as artful as the wary traitor whom he had to deal with, at length succeeded in luring him into his camp, and had him instantly put to death—a proof, says old Fuller with his usual quaintness, that mercenary auxiliaries may be “ called in with a whistle, but scarce cast out with a whip.” This act of vengeance was followed up by an immediate march on Cairo, which the Turkoman entered triumphantly at the head of his troops, when the Khalif, grateful for his services, and not sorry to get rid of his former vizier, declared him Sultan in Shower’s stead. This dignity, however, he did not long enjoy ; for at the end of two months he fell sick and died, leaving his nephew Saladin his successor, not only in the command of Nouredin’s army, but in the government of Egypt—the phantom sovereign of that country having no alternative but to proclaim him Sultan, as he had done his immediate predecessor. Nouredin, though jealous of the ambitious temper of Saladin, confirmed him in these dignities ; and soon afterwards, (1171,) the death of the Egyptian Khalif, not without suspicion of violence, put an end at once to the shadowy supremacy of these princes and the Fatimite dynasty. This event rendered Saladin’s authority absolute on the banks of the Nile ; but he condescended to hold his sovereignty by investiture from the Abbassidian Khalif of Bagdad, who had long contested with the Fatimite princes the heirdom of their prophet, and with an honourable policy recognised the supremacy of Nouredin till the termination of that monarch’s life, (1173.) When that great leader, however, no longer stood

between him and the supreme power, he gave full vent to the boundless ambition of his heart. A Kurd by nation, and habituated, from his infancy, to rely for advancement solely on his sword, he was singularly expert at all warlike exercises—a severe but generous commander, a just governor, and a humane man; qualities calculated to exalt him to a lofty station in a country where scarcely any virtue, save that of sheer valour in war, ever came to maturity. Having connected himself by marriage with the family of Nouredin, he made war on that prince's son; and in a short time Damascus, Aleppo, and greater part of Syria and Mesopotamia, submitted to his arms. The Christians of Palestine beheld these conquests with dismay; for the active ambition of the Kurdish prince left them little hope that he would suffer the kingdom of Judea to remain inviolate, situated as it was almost in the centre of the mighty provinces which had fallen under his dominion. Still the fortune of war was not such as to create utter despondency. On one occasion, Saladin, anxious to annihilate a power whose very existence he held to be a stain on his renown, attacked the castle of Daron in Idumea, at the head of a large army; but the garrison making a brave resistance, he withdrew his troops, and invested Gaza, the grand stronghold of the Christians on the Egyptian frontier. Gaza, however, being defended by the Templars, was equally impregnable to his assaults; and, to revenge himself for the double repulse, he laid the adjacent country waste, and also instructed his lieutenants to devastate the principalities of Antioch and Tripoli.

The King of Jerusalem found, in these perilous times, that the two military orders were the stay of

his kingdom. Both Hospitallers and Templars might be said to live in their war-saddles; for the shout of battle came incessantly from one side or other, and, like true knights, they were always the first among the Christian warriors to send it back in defiance. But Amaury foresaw that this unequal contest must soon terminate in his destruction; and he therefore resolved, as the only chance of saving his crown, to implore the Princes of Europe to undertake a new crusade. An ambassador was accordingly despatched to the Kings of the West; and, in the mean time, Amaury, as some writers assert, repaired in person to Constantinople, to solicit the Emperor Manuel, with whom he was connected by marriage, for immediate succour. During his absence, the Grandmasters of the military orders were conjunctly intrusted with the government of his realm.*

Brother Gastus, a knight of whose country there exists no record, succeeded Gilbert D'Assalit as Grandmaster of the Hospitallers, on the resignation of that knight in 1169; but his government lasted only a few months. Joubert of Syria, his successor, the same individual who had so honourably accomplished a dangerous mission to Europe relative to the affairs of Antioch eight-and-thirty years before, was a knight of great sagacity and experience; and the King could not have chosen a fitter viceroy. Joubert and his colleague were scarcely installed in their new dignity, when the jeopardy of the state was increased by the appearance of an enemy in the person of an Armenian prince, who, though a Christian and a Knight Templar, had not only quitted his Order to enforce a claim

* Vertot.

he had to the sovereignty of his native country, but, actuated by a spirit of revenge against the Latins, who had countenanced another candidate, had entered into a league with the Infidels, and now proceeded to ravage the principality of Antioch with fire and sword, to the very frontiers of Judea. The barbarities practised on the Christians by this apostate knight, who was named Melier or Milon, surpassed even those which his Mohammedan allies inflicted. Against the Hospitallers and Templars, in particular, he entertained the most implacable enmity; and such of them as fell into his hands were either butchered in cold blood by his own minions, or handed over to the Turkomans, to experience an equally miserable fate. While these atrocities were perpetrated on the side of Antioch, the vigilance of Saladin, who still hung on the Egyptian frontier, left the knights-regents no leisure to chastise the renegade Templar in person; and they had therefore to depute a valiant Hospitaller, who had the guardianship of the marches towards Syria, to bring him to battle. Bohemond the Third, Prince of Antioch, son of that Raymond of Poitiers, who had married the Princess Constance, and, in right of her, obtained the sovereignty of the principality, joined his forces to those of the Hospitaller; and the false Templar, alarmed at the numerical superiority of his adversaries, hastily retired into the mountainous defiles to the northward of Antioch, whither the Christians did not think it prudent to follow him.

The apostasy of Melier was not the only stain which, about this time, fell on the reputation of the Order of which he was a member. The Templars, who had possession of Tripoli, had for a long period

waged war with a fanatical tribe who inhabited the mountainous country lying between that city and Tortosa, and whose chief, who bore simply the title of the Old Man of the Mountains, exercised the most absolute authority, not only over the properties and lives, but over the moral energies of his subjects. These barbarians, who took the name of Assassins, either from Hassan their founder, or from a poniard called *hassisin* in the Persian language, which they usually carried, and with which they perpetrated the most daring and atrocious murders at the command of their chief, had engrafted a few of the tenets of Islamism on their ancient Pagan creed—one of which was, an utter abhorrence of the Christian name. Such was their devotion to the will of the hoary despot who ruled them, that they held the commission of the most flagitious crimes under his authority a sure passport to paradise; and their daggers carried death wherever he had enemies. It is from the murderous habits of this race that the name by which they were known has its modern application. Armed only with their fatal poniard, they stole into the halls of Princes, and the courts of Kings, and fulfilled their bloody mission under the very swords which they knew were to hew them in pieces, the moment it was accomplished. The neighbouring princes trembled, in the deepest recesses of their palaces, at the terrible renown of these fanatics; and courted, with lavish gifts, the amity of the remorseless wretch who had so many daggers at his command, and who had only to desire one of his avengers to cast himself headlong from a tower, and another to bury his poniard in his own heart, to meet with instant obedience. The Templars alone, having a government not to be annihilated by

the fall of their chief, were inveterate in their hostility to this blood-thirsty race, and spared no efforts to effect their subjugation. The Assassins, satisfied at last that the existence of the Order was not to be affected by the death of one or even many Grandmasters, at length submitted to pay a yearly tribute; but, in the end, they became weary of the burden, and finally their chief sent a deputation to Jerusalem, offering to be baptized along with the whole of his people, provided the King would declare the tribute no longer exigible. Amaury, flattered by the prospect of making so many converts to the Christian faith, received the envoy with great distinction; and, after pledging himself that the tribute should be remitted, sent him back to his master under an honourable escort. But on the journey, a Templar, named Du Mesnil, unfortunately encountered the ambassador, and, contemning alike his capacity, and the King's guarantee for his safety, ran on him with his sword, and deprived him of life. Amaury's rage, when he heard of this rash act, knew no bounds. He instantly insisted on the culprit being given up to him, to be dealt with as justice might dictate; but Odo de Saint Amand, the Grandmaster of the Templars, refused to comply with the requisition, though he had the murderer arrested and put in irons, alleging, as an apology for his contumacy, the privileges of the Order, which declared the crimes of its members cognizable only by the head of the church at Rome. Amaury, however, was not to be turned aside from his purpose by this argument. He laid hold of Du Mesnil in defiance of the Order, and threw him into close durance, from which, in all probability, he would have been liberated only to make

exemplary atonement for his crime, had not the death of the King occurred just in time to save his forfeited life. (1173).

Amaury, though in some respects an unwise monarch, inherited all the valour of his race; and he had not been long in the grave before the kingdom experienced that it could ill spare either his counsel or his arm. His son and successor, Baldwin the Fourth, sickly from his birth, wanted both the physical strength, and the mental energy necessary to compete with the gigantic power of Saladin, who, triumphant in every quarter, waited but a favourable opportunity to pounce on Palestine, and extirpate the whole Christian race. Baldwin, being under age when his father died, Raymond Count of Tripoli was installed regent of the kingdom. This prince, justly alarmed at the threats of Saladin, endeavoured to check his encroachments from the side of Aleppo, by investing Harem, a strong castle on that frontier, with all the troops he could muster; but, after a long siege, he withdrew his forces, having, according to several historians, disgraced himself by accepting a bribe from the Saracen chief. Meanwhile Saladin, who was in Egypt at this juncture (1174), was not inactive. At the head of a numerous army he burst into Palestine from the desert; and Baldwin, who had just attained his majority, was compelled, notwithstanding his infirmities, to leap into the saddle, and hasten, at the head of a very inferior force, to the violated frontier. Instead of encountering his powerful adversary in a pitched battle, he fell on his camp by night, and routed him with so great a slaughter, that even the intrepid Saladin himself had to make his escape into the desert, half naked, on the back of a dromedary. This

victory, however, was afterwards counterbalanced by a terrible defeat, which the Christians sustained at a pass on the Jordan, called Jacob's Ford. Saladin, with that strategic skill for which he was remarkable, drew them into an ambuscade, and then attacked them on all sides with such impetuosity, that they almost instantly disbanded, leaving the Hospitallers and Templars alone to contest the field, on which the greater part of them perished. The venerable Joubert, Grandmaster of the Hospitallers, covered with wounds, and seeing nearly all his knights slain, flung himself into the Jordan, with barely strength to swim across it, and reach the nearest friendly stronghold; and the Grandmaster of the Templars, still more unfortunate, was borne down by foes, and made captive. It is told of this gallant Templar by the historian, Robert Dumont, that Saladin offered to exchange him for one of his own kinsmen, whom the Templars held in durance; but that, with the brave spirit of a Christian knight, he rejected the proposition, protesting that it would ill become the head of an Order, the members of which were pledged to conquer or die, and who held no property, save a girdle and a knife, to set an example of surrender in battle under a hope of ransom. It was probably in this engagement that a Templar named James de Maille, mounted on a white horse, fought so nobly, that the Saracens gave him the name of Saint George, and afterwards drank his blood, thinking that they would thereby acquire his courage. *

The disastrous result of this battle filled the Latin Christians with dismay; and great cause had they

* Coggeshall.

to despond ; for never, since the Cross was planted by Godfrey on the walls of the Holy City, had their prospects worn so gloomy an aspect. Their army was broken and dispersed, the whole country devastated by barbarian hordes, their King a miserable leper, for to that loathsome state his maladies had reduced him, and the two military Orders without heads—Joubert being incapable of service by reason of his wounds, and Odo de Saint Amand in close captivity. In short, as Fuller expresses it, “ the kingdom was as sick as the King ; he of leprosie, that of an incurable consumption.” In these lamentable circumstances, the Latin Lords had no alternative but to endeavour to avert, by negotiation, that danger which they could not repel by defiance ; and in consideration of a large sum of money, Saladin agreed to a truce, to which he was the more easily induced to accede, from the circumstance of a grievous famine having wasted his own territories. Before this treaty could be ratified, however, the venerable Grandmaster of the Hospitallers fell a sacrifice to his ardour in the public service. Heedless of his scarcely healed scars and gray hairs, he threw himself, along with a chosen band of knights, into the castle of Margat, which had been granted to the Order, and greatly strengthened under his superintendence, on purpose to defend it from a strong body of troops which Saladin sent against it. As usual, the knights maintained the place with extraordinary bravery, and repelled the Infidels in several sanguinary assaults. Joubert saw the ramparts strewn with the bodies of the bravest of his chevaliers ; but, with the indomitable resolution of one who had passed his life in war, and was prepared to lay it down in the breach,

he spurned the idea of capitulation. Enraged at this gallant resistance, the besiegers made a last desperate attack, and, after a bloody struggle, carried the fortress. Joubert, though he anxiously courted death, beheld the last of his companions hewn down at his post, and fell alive into the hands of his enemies, who instantly threw him into a dungeon, where, cruelly deprived of necessary sustenance, he terminated his illustrious life (1177).

The Order elected Roger De Moulins, a wise and valorous Norman knight, as his successor. De Moulins' talents for government were soon called into active exercise, by the uncharitable dissensions which, during his grandmastership, partially severed the fraternal bonds that had previously united the military Orders, and rendered the Hospitallers and Templars nearly as hostile towards each other, as they mutually were to the barbarians whom they were pledged by a solemn vow to hold perpetually at defiance. The spirit of Christian charity and pious zeal no longer regulated these warriors in the counsel, and fortified them in the field. Worldly ambition had taken possession of them; and, though their bravery remained untarnished, they exposed themselves to danger, less in consonance with their vows, than for the purpose of winning the earthly guerdon of military renown. From being generous rivals in the combat, they became wranglers in the council and the camp; and trivial disputes as to rank and precedence kindled the fiercest animosities, which frequently flamed out in open insults and unknighthly broils. This disunion could not have occurred at a time more unfortunate for the safety of the kingdom; for, in addition to the attacks of Saladin, it was weakened by the jealousies and feuds of its own

nobles, who, all eager to attain the supreme authority which the infirmities of the King disqualified him from discharging, scrupled not to resort to the most dishonourable and infamous methods to compass each his own exaltation. In this emergency, the King, whose jurisdiction was openly contemned by the rival knights, appealed to the Pope, Alexander the Third, for support, who, satisfied that the preservation of the Holy Land depended on the immediate reconcilment of the military Orders, issued an injunction, commanding them instantly to drop their uncharitable hostility towards each other, and ratify their reunion by a solemn treaty signed by their Grandmasters. He was reluctantly obeyed; and for a time these contentions ceased, but only to recommence, with greater bitterness, at a subsequent period.

The loathsome disease with which King Baldwin was afflicted being a barrier to his forming a matrimonial connection, and at the same time incapacitating him from holding the reins of government in his own hand, he at length associated Guy de Lusignan, a prince of the House of la Marche, with him, as regent of the kingdom (1182). Lusignan had visited Palestine from motives of devotion, as was the wont of every pious and adventurous knight of that age; and being of a noble port, and withal well versed in the gallantry of courts, he not only established himself in the favour of the King, but won the heart of his eldest sister, the Princess Sybilla, widow of a Lord of Montferrat, and obtained her in marriage. The nomination of an undistinguished foreigner, such as the Latin Lords, with some reason, held Lusignan to be, to this exalted station, filled the whole of them with jealousy and distrust;

for so complete was Baldwin's renunciation of the regal authority, that it was virtually an abdication of his crown in favour of his sister's consort. Raymond, Count of Tripoli, who had long secretly aspired to the succession, irritated at seeing his hopes blighted, not only fomented internal disaffection, but, if we may believe many historians, entered into a treasonable conspiracy with Saladin against his sovereign, and suggested to that vigilant enemy projects for the subversion of the kingdom. This nobleman was the lineal descendant of Raymond, Count of Toulouse, the fellow-crusader of Godfrey, and grandson of Baldwin the Second, in right of his mother Hodierna, third daughter of that monarch. The truce which had been so opportunely concluded with the Infidel commander still subsisted; but some trifling encroachments having been made by the Saracens on the Christian frontier towards the desert, they were followed by so sweeping a reprisal on the part of a famous adventurer, named Reginald de Chatillon, Lord of the strong fortress of Mont-Royal, or Karac, that Saladin demanded the most ample reparation, which, being refused, he instantly imprisoned fifteen hundred Christian merchants and pilgrims, who had been shipwrecked near Damietta, and allowed strong marauding parties to pass the Jordan, and devastate the Christian territory. The progress of these ravagers had the effect of calling the attention of the Latin Lords from their own private feuds to the jeopardy of the kingdom; and they exerted themselves to collect a force sufficiently large to drive back the invaders into the desert. A considerable army, supported by the military orders, was brought together; but the King, stricken in every limb with the malignant disease that

had fastened on him, was unable to head it; and the command, in compliance with the royal wish, devolved on Lusignan, who, as presumptive heir to the throne, had been created Count of Jaffa and Ascalon. By this unwise act, the preparations to chastise the Infidels for their breach of the truce came to nought. The Latin Lords, scorning to give effectual assistance to a leader whom they disliked and envied, vouchsafed him but little support; and having no great capacity for war himself, he allowed the Infidels to recross the Jordan with all their spoil, though he had lain encamped over against them with a superior force for eight days, and had repeated opportunities of attacking them at an advantage. This pusillanimous conduct completely dishonoured him in the estimation of the grandees, who, with all their faults, were a brave race, and inherited from their fathers an ardent desire to see the throne constantly occupied by a warlike King. Scorning to serve under a man whom they held to be a craven, they openly protested that they would never more lift a sword under his banner; and the King, to whom their complaints were formally tendered, not only admitted that Lusignan had proved himself unworthy of the command, but recalled his grant of the county of Jaffa, on the argument, that the defence of so important a place could not with propriety be intrusted to a mere carpet-knight. This indignity, coupled with the King's public nomination of Baldwin his nephew, son of the Princess Sybilla by her first husband, a boy scarcely five years of age, as his successor, wounded Lusignan's pride so deeply, that he retired to Ascalon, and for some time showed a disposition to condemn the royal authority. But nature had made him

a bolder man at the banquet than in the broil ; and, instead of deciding his fortune with the sword, he ultimately consented to receive back the county of Jaffa in lieu of all his denuded honours, and to hold it and his other possessions simply as the King's vassal.

Raymond of Tripoli, who had secretly fomented the divisions against Lusignan, benefited greatly by his humiliation, being appointed to succeed him as regent by the infirm King. Though he had long aspired to that dignity, he at first affected to decline it, well knowing that Baldwin, who dreaded his turbulent disposition, would not dare to offer it to any other Lord ; and when he did accept it, it was with the thankless port of one who had been importuned into a disagreeable and vexatious office, and under an express stipulation, that the defence of the frontiers should devolve entirely on the military orders. As a settled persuasion prevailed throughout the kingdom, that a successful resistance could not be much longer made to the encroachments of Saladin, one of the first acts of Raymond's regency was to renew the truce with that Prince, which he effected as before, by paying him a large ransom. The Christians, in purchasing this truce, were actuated by a hope, that, before it expired, the Princes of Europe would take into consideration the perilous position of the Holy Land, and engage in a new crusade. It was accordingly determined to despatch a solemn embassy to the sovereigns of the West, and Heraclius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, voluntarily offered to conduct it. The vain and pompous character of Heraclius, however, but poorly qualified him for so important a mission ; and the council, though they did not choose entirely to reject his services, prudently appointed the Grandmasters of the Hospital-

lers and Templars his colleagues, in the expectation, that the wisdom and amenity of these two experienced knights would prevent the warm temper of the prelate from doing injury to the cause. The ambassadors first bent their way to Verona, where Pope Lucius the Third, and the Emperor Frederic the First, chanced to be at the time engaged in the settlement of their territorial disputes. These princes listened with condescension to the moving tale which the embassy laid before them, and dismissed them with abundance of futile hopes. The Emperor, says Vertot, promised them troops, which he never furnished; and the Pope gave them only indulgences and letters of recommendation, which cost him nothing.

At Verona, the embassy lost Arnould of Troye, Grandmaster of the Templars, who was suddenly seized with a violent distemper, of which he died. Having laid him in his grave, his companions made the best of their way to the court of France. The throne of that country was occupied at the time by Philip the Second, a young prince scarcely twenty years of age, who received them "graciously," and, as Rigord says, with the "kiss of peace." * The ambassadors, in order to strengthen the arguments employed by them to induce Philip to succour the tottering kingdom of which they were the representatives, laid at his feet the keys of Jerusalem, as a pledge that the Christians of Palestine were prepared to recognise him as their protector, at whatever time he chose to display his banner on their walls. Filled with enthusiasm at the idea of unfurling the Oriflamme on a soil which the whole Christian world venerated as holy, and which a long succession of illustrious crusaders had passed their lives in efforts

* Hist. Philip Aug.

to redeem, Philip would have instantly donned his arms, and marched his army in person to its relief; but his counsellors represented, that his absence at such a juncture would be dangerous to the safety of his own territories; and he was necessitated to moderate his chivalrous ardour. A new crusade, however, was preached throughout the kingdom, and liberal promises were made to those who should draw their swords in the sacred cause. In England, to which the ambassadors next repaired, they were received with equal respect; but Henry the Second, who then occupied the throne, though long pledged to lead an army to the defence of the Holy City, in fulfilment of a penance imposed on him by the Pope, expiatory of the murder of Thomas à Becket, saw good reason, in his advanced age, and the turbulent ambition of his sons, for acquiescing in the opinion of his parliament, that his coronation-oath required him to stay at home, and leave the warlike Saladin to be bearded by some other chief. The parliament, nevertheless, was willing to agree to a grant of money for levying troops to be immediately despatched to the East, and also to encourage a general arming throughout the empire; but, dissatisfied with these half-measures, Heraclius entreated, since the King could not take the command himself, that he would send one of his sons as his representative. To this request Henry returned an equally unfavourable reply; upon which the patriarch's temper utterly deserted him; and he upbraided the King so insolently, not only with his lukewarmness in the cause of religion, but with all his own special sins, that Henry had great difficulty in repressing his wrath; and it required all the sagacity of the Grandmaster of the Hospitallers to effect a reconciliation.

The result of this embassy gave but little satisfaction to the Christians of Palestine. The English King, notwithstanding the intemperate conduct of Heraclius, contributed a considerable sum of moneꝝ to relieve their necessities; and the crusaders who voluntarily mustered in his territories, when incorporated with those of France, formed a body sufficiently numerous to have afforded very important succour, if properly commanded; but no leader of renown was at their head; and in those days the moral influence of a warlike name was so great, that an army which took the field under the auspices of an unknown commander, was regarded as delivered over to destruction. At this untoward juncture (1186), when all public confidence was at an end, Baldwin the Fourth died; and he had scarcely been seven months in the grave, when it also opened to receive his successor, the young Baldwin the Fifth, who terminated his reign so suddenly, as to countenance strong suspicions that his life had been shortened by poison. These suspicions were at first directed against the Regent; but, from what afterwards transpired, the foul crime was, with more justice, laid to the charge of the youth's own mother, who was supposed to have perpetrated it for the purpose of advancing herself and Lusignan to the supreme authority. Certain it is, that the young King died suddenly in his mother's palace, before his subjects were aware that his life was in any danger; and the Princess did not allow the event to become known till she had secured, by bribery it is said, the Patriarch and Gerard de Ridefort, Grandmaster of the Templars, to assist her and Lusignan to ascend the throne. In the same hour that the people were informed that their King was dead, Ride-

fort, who was custodier of the regal insignia, placed them at the Queen's disposal, unknown to the Lords of the realm; and Guy de Lusignan and his consort were immediately proclaimed King and Queen of Judea. These proceedings excited the greatest indignation throughout the country. Lusignan was held in such general contempt by the nobles, that even his own brother Geoffrey, a knight of distinguished bravery and great physical strength, scoffingly exclaimed, "Since they have made Guy a King, they would, had they known my value, have made me a God." The Grandmaster of the Templars was regarded by many people as a traitor, who had surrendered the crown to a claimant who had no title to wear it; and so widely was public opinion at variance on the subject, that both parties took to arms, and made preparation to decide their disputes in open battle. As Lusignan's, or rather his consort's partisans, were numerous, the Count of Tripoli, as champion of the malecontents, held it more prudent to settle the matter by artifice than by the sword. Intimation was conveyed to the Queen, that, as far as concerned herself, the grantees were ready to recognise her authority; but that, to secure that recognition, she must formally divorce Lusignan, and, if she were still determined to have a companion on the throne, choose a partner more likely to prove a bulwark between the kingdom and its enemies. The princess, who did not want capacity, and who saw that this proposition might, with due management, be made to serve her own purpose, agreed to it on condition that the nobles should bind themselves, by a solemn oath, to swear fealty to whoever she should afterwards choose as their King. Raymond and his

partisans, eager to get rid of Lusignan, whom they held in the most sovereign contempt and detestation, readily bound themselves in the manner stipulated; and on some futile pretence, which historians have not deigned to record, the Patriarch, who was devoted to the Queen's interest, forthwith declared her and Lusignan legally divorced. This done, the nobles readily did homage to her as their sovereign, and she was conducted with great pomp to the church of the Holy Sepulchre, to undergo the ceremony of coronation. No sooner, however, was the crown placed on her head, than she removed it, and with her own hands placed it on that of Lusignan, whom, to the astonishment of the spectators, she hailed by the title of King, exclaiming, at the same time, in the language of scripture, and with a stateliness worthy of her ancestry, "Whom God hath joined, let not man put asunder!"* The grandees, foiled by this act, offered no opposition; and neither did the populace, though they marvelled at it as an extraordinary event, manifest any decided hostility towards their new sovereigns. The Count of Tripoli alone was exasperated beyond reconciliation. Imprecating ruin on the heads of Lusignan and his queen, and ready to cast away even honour and life in order to be revenged on them and their abettors, he instantly quitted Jerusalem, and retired to his own principality; where an envoy, accredited by Saladin to take advantage of this unhappy rupture, soon after found him prepared to subscribe to any scheme, no matter how perilous or how infamous, likely to compass his rival's overthrow. In

* Hoveden, Coggeshall, and others, throw doubt on this story.

compliance with the Saracen's representations, the Count pledged himself, it is averred, to become an apostate to the Christian faith, and to hold the kingdom of Judea in vassalage from the Sultan, provided he were assisted to ascend the throne, and take vengeance on his enemies. As these dark plans, however, were likely to be forwarded more by a hypocritical submission to the regnant king, than by a bold defiance, he returned to Jerusalem, where, through the intercession of his friends, he was restored to favour, and thereby enabled to mature, without suspicion, his desperate designs.

The storm which the Christians had so long seen gathering on their frontiers, at length burst over them. Saladin, in accordance with his secret treaty with the Count of Tripoli, marched a vast army, principally composed of veteran troops, into Palestine (1187), and laid siege to Acre, the strongest and most opulent city of the kingdom. Through the machinations of the Count of Tripoli, no effectual opposition was offered to his advance; but the Grandmasters of the Hospitallers and Templars, to whom the King confided the defences of the menaced fortress, were enabled to throw themselves into it with a strong body of knights, before the Infidels could effect its investment. The Christians having repeatedly found, in their former wars, that victory attended their night-attacks on the enemy's camp, resolved, on this occasion, to make a desperate sortie before sunrise, and, if practicable, raise the siege by one decisive blow. Headed by the military friars, the garrison, and such of the inhabitants as were able to bear arms, sallied silently from the gates under the cloud of night, and fell sword in hand on the sleeping host. The Saracens, filled with conster-

nation at the impetuosity of this attack, were for a time incapable of resistance; and, seeing their lines strewn with dead, and their tents in flames, they were on the point of yielding up the field in despair when the valiant Sultan presented himself in the midst of his broken phalanxes, and rallied them with his well-known voice. When the sun rose, the Christians, instead of finding themselves masters of the field, beheld the Infidels drawn up in battle-array, and on the point of surrounding them. A regular battle ensued. The knights, emulous of renown, and burning with the hope of taking the redoubted Saladin captive, made a gallant effort to pierce the phalanx which he had rallied in person; and closed hand to hand with their adversaries in deadly strife, neither giving nor asking quarter. The Grand-master of the Hospitallers repeatedly charged through the Saracen squadrons; but at length his horse received a wound which brought him down with his rider under him, and in a moment the venerable knight lay weltering in his blood, and hewn almost to pieces by the scimitars of the barbarians. The Hospitallers, when they saw him fall, formed a ring round his body; and it became the centre of a desperate conflict, in which many brave men of both armies fell. The battle terminated without either party obtaining a decisive advantage; but as the Infidels retreated from the field, the Christians held it a token that they had been worsted. The body of the brave De Moulins was found by the knights who survived him, buried under a pile of the slain, chiefly Turkomans and Saracens, whom the falchions of his brethren had sacrificed to his manes. It was interred at Acre with knightly honours; and the lamentations, not only of his own order, but of the whole nation, followed him to his grave.

Garnier, a native of Naplouse, in Syria, Grand Prior of England, and Turcopolier or Colonel-general of the infantry of the Order, succeeded to the Grandmastership on the death of Roger De Moulins. Garnier was a knight of great experience and valour; and the Hospitallers were induced to make choice of him, from a conviction that, never since the institution of the Order, had there existed a greater necessity for selecting a chief in whom these qualities were combined. Saladin, foiled before Acre, and acting in concert with the traitor, Raymond of Tripoli, who, the more effectually to screen his treason, had suggested that his own possessions should be attacked, laid siege to Tiberias, which belonged to the Count, in right of his wife, who had made it her place of residence. The town fell into the Sultan's hands, almost without resistance; but the Princess, who was ignorant of her Lord's treachery, retired with the garrison into the castle, and made preparations for a resolute defence. On her situation becoming known in Jerusalem, Raymond, who had wormed himself deeply into the King's confidence, was vehement in his demands for succour, and insisted that every man in the kingdom able to bear arms should march to relieve so important a place. Lusignan, who was no match for Raymond, either in camp or in council, adopted this perfidious advice, and, instead of relying on his own generalship, and the valour of a small army of chosen soldiers, not only drained all his fortresses of the troops requisite to defend them, but crowded his ranks with citizens and peasants, totally ignorant of war, and took the field, determined to stake the fate of his kingdom on a single battle.*

* Some writers assert, that the Count of Tripoli, far from

The Count of Tripoli was appointed to a distinguished command in this army. On its arrival in the vicinage of Saladin's position, Raymond, in furtherance of his own nefarious designs, prevailed on the unsuspecting King to fix his camp in an arid and elevated place, destitute of water—that most essential provision of an army. When the blunder was discovered, it was found that a supply could only be procured by opening a passage to a stream flowing in rear of the Saracen host. In a country like Syria, such a privation could not be borne passively by a large force, in the heat of July, for any length of time. One night's repose convinced Lusignan of the untenableness of his camp, and he issued an order that an attempt should be made to open a passage, sword in hand, to the river. The Templars, with their usual bravery, volunteered to lead the van; and, rushing down from their rocky camp into the plain, where Saladin had drawn up his army in battle array to receive them, they charged the Saracen line with such impetuosity that it was completely broken by their onset. But at this important juncture, when it was the special duty of the Count of Tripoli to support them with a powerful reserve, that apostate Lord, according to some historians, turned his back on the battle and fled, leaving them entirely at the mercy of their enemies. The rest of the army, struck with dismay at his desertion, returned unbroken to their former position; and the gallant Templars, hemmed in on every side, and overborne by numbers,

expressing any undue anxiety about the fate of Tiberias, declared himself ready to sacrifice it for the public good. They add, that it was the Grandmaster of the Templars who spurred on Guy of Lusignan to his destruction.

were all slain or made captive. Lusignan and his disheartened troops passed another night in their rocky prison, tormented by thirst, which was greatly aggravated by the heat of the season, and the conflagration of the woods that clothed the mountain, which Saladin had set on fire. Spent with fatigue, and rendered careless of life by their sufferings, the soldiers threw themselves on the bare earth, and ceased to observe any discipline. Information of their despair having reached the vigilant Sultan, he boldly stormed their position, and, meeting with scarcely any resistance, completely annihilated the whole army. For a time, the fragment of the true Cross, which was planted on an eminence, served as a rallying-point to the broken battalions; but gradually all who had gathered round it were hewn down, and at last the bishop of Acre had the holy relic torn from his grasp. The carnage was dreadful, for the Infidels gave no quarter; and the blood of thirty thousand Christians ran in streamlets down the rocks. The King, the Grandmaster of the Templars, the famous partisan, Reginald de Chatillon, and a vast number of Lords and Knights, fell alive into the hands of the enemy. The Grandmaster of the Hospitallers was almost the only person of distinction who escaped captivity or death. After performing many feats of valour, when he saw the battle irretrievably lost, he cut his way, single-handed, through the enemy's squadrons, and, covered with wounds, fled to Ascalon, where he soon after died. It is stated, on the authority of Hoveden and other historians, that Saladin, regarding the military Orders as the bulwark of the Christian power in the East, conducted himself with unwonted severity towards the Hospitallers and Templars whom he made prisoners in

this disastrous conflict ; and that, on their refusing to become apostates to their religion, he cruelly ordered them to be put to death. But it is probable that these atrocities were perpetrated in the flush of victory, either without his knowledge, or by barbarians over whom, at such a moment, he had no controul ; for never had the tribes of the desert been under the rule of so magnanimous and clement a chief. This inference is strengthened by his conduct towards the captive King. On being summoned, along with the Grandmaster of the Templars, Reginald de Chatillon, and several other Latin Lords, to the presence of the Sultan, Lusignan prepared himself for death. But Saladin received him with courtesy, and seeing him sinking under the effects of thirst, weariness and grief, commanded a pleasant beverage, cooled with snow, to be given him. The King having quenched his thirst, would have handed the cup to Reginald de Chatillon ; but Saladin intimated, through his interpreter, that it was for Lusignan alone that it had been filled, and that Reginald, having forfeited his life by innumerable crimes, could not share the hospitable draught. He then reproached that unprincipled chief, who was indeed little better than a bandit leader, with the truces he had broken, the robberies he had perpetrated, and the cruelties he had exercised, towards the prisoners who had fallen into his hands. Above all, he charged him with a design, which it was well known he had long entertained, of crossing the desert, from his stronghold of Mount Royal, at the head of a body of desperate partisans, and surprising and plundering the holy cities of Medina and Mecca ; and, as an atonement for the sacrilegious intent and his numberless atrocities, called upon him to renounce Christ, or surrender his life a victim at the

shrine of Mohammedan vengeance. Reginald, with an intrepidity worthy of a less polluted and nobler heart, answered resolutely, though he saw the Moslem's scimitar ready to leap from its scabbard, that, as a Christian, he scorned to purchase his life by so foul a recantation. Scarcely had he uttered these words, when the ready blade swept his head from his shoulders, thereby conferring the crown of martyrdom on a man who otherwise merited a felon's death. The lives of all his companions were spared, and they were sent prisoners to Damascus.

The last days of the kingdom of Jerusalem now seemed to be fast approaching. The King and the flower of his nobles were in captivity—the manhood of the country had fallen under the swords of the Infidels—and the military orders were nearly extinct. It was under these disastrous circumstances that the few Hospitallers, still marshalled under their once victorious banner, assembled, to elect a leader in the stead of the venerable knight who had received his death-wound in the battle of Tiberias. That dignity was no longer an object of competition, but so beset with cares and perils, that the knights with difficulty prevailed on Ermengard Daps, on whom their choice fell, to accept it, which he did, under the conviction that it remained only for himself and his brethren to seek an honourable death (1187).* Saladin lost no time in following up his victory by new conquests. Many of the strongest places in the kingdom, drained of their garrisons, and filled with dismay at the rapidity with which he overran the country, threw open their gates;

* Baudoin, Vertot and others. Boisgelin says he was not elected till 1191.—*Chron. Malta.*

and, at length, anxious to smite the Christian power to the core, he laid siege to Jerusalem, which was defended only by a few thousand Christians, the chief of whom were followers of the Greek church, and of course hostile to the Latin supremacy. The Queen, who awaited within the walls the ruin of her throne, offered to capitulate; but Saladin, knowing her inability to offer a protracted resistance, rejected the proposition, and declared, that, if the city did not instantly surrender, he would scale the ramparts, sword in hand, and avenge, by an indiscriminate massacre of the inhabitants, the Moslem blood shed by Godfrey of Bouillon. This answer rendered the Latins desperate, and they resolved to bury themselves under the ruins of their shattered battlements. Even the women, gathering courage from despair, took arms, and prepared themselves to share the death that awaited their natural protectors; and so bravely did the garrison repel every assault, that, at the end of fourteen days, the Sultan was glad to sign the treaty which he had previously rejected. The terms were at once honourable to the garrison, and indicative of a rare humanity in the conqueror. The city was left undespoyled, and the Christian nobles and soldiers were permitted to march out with their arms, and guaranteed a safe convoy to any town in which they might choose to seek refuge. As to the inhabitants, the native Greeks were allowed to remain unmolested; but such as were Latins by descent were required to pay a ransom, the men ten, the women five, and the children two crowns of gold, and to remove to some other place. All persons who were unable to pay this ransom were detained as slaves.

Notwithstanding the clement terms of this treaty,

the last article of which alone pressed with severity on the vanquished, religious associations gave it an aspect of refined cruelty to the unhappy Latins, who passed the last night they remained possessors of the city in lamentations and tears. Multitudes, carried away by a pious enthusiasm, which momentarily became stronger as the hour of their expulsion drew near, hastened to the Holy Sepulchre, and prostrated themselves in mournful humiliation before it. Saladin, with a consideration that did him honour, refrained from entering the city, though the gates were thrown open at sunrise, until these melancholy demonstrations were ended, and the last of the Latin Christians had bidden it a final farewell. The matrons, carrying their infants, led the procession;—after them came the men bearing provisions for their journey, and such household relics as circumstances permitted them to remove;—and, lastly, came the Queen, and the two infant princesses, her daughters, surrounded by the priesthood, the remnant of the nobility, and the few military men who were still able to grasp a lance. It is said, that several of the Christian ladies, whose lords were in captivity, uttered dolorous cries, and lifted up their hands in earnest supplication, when they beheld Saladin, as he stood watching their departure. The noble-minded Kurd, on being made acquainted with the cause of their grief, which one of them, who had prostrated herself at his feet, energetically described as to be lightened only by the liberation of their natural protectors, humanely ordered such prisoners as they named to be set free, and dismissed the fair suppliants with several princely gifts. Nor did the generosity of the conqueror terminate with this chivalrous action. With that respect for valour and

humanity which supremely distinguished him, he no sooner heard of the benevolent attention which the Hospitallers were in the habit of bestowing on the sick and wounded, than he granted ten of them permission to remain a year longer in Jerusalem, to perfect the cure of all the sufferers who had been confided to their care. *

Thus, on the 2d of October 1187, at the distance of eighty-eight years from its conquest by the first crusaders, Jerusalem passed once more under the Mohammedan yoke. Saladin, ere he entered the subjugated capital, caused the bells of the Christian temples to be broken and melted down; and the Patriarchial Church, which had originally been a magnificent mosque, built by the Caliph Omar on the ruins of the famous Temple of Solomon, was carefully purified with rose water, and again dedicated to Infidel rites. The great cross which surmounted the dome of this superb structure, was also displaced by the Sultan's orders, and, as a mark of degradation, dragged for two successive days through the filth of the streets. The wars of near a century had won for the city that had been the object of so much pious zeal and so many sanguinary conflicts, nothing save fresh dishonour and a heavier chain.

* Continuation of William of Tyre.

CHAPTER IV.

Siege of Tyre—Death of the Count of Tripoli—The Third Crusade—Siege of Acre—Expedition of the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa—Institution of the Teutonic Knights—Arrival of Philip Augustus and Richard Cœur-de-Lion before Acre—Rivalry of the Kings-Crusaders—Conquest of Acre—March of Richard from Acre to Ascalon—Termination of the Third Crusade—Death of Saladin.

THE Queen and her retinue found an asylum at Ascalon; but the miserable multitude who shared in her expulsion from the capital of her kingdom, were scattered far and wide. Some of the refugees betook themselves to Tripoli, others to Antioch; and many conceiving Jerusalem reduced to perpetual bondage, left Asia for ever, and passed into the European States. Among the last were the Nuns-Hospitallers of Saint John, who, with the Grandmaster's permission, retired to the Christian kingdoms of the West, where their Order subsequently attained considerable importance. To the dishonour of the Prince of Antioch, he not only denied the wanderers who crowded thither the rights of hospitality, but stripped them of such property as they had been able to carry away.

The Queen, though she had received a safe conveyance to Ascalon, was not long permitted to retain that stronghold, for Saladin soon after invested it with a considerable force; and she held it advisable to

surrender, chiefly on condition that her consort, together with the Grandmaster of the Templars, and fifteen other Latin Lords, should receive their liberty. An article in the treaty stipulated, that Lusignan should solemnly renounce the title of King of Jerusalem; and he had the meanness to agree to this humiliating abdication of a throne, which he may be said to have usurped, and which he had neither the gallantry nor the talent to defend. Having thus publicly discrowned himself, he retired, with his Princess, to a solitary stronghold on the sea-shore, where Saladin, who held him in sovereign contempt, left him unmolested, as a foe altogether unworthy of his regard.

The Christians having thus lost Jerusalem, Ascalon, and many other fortresses, were filled with despair. The inhabitants of Tyre, which had sheltered great numbers of the fugitives from Jerusalem and other places, no longer imbued with the invincible bravery which had enabled their ancestors to hold out for seven months against the army of Alexander, were so intimidated by the intelligence that Saladin was about to invest their city, that they prepared to receive the Infidels as conquerors, and would have tendered the Sultan the keys of their gates without resistance, had not young Conrad of Montferrat, son of the Marquis of that name, whom Saladin held in captivity, and brother of the first husband of the Queen Sybilla, arrived from Europe at this critical juncture, and offered them his services provided they would engage to make a resolute defence. Contemning Lusignan as a craven knight, and hurried away by youthful ambition, he refused to unsheath his sword in his cause; but stipulated, that, should he succeed in repulsing the Infidels, and pre-

-serving the place, the Tyrians should afterwards swear fealty to him as their liege lord. Having secured their assent to this condition, he invited the remnant of the Hospitallers to his assistance, and, with their aid, rendered the citizens so expert in military exercises, and infused such a warlike spirit into the whole population, that Saladin, when he sat down before the city, found the very women banded with the bowmen on the ramparts. The siege was pressed with vigour, but the valour of the garrison defeated every attempt to take it; and at length, chafed by the slow progress of his arms, Saladin determined, as a last resource, to engage the filial sympathies of the young knight who conducted the defence in his behalf. The Marquis of Montferrat, Conrad's father, who had been taken prisoner in the fatal battle of Tiberias, was brought in irons to the Sultan's camp; and Saladin, having caused the captive nobleman to be carried to a conspicuous situation before the walls, sent a herald into the place with a message to Conrad, that unless he capitulated forthwith, his father's head should be struck off within sight of the ramparts. Conrad, instead of giving way to the yearnings of filial affection, assumed an air of indifference, and ordered the herald to return and tell his master, that he could not put a captive to death under such circumstances, without incurring the utmost dishonour, and that, as a Christian knight, he himself would glory in having a martyr for his father. To show that this was no idle boast, the Tyrians followed it up by fresh showers of arrows; but the archers had secret instructions to shoot wide of the spot where the venerable parent of their champion was exposed in chains. A bloody-minded conqueror would have

fulfilled his threat of decapitation ; but Saladin, who possessed nothing of the barbarian save the name, had too much magnanimity to wreak his disappointment on a defenceless captive. He sent him back to prison in safety, and raised the siege. *

Tyre being thus relieved from immediate danger, Guy de Lusignan, who still coveted those regal honours which he had so dishonourably worn and so pusillanimously resigned, presented himself before the city, with an intent to enter it in regal state, under the shadow of young Montferrat's renown. But the inhabitants treated his pretensions with contempt ; and told him, as he stood supplicating for admittance, that the lordship of Tyre had, by solemn compact, been conferred on the valiant knight who had enabled them to defy the Infidel host, and was severed from him and his house for ever. With this answer Lusignan was forced to retire ; but the Grand-master of the Templars having countenanced his claims, while the Hospitallers sided with the Tyrians and their new Lord, a sort of partisan warfare ensued between the two princes, which, though it did not lead to bloodshed, yet conspired, along with other untoward causes, seriously to undermine the Christian power in the East.

Saladin, having been thus repulsed at Tyre, next turned his arms against the principality of Antioch, the whole of which, with the exception of the chief city itself, speedily submitted to his arms ; and of all the fortresses that had once appertained to the crown of Jerusalem, those of Antioch, Tripoli and Tyre, alone continued to display the Cross on their battlements. It was now that Raymond of

* Vertot.

Tripoli, seeing the whole of Judea overrun by Saladin's armies, and the discrowned Lusignan a fugitive and vagabond in his own dominions, requested the Sultan to put him in possession of that diadem, for which he had so foully betrayed his compatriots and his faith in the battle of Tiberias. But Saladin, scorning him the more for the very treason which had secured himself the victory, treated his pretensions with ridicule, and galled him with cutting gibes. Pride and ambition had been Raymond's bane; and his reason could not support the execrations of all good men, and the total annihilation of his own ambitious hopes. Stricken with madness, he closed his guilty career in a paroxysm of rage and despair; leaving behind him a name, which had once held a lofty and honourable place in the roll of Christian chivalry, indelibly tarnished by the crimes of treason to his country, and apostasy to his God.*

The loss of Jerusalem filled Europe with sorrow and dismay; and Pope Urban the Third, who then occu-

* Historians differ greatly respecting the charge of treason brought against the Count of Tripoli. Mills, in his History of the Crusades, declares, that after a careful collation of authorities, he considers him the victim of calumny, chiefly on the testimony of Ralph Coggeshal, who was in Palestine at the time of the battle of Tiberias, and whom he esteems a very faithful historian. Several other writers speak with hesitation on the subject; and the Arabian historians concur in describing Raymond as a formidable enemy. It would be foreign to this narrative to do more than notice these discrepancies; for, as in all matters of historical doubt, much may be said on both sides. When a great action miscarrieth, as Fuller says, the blame must be laid on some one; and, as the Count of Tripoli died a short time after the battle, it may have been esteemed as politic as it was easy, to charge him with its loss. With him terminated the Eastern dynasty of the famous Counts of Toulouse.

pied the papal chair, is said to have taken it so deeply to heart, that he died of grief.* His successor, Gregory the Eighth, to whom William, Archbishop of Tyre, the most veracious historian of the age, carried in person the moving tale, appointed prayers to be said, and fasts to be held, throughout Christendom, to deprecate the divine wrath; and the whole conclave of Cardinals publicly renounced all temporal diversions, and declared themselves and their flocks to be unworthy to bear the name of Christians, while the heritage of the Redeemer of mankind remained under the Infidel yoke. But there was much more ostentation than sincere zeal in their protestations, which, as Fuller remarks, like mariners' vows, ended with the tempest. When William of Tyre presented himself at Rome, entreating succour in behalf of his distressed compatriots in the East, he found these hypocritical churchmen, one and all, far more ready to recommend the crusade to others, than to engage in it themselves, or even to humble their bodies in token of grief. The temporal sovereigns to whom he next addressed himself, deported themselves with more generosity. At a conference held near Gisors on the 15th of July 1188, at which Philip the Second of France, and Henry the Second of England, took into grave consideration the facts which the Archbishop laid before them touching the deplorable condition of Palestine, these two monarchs, though almost always at variance with each other, and at that identical period ready to begin a new war, agreed to assort, for a time, their clashing interests, and unite under the same sacred banner for the deliverance of

* Hoveden.

the Holy Land. Measures were instantly taken by both in their respective states, to raise the funds necessary for fitting out a mighty armament; and all persons who refused to serve personally in the crusade were subjected to a tax equivalent to a tenth of all their property—an impost which was long afterwards popularly known by the name of the Saladin Tithe. The King of Scotland compounded for the Saladin Tithe, by paying Henry five thousand marks.* The religious communities alone resisted this subsidy. Several were specially exempted from it; and those who paid it did so with a most discreditable reluctance, and under a protestation that Christian princes, who must needs engage in warlike enterprises, ought to exact nothing from the clergy, but continual prayers for the success of their arms.

The death of Henry the Second of England, before the expedition was in a state to depart, elevated his son Richard the First, the redoubted Cœur-de-Lion, to the throne of that kingdom; but that chivalrous prince at once took upon himself his father's engagement to join the crusade. At the head of an army of thirty thousand foot and five thousand horse, he embarked at Dover (1189), and, passing by Flanders into Normandy, soon after joined Philip Augustus at Veze-lai, on the frontiers of Burgundy. On reaching the Rhone, the two monarchs separated. Philip proceeded to Genoa, where his fleet lay ready to receive him; while Richard repaired to Marseilles, where he had made arrangements to embark—Messina having been previously fixed on as the port of rendezvous.

* Hoveden.

Meanwhile, the Archbishop of Tyre, and his colleague, Henry, Bishop of Albano, had not been idle. Having secured the assistance of the Kings of France and England, they passed into Germany, and, by their ardent representations, won on the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, an aged but warlike prince, to engage in the same enterprise, with no less than sixty-eight of the princes of his empire. Every nation of Christendom, Spain alone excepted, had a share in this crusade. The Moors, who had established themselves in the finest provinces of that country, gave the Kings of Castile, Arragon and Navarre, ample employment in their own dominions; but Queen Sancha of Arragon, in token of her reverence for the cause which she had greatly the wish, though not the power, to forward, and more especially of her respect for the valiant Friars-Hospitallers who had so freely shed their blood in defence of the sacred soil, founded a magnificent monastery at Sixenne, a village between Saragossa and Lerida, for nuns of that order. In this establishment, it is conjectured, part of those nuns-hospitallers, who were driven out of Jerusalem by the conquests of Saladin, found an asylum; and there, say the monkish chroniclers, these pious ladies passed the remainder of their lives in watering with tears the memory of the heroes belonging to their Order, who had perished in hot battle against the Paynim foe, and in invoking victory on the Christian banner, wherever it should be unfurled in the same holy strife.

While the Princes of Europe were thus bestirring themselves to bring together an army able to sweep from Judea the barbarians who had reconquered it, Guy de Lusignan mustered the few friends who re-

remained faithful to him in his misfortunes, and, reinforced by a small body of crusaders brought from Europe by his brother Godfrey, and various other adventurers, invested Saint John d'Acre with about eight thousand men (1189.) This city, the Accho of Scripture, and the Ptolemais of the Romans, was not only strongly fortified, but possessed a haven capable of accommodating the whole of the mighty armaments which he expected from the West. The Hospitallers and Templars were among the adherents who agreed to give him their services; and his army was also efficiently augmented by the arrival of three private crusades, one composed of Germans, under the Landgrave of Thuringia and the Duke of Gueldres; another, consisting of Danes, men of lofty stature, armed with ponderous battleaxes, Frieslanders, and Flemings; and the third of French, under the Princes of the House of Dreux. Even Conrad of Montferrat, Prince of Tyre, burying in oblivion his differences with Lusignan regarding the sovereignty of that city, and remembering only that it behoved every Christian knight to lose no opportunity of lending his aid to humble the common enemy, appeared in the leaguer, and shared in the danger and the glory. Acre was defended by a strong garrison, under the command of Karacos, one of Saladin's bravest captains, a veteran under whom the Sultan himself had made his first essay in arms. This hoary warrior encouraged his troops to make frequent sallies, which generally terminated in sanguinary engagements. No sooner was Saladin aware of Lusignan being once more in the field, than he marched a formidable army to support Acre; and on his approach, the Christians readily left their lines to give him bat-

tle. Lusignan himself led one division into action, composed of his own troops, the French crusaders, and the knights of Saint John. The other was commanded by the Grandmaster of the Templars, and included the knights of that Order, and the Germans and Northern adventurers who had lately joined the Christian standard. Both armies fought with great obstinacy; but the Christians, though they lost the Grandmaster of the Templars and many of his knights, returned victorious to their lines. Saladin, finding it impracticable to raise the siege, restricted his operations to the interception of the convoys employed to supply the army with provisions; and famine and pestilence soon revealed themselves in the Christian camp, and smote more victims than the Paynim steel. Lusignan had the misery of seeing his young and promising sons fall victims to the prevalent disease; and at length his misfortunes were crowned by the Queen Sybilla, his consort, likewise sinking under the same fatal malady.*

The death of Sybilla was the forerunner of new divisions among the Christian chiefs. Her only sister, Isabella, while yet a mere child, had been betrothed to Humfrey, Lord of Thoron, the third of that name; but the nuptials never having been consummated, Conrad of Montferrat now openly aspired to her hand; and being young, and of a noble presence, made himself master of her affections, and persuaded her to reject, as a compulsory contract, the former alliance. Her first marriage was in consequence publicly annulled; and next day the Bishop of Beauvais solemnized her nuptials with the Prince of Tyre, who, in right of their union, instantly claim-

* Hoveden.

ed the title of King of Jerusalem. That title, however, despoiled of its glory as it was, Lusignan refused to surrender, on the argument that the impress of Royalty was never to be effaced while he remained in existence; and to increase the complexity of the question, Humfrey of Thoron likewise put in a claim to the crown, and disputed the justice of the sentence by which his marriage with the princess had been dissolved. The mailed tribunal, to which the matter was submitted, declined to give judgment as to the rights of the three titular kings, who thus disputed a sovereignty without subjects; and, to prevent them from turning their arms against each other, it was agreed to refer their pretensions to the Kings of France and England, when these monarchs should arrive in the Holy Land.

Philip Augustus and Richard of England wintered in Sicily; and in consequence of this delay, the expedition led by the Emperor Frederic arrived in Asia before them, having proceeded overland through Greece. Frederic was sixty-nine years of age when he engaged in this enterprise; but he had all the ardour of a warrior in his full vigour; and, after defeating the Sultan of Iconium, who disputed his passage, made good his advance into Cilicia. Unhappily, having incautiously ventured to bathe in the Cydnus, the waters of which were chilled by the snows of the Isaurian mountains, it brought on an illness of which he died. In this august monarch the military orders, and particularly the Hospitallers, lost a powerful protector and steady friend.

On the death of Frederic, the Duke of Suabia, his son, succeeded to the command of the army, which arrived before Acre wasted by disease, and thinned of its bravest officers, who had purchased

with their lives the victories which had opened it a path from the Hellespont to the Syrian frontier. At Acre, the Germans found even more misery than in their own infected camp. Famine and pestilence still reigned dominant before its impregnable walls; and had it not been that several natives of Bremen and Lubeck, who chanced to arrive by sea, took compassion on their countrymen, and constructed a spacious tent for the accommodation of such of them as were suffering from disease, the misery of their condition would have been augmented, rather than relieved, by their junction with the besieging host. This tent, constructed of the sails of the ships which had brought the benevolent Bremeners and Lubeckers to the Syrian shore, was the cradle of the Teutonic order, which was entirely confined to the German nations. By a bull of Pope Celestine the Third, dated the 23d of February 1192, the new Order was instructed to frame its statutes after those of the Hospitallers of Saint John, in as far as related to the service of the poor and sick; and after those of the Templars, on such points as related to military discipline. It took the title of the Order of the Teutonic Knights of Saint Mary of Jerusalem; and their dress was a white mantle, bearing a black cross embroidered with gold.*

Nearly two years had elapsed since the investment of Acre by Lusignan, and still the place held out stoutly; when Philip of France, who, along with the King of England, had been detained at Messina much longer than they originally contemplated, by private jars, inconsequent to this narrative, appeared in the broad bay which spreads between the city and

* James de Vitri.

the base of Mount Carmel, with a numerous fleet (1191). His arrival infused new life into the besiegers; and on the engines which he had ordered to be constructed effecting a large breach in the rampart, the whole army eagerly demanded to be led to the assault. Philip, however, either unwilling that the King of England, whose flag he daily expected to see on the horizon, should be deprived of a share of the renown likely to arise from the capture of so important a place, or aware that it became him not to calculate too much on the momentary enthusiasm with which his presence had inspired the plague-wasted battalions that now shouted for battle, judged it better to postpone the enterprise until the arrival of the English monarch.

The King of England's voyage was less prosperous than that of his royal ally. Several of his ships having been wrecked on the coast of Cyprus, their crews were treated with great cruelty by the tyrant of that island, who, by his mother's side, was of the Imperial house of Comneni; and it was not consonant with the disposition of Richard, to allow such an outrage on his followers to pass unpunished. Being denied the satisfaction which he demanded, he instantly debarked a part of his army, seized on the city of Limisso, and, after cutting the forces of the Greek prince to pieces, captured himself and the Princess of Cyprus, his only daughter, and subjugated the whole island. His two prisoners he carried with him to Acre, where the father was committed to the custody of the Hospitallers, and confined in their fortress of Margat, while the daughter was attached to the suite of Queen Berengaria, the English monarch's consort, and Jane of England his sister, who had both accompanied him to the Holy Land. Cyprus he sold to the Templars for

three hundred thousand livres, as a place too remote to become an appanage of his own crown ; but the Red Cross Knights were never able to reduce the island to subjection, and ultimately restored it to the conqueror. Richard entered the Christian camp before Acre, on the 8th of June 1191. Prior to his arrival, the garrison had completely repaired the breaches made in the wall by the engines of the French King ; and it was chiefly owing to the indomitable valour of the English monarch, and the intrepidity of the warriors who served under his banner, that the city was ultimately taken. Wherever a perilous service was to be performed, the war-cry of Saint George for England resounded, and the crest of the Lion-hearted King constantly led the battle. Even those more polished knights who disliked the rough honesty of his port and speech, could not withhold their admiration of his fearless bravery. His example inspired the whole army with a generous emulation in feats of arms. The three military Orders, in particular, were smitten with a noble envy of his valour, and rivalled each other in their exertions to be foremost in every assault. The Templars, on one occasion, lost their Grandmaster ; and of the Hospitallers, so many perished in their incessant conflicts with the enemy, that the Order would have been extinguished but for the crowds of young aspirants for renown and martyrdom who were constantly arriving from Europe, and who generally gave a preference to the banner of Saint John. " Never," says Gibbon, " did the flame of enthusiasm burn with fiercer and more destructive rage ; nor could the true believers, a common appellation, who consecrated their own martyrs, refuse some applause to the mistaken zeal and courage of their adversaries."

Arduous as were the duties of the besiegers, and sacred as was the bond that united them in the warfare they were waging, they yet found leisure for mean jealousy and uncharitable strife. Guy de Lusignan, and Conrad of Tyre, renewed their old contentions; and divisions also broke out between the French and English forces, in which their Kings were deeply implicated. Richard of England and the Hospitallers sided with Lusignan, while Philip Augustus and the Templars gave their voice in favour of the Prince of Tyre. It required all the influence of clerical authority to suppress the disorders in which this fatal dispute threatened to terminate; but at length both parties were mollified by a sort of compromise, by which it was agreed that Lusignan should retain the title of King of Jerusalem during his life, and that afterwards the Prince of Tyre, in right of his consort, should succeed to the crown. That distinction, however, Conrad did not live to enjoy. Having sometime afterwards (1191), failed to redress an injury which the Old Man of the Mountain conceived some of his subjects had sustained from the inhabitants of Tyre, two assassins, deputed by their inexorable master, stabbed the unfortunate prince to the heart, and, though they were flayed alive for the crime, died glorying in its accomplishment. The enemies of Cœur-de-Lion did not scruple to charge him with having instigated this foul murder; but a soldier so free and fearless in the use of his lance, would scarcely have descended to whet a ruffian's dagger.*

New breaches having been made in the ramparts,

* Hoveden, and Jeffrey of Vinesauf's Itin. of Rich. in Gales' Eng. Hist. vol. 2.

by the enormous rams and other engines which the Christians brought against them, the Infidels, seeing their outworks taken, their towers in ruins, and the chivalry of Europe, with the redoubted Cœur-de-Lion at its head, ready to spring sword in hand upon their battlements, consented to a capitulation. The garrison were declared prisoners of war, with the option of being exchanged for the Christian captives whom Saladin held in durance, and the wood of the Holy cross; and on the 13th of July 1191, the standard of redemption once more floated over Ptolemais. The conquest, however, was dearly purchased; for it is computed that more than one hundred thousand Christians perished before the walls.* The Hospitallers soon after made it their principal residence, which, since the fall of Jerusalem, had been fixed at Margat; and about the same period their Grandmaster, Ermengard Daps, terminated tranquilly an illustrious life.

Godfrey de Duisson, an aged knight, was chosen his successor, in a full chapter (1191). † The slow progress of the Christian arms before Acre, and the vast sacrifice of life at which the conquest was achieved, had subdued the enthusiasm of the crusaders; and after the capitulation many of them showed a decided disinclination to resume their harness. These men, nearly all of whom were volunteers, quitted the army in bands whenever a favourable opportunity of returning to Europe presented itself; and even Philip Augustus, though a brave prince, weary of sacrificing

* Among the Englishmen of note who died before Acre, were William Earl of Ferrers, Robert Scrope of Barton, and the knights Henry Pigot, Walter Scrope, Mowbray, Talbot, Mandevil and Saint John.—*Dugdale's Baronetage.*

† Boisgelin.

his health and interest on a barren coast, at length resigned the command of his troops to the Duke of Burgundy, and sailed for France. It is said that his departure was hastened by a distemper which made his hair and nails fall off, and excited a suspicion that he had been poisoned. The King of England, however, was not to be swept homeward by the crowds of recreants who daily deserted the Christian standard. As his name had become dear and glorious in the estimation of his English subjects, though tarnished by occasional bursts of sanguinary ferocity, so did its renown extend over the strange land he sought to subjugate; and at the distance of sixty years from his advent, it was still used by the Syrian mother to silence the refractory child, and by the Saracen rider to check the starting horse.* With the warriors who remained faithful to the Cross, he advanced from Acre along the sea-coast, and added Cæsarea, Jaffa, and Ascalon, to the fragments of Lusignan's kingdom. He was eleven days in reaching Ascalon; and so closely did Saladin hang on his flank, that the march was one great and perpetual battle. In this expedition, the Templars led the van, while the Hospitallers protected the rear of the army, and, by their valour, repeatedly broke the violence of the assaults. In the midst of toil and death, the crusaders paid strict attention to their religious duties. At nightfall, when they halted to encamp, the heralds shouted thrice, "Save the Holy Sepulchre!" and the warriors, thus reminded of their faith, instantly sank down on their knees, and invoked the aid of heaven.† The walls of Ascalon were demolished by the crusaders; and a severe winter coming

* Joinville.

† Vinesauf.

on, they were relieved, during its continuance, from the presence of the Sultan's standard, and the portentous sound of his brazen drums.

In the following spring, the Christians, under the guidance of the banner of England, again took the field, and, to Saladin's great consternation, advanced within a day's march of Jerusalem, in which place he had fixed his abode. No adequate means of defence being in his power, the Moslems must have surrendered the city to the Franks, had not one of those incomprehensible panics which frequently strike multitudes, spread through the Christian ranks, and hurried the crusaders back to the coast. The Duke of Burgundy is charged by Joinville, his countryman, with having, from motives of envy, brought about this retreat. Other writers * ascribe it to the advice of the military orders, who dissuaded the King from the enterprise, on the argument, that not only would they have to fight the Turks at a disadvantage, but that the greater part of the crusaders would desert the holy standard as soon as the sepulchre was recovered, and their pilgrimage at an end. Richard, however, regarded it as a foul stain on his renown; and, as he watched from an eminence the recreant squadrons file seaward past him, is said to have covered his face, and exclaimed with indignation, "Those who are unwilling to rescue, are unworthy to view the sepulchre of Christ!"

This was the last memorable effort of Plantagenet to restore the declining fortunes of the Latin Christians in Palestine. A languid and tedious negotiation commenced between him and Saladin, which ended in a truce with the Moslems for three years,

* Vinesauf.

three months, three weeks, and three days. It was stipulated in the treaty, that Jerusalem and the holy sepulchre should be open, without tribute or annoyance, to the Latin Christians ; that they should possess the sea-coast from Jaffa to Tyre ; and that the Counts of Tripoli and Antioch should be included in the armistice. At the same time, he prevailed on Guy de Lusignan to marry the Princess of Cyprus, of whom Richard himself was suspected to have been enamoured, and gave her back that island as her dowry, which, for three centuries afterwards, Lusignan's heirs enjoyed. Another stroke of policy was the union of Henry, Count of Champagne, the King's nephew, and devotedly attached to his interests, with Isabella, the widow of Conrad of Tyre, in right of whom he assumed the now lustreless and thorny crown which Godfrey of Bouillon had won. This done, Cœur-de-Lion embarked for the West, to be stripped of his mail in an Austrian prison, and afterwards to lay his head in a premature grave ; and scarcely had he left the Syrian shore, when Saladin, the noblest of his enemies, also terminated his glorious life. He closed his career at Damascus, the fairest of his capitals, on the 13th of March 1193 ; and, as he had lived a hero, so, if his faith be not taken in judgment against him, did he die a righteous death. One of the last acts of his life was, to order a considerable sum of money to be given to the poor of Damascus, without regard to creed ; and, when he felt his end approaching, an officer, in compliance with his orders, tore down his war-pennon, and hung up his shroud in its stead, proclaiming to the populace as he did so, that in that melancholy garment they beheld all that the conqueror of the East could carry with him to the tomb. It has

been well said of Saladin, that in lineage alone was he a barbarian. Brave, clement, tolerant and bountiful, there exists not in the proud list of Christian knights who were opposed to him, a name that shines more resplendently; nor do we find, in the whole history of European chivalry, the memory of a warrior hallowed by more illustrious deeds. *

* Bohadin.—Trans. of his Life of Saladin, by Harris.

CHAPTER V.

The Fourth Crusade—Rigorous Administration of the Grandmaster Alphonso of Portugal—Hostilities between the Hospitallers and Templars—The Fifth Crusade—Conquest of Zara—Expedition against Constantinople—Siege and Surrender of that City—Revolt and Usurpation of Mourzoufle—Reconquest of the Capital—Election of a Latin King.

THE death of Saladin was hailed by the Latin Christians as a special interposition of Providence in their behalf. Prior to his death, he had divided his dominions among his sons; but scarcely was he laid in the grave, ere the fraternal bond that had united them during his life gave way, and their whole exertions were directed to despoil and destroy each other. Of these dissensions, their uncle Adel, or Saphadin, the brother of Saladin, and the companion of his victories, speedily took advantage. Overthrown by his greater craft and stronger arm, they were all successively deprived of the diadems which their father had bequeathed them. Such as fell into the hands of the conqueror were put to death by his orders; and out of the ruins of their inheritance, was once more consolidated an empire, nearly as magnificent as that which Saladin's sword had carved out.

Encouraged by these events, and the fervent exhortations of Pope Celestine the Third, to renew the war, the Latin Christians held it useless longer to cherish the amicable relations which they had maintained with the Moslems after the expiry of the truce which the King of England had ratified; and supported by a body of German crusaders, under Waleran, brother to the Duke of Limburgh, they rashly committed some petty outrages on Saphadin's frontier. This was followed by the struggle known as the fourth crusade,* in which the leaders were chiefly German lords, and among whom, as a pilgrim, marched Margaret Queen of Hungary, sister of the French King. At one time, fortune favoured them so greatly, that they cleared the whole sea-coast of Palestine of the Infidels; but being foiled before the lofty walls of the fortress of Thoron, and further dispirited by the loss of several chiefs, and the news that Henry the Sixth, Emperor of Germany, the support of the crusade, was dead, these triumphs proved of no avail. Saphadin, gathering heart as their valour declined, stormed Jaffa, and put twenty thousand crusaders, who had sought refuge there, to the sword (1197); and had not fresh disturbances broken out in his own territories, and, along with the rumour of a new crusade, compelled him eventually to renew the armistice for six years, the Latins would have run a risk of being driven into the sea. This new treaty was followed by the death of the Count of Champagne, whose right to the crown of Jerusalem, through his consort, the Princess Isabella, has al-

* The enumeration of Mills is adopted here, and adhered to in numbering all the subsequent crusades. Some writers, and Gibbon among others, do not reckon this a distinct expedition.

ready been noticed. The death of this Prince was somewhat tragical. He had stationed himself at a window of his palace at Acre, to behold his troops pass before him in review, when the bar on which he leant suddenly snapt asunder, and he was dashed to pieces in the castle ditch. Guy de Lusignan, too, who had retired to his kingdom of Cyprus, had a short time before descended to the grave; and the Latin grandees, satisfied that they could not maintain themselves long in Syria without a monarch at their head, arranged another union for their thrice-wedded and twice-widowed queen. The object of their choice was Amaury de Lusignan, who had just succeeded to the sovereignty of Cyprus by his brother's death; and Isabella decidedly giving him the preference over Humfrey of Thoron, her divorced Lord, who was still alive, and who, from motives of ambition, was not indisposed once more to court her favour, they were married by the Patriarch, and solemnly proclaimed King and Queen of Jerusalem and Cyprus.* Humfrey de Thoron's case was a hard one; but he had not the means of entering the lists with his powerful rival; and, in those days, might made right. Godfrey de Duisson, the Grandmaster of the Hospitallers, was the personage on whom the completion of this matrimonial negotiation devolved; and scarcely was it ended, when he followed Henry of Champagne to the tomb. Vertot regrets that so little is known of his government; and after remarking, that, for four hundred years, no knight of the Order undertook to record its achievements, naively ascribes it to their being much more accustomed to wield the sword than the pen.

* Con. William of Tyre.

Brother Alphonso of Portugal succeeded De Duissou in the government of the Order (1202). * He is supposed to have been an illegitimate branch of the royal family of Portugal; and, though distinguished for piety and valour, was of a proud and imperious disposition. He instantly set about reforming various abuses which had crept into the order; and by the pertinacity with which he insisted on their abolition, lost much of his popularity among the knights. Yet it does not appear that he was actuated by improper motives in this rigorous exercise of his authority. One of his acts was to curb the presumption of the secular gentry who fought as volunteers under the banner of Saint John, and who, being entitled to wear the cross of the Order while serving in its ranks, abused the indulgence, by retaining it on their return to Europe, thereby classing themselves among the professed knights. The Grandmaster, wisely conceiving that the sanctity of the Order might be dishonoured by the pretensions of these adventurers, prevailed on the Chapter to pass a statute, that they should be regarded merely as auxiliaries, and that the cross of Saint John should be worn by them only, when actually employed against the Infidels in the field. By another act, he tried to curtail certain indulgences enjoyed by the professed knights themselves. Esteeming their mode of life too sumptuous for warrior-monks devoted to the service of Christ, and the redemption of the land that had witnessed his death, he enjoined them to reduce their establishments, and was himself the first to set the example. Their diet, habit and equipages, were all subjected to a severe scrutiny, and underwent a ri-

* Boisgelin.—Baudoin, and Vertot, place his election in 1194.

gid reform. Such of them as murmured he upbraided for their effeminacy, and contemned as apostates to the system of discipline instituted by Raymond du Puis. The Chapter in which the matter was debated was a stormy one, and resounded with complaints. The knights reminded him that times were changed—that the rigorous mode of life which he enjoined was incompatible with the harassing duties that continually devolved on them. The Grandmaster's only answer was the arbitrary expression, "I will be obeyed; I will hear no reply." Exasperated at his stateliness, an old knight remarked, that it was the first time a superior of the Order had presumed to dictate to its members with the voice of a king. This led to anarchy and revolt; and the Grandmaster, at last, seeing his authority openly defied, abdicated his dignity, and retired in disgust to his native country, where he fell in one of the civil conflicts by which it was then shaken.

Geofroi le Rat, of the language of France, was chosen Grandmaster on his abdication, (1202). He possessed exactly those qualities which Alphonso wanted; that is, he was pliant, courteous, and humble in his bearing, and withal stricken in years; a circumstance which seems to have had as much influence on the suffrages of the Chapter at all elections, as it has at this day in the choice of an occupant of Saint Peter's Chair. He found the Order enjoying a respite from the toils of war, in virtue of the six years truce; but a scourge scarcely less terrible than the sword waved over the land, which, in consequence of the failure of the harvest in Egypt, from which Palestine was chiefly supplied with corn, was exposed to the horrors of famine. So great

was the scarcity in Egypt, that parents, in some cases, slew and eat their own children; and by the mortality that ensued, the banks of the Nile were covered with corpses, in number so great, says an Arabian historian,* that "God alone could reckon them!"

It is mentioned by James de Vitri, then Bishop of Acre, and by Matthew Paris, another contemporary historian, that never before had the Order of Saint John been so wealthy, or its influence so extensive, as at this period. It possessed principalities, cities, towns, and villages, both in Asia and Europe; and enumerated within the bounds of Christendom no less than nineteen thousand manors,—the term manor being understood, in the sense here used, to signify the tillage of a plough and two oxen. The Templars, though less rich, had also vast possessions; and the knights of both Orders exhibited rather the haughty port of independent princes, than the meek bearing that had distinguished their predecessors, who took no pride in temporal display, and whose chief employment was to protect the helpless, and wash the way-worn pilgrim's feet. The ancient jealousy between the two Orders had never been thoroughly repressed, though they had, for a considerable length of time, lived on seemingly amicable terms with each other; and a trivial circumstance was sufficient to make their rivalry blaze out in acts of outrage. In the vicinage of Margat, which, as already mentioned, became the principal stronghold of the Knights of Saint John, after their ejection from Jerusalem, stood another fortalice, which a chevalier, named Robert de Margat, held as their vassal. The Templars, having some ancient pretensions to

* Abulfeda.

the place, resolved to regain it by force, and took it by surprisal. The despoiled feudatory sought refuge with the Hospitallers, his lords, who, inflamed with rage, and hurried away by pride, instantly sallied out, and retook the post by escalade. This affair led to a sort of regular warfare between the Orders; and the rival knights rarely encountered each other, without displaying their partisanship in a regular combat. Each party, too, had their secular friends; and thus a civil strife was rapidly kindled in a state where there was no sovereign authority to quench it. At length, the Patriarch and the Latin Bishops, startled at a warfare from which the Infidels alone reaped benefit, interposed between the disputants, and the quarrel was referred to the Pope. Both Orders sent deputies to Rome to plead their cause; and Innocent the Third, the prelate who then filled the papal chair, pronounced judgment with great impartiality. In a preliminary sentence, that young and ambitious priest, in whom the successors of Saint Peter attained the full meridian of their greatness, decided that both parties were wrong; that the Hospitallers, in the first place, should restore to the Templars the disputed fortalice; and that, after the Templars had held it for the space of a month, Robert of Margat should have title to cite them before judges, to prove their right of possession. To obviate the hazard of a partial judgment, however, his Holiness further willed, that the judges should be brought from Tripoli and Antioch, and that the Templars should have the privilege of exception against all or any of them, with the understanding that the verdict of those elected should be immutable, and that a refusal to submit to it should empower the Hospi-

tallers to take forcible repossession of the contested post. In the end, the pretensions of the Templars were declared groundless; Robert of Margat was reinvested in his rights; and the two Orders assumed the semblance at least of friendly unity.*

Amaury de Lusignan, after his marriage with Queen Isabella, fixed his abode in Palestine, leaving the island of Cyprus, which he inherited from his brother, to the government of a viceroy; but the turbulent disposition of the inhabitants, many of whom desired a reunion with the Greek empire, was not to be repressed by an underling; and it was made evident to the King, that unless he returned there in person, it would soon pass from under his sway. Aware that the crown of Jerusalem was already robbed of its jewels, and might speedily drop from his brow, Amaury explained to the Pope the agitated state of his insular kingdom, and announced his intention of returning to it, in order to re-establish his authority. Innocent was not slow to discover, that the departure of Amaury would accelerate the total desertion of the Holy Land. He knew the latent hatred that the Hospitallers and Templars cherished against each other; and foresaw that a fierce struggle for domination would ensue betwixt them, the moment the bark that carried the King to Cyprus had left the Syrian shore. Anxious to avert this calamity, he implored Amaury not to abandon to the Infidels the remains of the heritage of Christ; and, at the same time, urgently entreated the princes of Antioch and Tripoli, and the military orders, to support the royal authority wherever it might be in danger. The Templars,

* Vertot. Boisgelin asserts, that this dispute occurred during the Grandmastership of Godfrey de Duisson; but he does not give his authority.

who had already made themselves odious to the Cypriots, do not appear to have complied with this injunction ; but Amaury, in concert with the Grandmaster of the Hospitallers, chose several knights from that fraternity, to whom he intrusted the government of the island, and who passed over to it with a body of troops, capable of keeping the insurgents in subjection.

While Palestine thus enjoyed a precarious tranquillity, and it seemed a matter of doubt, whether the headlong ambition of its Christian defenders, or the merciless blades of the unbelievers, were to render it desolate, the trumpet of defiance again sounded portentously in the West. A love of chivalrous adventure still lingered in Europe ; and, roused by the zeal of another St Bernard, namely Fulk, priest of Neuilly, a great number of princes and men of renown assumed the Cross, and prepared, under the command of Boniface, Marquis of Montferrat, brother of Conrad of Tyre, to engage in a new crusade. Rendered wise by the disasters which former expeditions had encountered, in their long and toilsome march through the vast and inhospitable countries which they traversed to reach the Holy Land, the leaders of this new armament resolved to pass directly into Syria by sea. Deputies were despatched to Venice, then the most powerful of the maritime states, to make offer of a considerable sum of money for the transportation of the whole army to Saint John d'Acre ; and the famous Henry Dandolo, who was Doge at the time, agreed, for eighty-five thousand silver merks * to carry four thousand knights and twenty thousand

* 4,250,000 livres modern French money.—*Sismondi, Hist. des Repub. Ital.*

foot, with their arms and munitions, to that fortress. In accordance with this treaty, the Venetians collected a mighty fleet; and that they might not appear merely in the light of mercenary carriers, but have some share in the glory, and mayhap in the spoil that was to be won, they added to the armament, on their own account, fifty armed galleys, filled with fighting men, along with whom Dandolo, though eighty years of age, and partly deprived of sight by a wound received in battle, announced his intention of making the voyage, as Admiral of the Republic.* But the crusaders had pledged themselves to pay a greater price for this service than they had the ability to realize. They found it altogether impracticable to raise a larger sum than fifty thousand merks; and the expedition was on the point of being ruined on the eve of embarkation, when the sagacity of Dandolo discovered a mode of compromise, which he foresaw would at once advance his country's interests and his own glory. He proposed to the crusaders, that, before they left the Adriatic, they should assist him to reduce Zara in Dalmatia, an ancient appanage of the Republic, which had renounced its allegiance, and put itself under the protection of the King of Hungary. As it was impossible to proceed without the assistance of Venice, and as this enterprise was decided to be a lawful one, though the inhabitants of Zara were not exactly the kind of enemies whom they were pledged to combat, the crusaders, after some hesitation, assented to these terms, and the fleet stood away for the Dalmatian coast. Their daring prows burst with little difficulty the chain or boom that protected the harbour;

* Ducange sur Villehardouin.

and, after a brief siege of five days, the city surrendered at discretion (November 10, 1202), and was pillaged, and its fortifications razed, in punishment of its revolt.

The Venetians having represented that the proper season for making the passage to Palestine had elapsed, the crusaders were compelled to sit down quietly for the winter in Dalmatia; and unprofitable disputes occupied them during the time they were detained in that country. They were on the point of re-embarking in the following spring, when an embassy arrived from Alexius Comnenus, a Greek prince, who had been driven by one of those domestic tragedies which so frequently discrowned the sovereigns of the Lower empire, to seek refuge with his brother-in-law Philip of Swabia. The Greek entreated them to do him the same service which they had done the Venetians, and put his father Isaac Angelus in possession of the imperial diadem, of which a brother, whom he had redeemed from Turkish slavery, had basely deprived him, along with his liberty and sight. The crusaders, full of generous enthusiasm, and swayed by the promises of the Duke of Swabia to succour the cause of Palestine, listened with compassion to the prayers of the youth who thus appeared before them, imploring their assistance against a tyrant and traitor, who had dethroned his own brother, and kept him loaded with fetters in a dungeon. The Marquis of Montferrat and the Venetian admiral, actuated by motives partly of a private, and partly of a political nature, warmly espoused his cause; and his splendid promises of eventual recompense to the whole army, and of ample succours for the service of the Holy Land, in

the event of his father's restoration, also won upon the Counts of Flanders, Blois, and Saint Pol, with eight barons of France, to give their vote in favour of the exploit. Many warriors, however, distinguished for valour and piety, withdrew from the camp, under the plea, that it became not men, who had left their families and homes for the rescue of the sepulchre of Christ, to engage in any other enterprise.

The treaty between the exiled prince and the Latin adventurers having been formally ratified, the troops destined for the expedition re-embarked, and favouring winds soon wafted the fleet to the walls of Constantinople. The voyage is described as a triumphal pageant. "The shields of the knights and squires," says Gibbon, quoting Jeffrey of Villehardouin, *marechal of Champagne*, an eyewitness and the historian of the enterprise, * "at once an ornament and defence, were arranged on either side of the ships; the banners of the nations and families were displayed from the stern; our modern artillery was supplied by three hundred engines for casting stones and darts; the fatigues of the way were cheered with the sound of music; and the spirits of the adventurers were raised by the mutual assurance, that forty thousand Christian heroes were equal to the conquest of the world." After one or two bloodless descents on the Grecian shore, the voyagers entered the Hellespont; and so mighty was their fleet, that the whole waters of that memorable strait were darkened with innumerable sails. Holding onward through the Propontis, they ran close under the walls of

* *Hist. de la Prise de Constantinople par les Français et les Venetiens.*

Constantinople, and afterwards debarked at Chalcedon, from whence the whole armament proceeded to Scutari, the Asiatic suburb of the capital, whose domes and palaces looked down in regal scorn on their narrow camp.

The usurper Alexius, had made scarcely any preparations to avert the storm which his nephew and namesake had thus directed against him. Sunk in sloth, and blinded by flattery and pride, he had neither the foresight to guard against danger when at a distance, nor the courage to repel it when it closed around. Despair took possession of him when he beheld the war-gallies of the Venetians anchor close to his walls, and heard the Frankish trumpets sounding defiance from the Asiatic shore. He sent a half-menacing half-suppliant message to the crusaders, offering to join forces with them for the deliverance of Jerusalem, if they were bent solely on that honourable exploit ; but threatening them with destruction if they presumed to violate his territory. The crusaders answered him with scorn. Provided, they said, he did not instantly make restitution of the crown to the lawful heir, their reply would be made in arms, in the palace of Constantinople.

On the tenth day of their encampment at Scutari, the Latins, distributed in six " battles " or divisions, effected the passage of the Bosphorus in the face of seventy thousand Grecian horse and foot, drawn up on the European shore in formidable array. Baldwin Count of Flanders led the vanguard, and the Marquis of Montferrat the reserve. " The chargers, saddled, with their long caparisons dragging on the ground, were embarked in the flat *palanders* ; and the knights stood by the side of their horses in complete armour, their helmets laced and their lances in

their hands."* The Greeks, struck with terror at their martial presence, fled within the walls without waiting their onset, and the city was regularly invested. Several attacks were made both by sea and land, and the leaders vied with each other in deeds of valour. While the French lords, at the head of their knights, made breaches in the ramparts, and sought to enter by escalade; the venerable Doge, stationed in complete armour on the prow of his galley, and with the great standard of Saint Mark flapping over him, ran his flotilla into the harbour, and for a time, the Gonfalon of the Republic was fixed on the rampart, and would have been permanently planted there, had not the peril to which his confederates were exposed on the land side compelled him to relinquish his advantage. Impressed with the conviction that it was vain to bid defiance to so dauntless a host, the usurper, incapable of persevering in a bold resistance, cast away his imperial trappings, and, collecting some treasure, had himself rowed through the Bosphorus by night, and fled to an obscure harbour in Thrace. His flight was the signal of revolt to the weak slaves who had obeyed him. Isaac Angelus was brought from his dungeon to reascend the throne; the gates of the city were thrown open to the crusaders as friends; and the Prince Alexius was solemnly crowned with his sightless parent under the dome of Saint Sophia, on the 1st of August 1203.

Alexius soon found that promises were more easily made than kept, and that he had incurred a debt of gratitude to the Latin commanders, which he could not attempt to liquidate. Insecure in his new

* Gibbon.

dignity, and anxious to postpone the day of reckoning, he prevailed on them to delay their departure a whole year, during which interval, a part of the army assisted to establish his authority in the provinces, and overawe his fugitive uncle. His constant intercourse and great familiarity with the Latins, gradually begot suspicion and discontent among his own subjects; while, on the other hand, the crusaders came to regard him as an ingrate, who had no inclination to fulfil the solemn stipulations he had made to them. Feeble and fluctuating in his conduct, he lost the confidence of both parties; and at length the Latin chiefs, disgusted with his shuffling, sternly demanded whether his choice were peace or war. This haughty message was carried to him by three French knights and three Venetian deputies, who, mounted on their battle-chargers, dashed boldly into the city, and, passing through the angry multitude that thronged the streets, entered with dauntless port the palace and presence of the Greek monarch.

This exploit, though it was accomplished without bloodshed, was a virtual renewal of the war. The Greeks, indignant at the humiliation which it inferred, denounced the Angeli as a base and spurious race, and clamorously demanded a more worthy sovereign. Tumult reigned in every corner of the capital, and, headed by a prince of the imperial house of Ducas, * nick-named Mourzoufle, on account of his black and shaggy eyebrows, the populace at length proceeded to acts of open rebellion. At midnight, Mourzoufle, who had the art to retain the confidence of Alexius, while he inflamed the passions and prejudices of the Greeks, rushed into the

* Ducange sur Villehardouin.

bed-chamber of his sovereign, and called upon him to fly and save his life. Alexius, suddenly roused from slumber, and believing that the multitude thirsting for his blood, already thronged the courts of his palace, cast himself at once on the guidance of the alarmist, and rushed with him down a private staircase. That staircase terminated in a dungeon ; and there, stripped and loaded with chains, after several days imprisonment, during which repeated attempts were made to poison him, his kidnapper strangled him with his own hands. Isaac his father, crushed to the earth with years and grief, soon followed him to the grave ; and Mourzoufle, clad in the eagle-embroidered buskins, which indicated his assumption of the imperial dignity, presented himself to the people, and was declared emperor by their acclaim.

The Latins no sooner learned the untimely death of Alexius, than they forgot their grounds of complaint against him, and gave bold defiance to his assassin. Hurried away by that headlong ardour which actuated them on every occasion, they once more beleagured the city, and, contemning the slow progress of a regular siege, attempted to carry it by escalade. But Mourzoufle, though sprung from the blood of Angelus and Ducas, had none of the effeminacy that had so long been associated with these imperial lines. Armed with an iron mace, and bearing himself like a warrior, he made a vigorous resistance ; and in a nocturnal sally, in which he was repulsed, he left his buckler and standard on the field of battle. Nearly three months elapsed before the Latins made their final assault. At the end of that time, the assailants, amid a deadly shower of darts, stones and fire, stormed the walls simultaneously, at more than a hundred different points. Thrice they return-

ed to the charge: the towers were scaled: the gates burst open; and at twilight, after a day of blood, the Latin trumpets, lighted by the glare of a conflagration accidentally kindled, sounded a point of defiance in the centre of the city. Next morning the unstable populace bent in slavish supplication at the feet of the conquerors. Mourzoufle had fled; and the half-civilized knighthood of Western Europe shouted victory within the palaces of Blachernæ and Boucoleon.

The Marquis of Montferrat, who is described as the patron of discipline and decency, endeavoured, as far as practicable, to prevent the laurels he had won in this enterprise from being blighted by licentious outrage; but still he was unable to save the city from partial spoliation. Glutted with pillage and slaughter, the victors, seeing themselves in possession of a vacant throne, at length found time to look round for a prince to ascend it. The choice was referred to twelve electors, six of whom were Frenchmen, and six Venetians; and it was decided that the one nation should furnish an Emperor, and the other a Patriarch. The imperial diadem was first offered to the venerable Dandolo; but, with the self-denial of a patriot who felt that, to be judged worthy to reign was the acme of his ambition, he rejected the dazzling gift. Next in favour with the army stood the Marquis of Montferrat; and on him the crown would have descended; had not the Doge, with that keen policy which formed so remarkable a feature in his character, thrown his influence into the scale against him; and Baldwin, Count of Flanders and Hainault, was, by the unanimous suffrage of the electors, declared Emperor of the East, while Thomas Morosini was chosen Patriarch of Constan-

tinople. That the Marquis of Montferrat, however, might not go without his reward, he was assigned the island of Candia, and the country beyond the Bosphorus; but he subsequently sold the former to the Venetians, and exchanged the latter for the province and title of King of Thessalonica or Macedonia; Dandolo was nominated Despot of Romania, and soon after terminated his long and glorious life; the Venetians obtained the sovereignty of most of the islands of the Archipelago; Jeffrey of Villehardouin was proclaimed Marshal of Romania, with a fair possession beyond the Hebrus; and, in short, the subjugated Greeks beheld, in every dependency, a Latin baron at the head of a band of knights and archers, settle himself as their feudal lord.

While the Latins remained united at Constantinople, the renown which they had acquired by its subjugation, and the terror of their arms, kept the Greeks in silent subjection; but no sooner were they scattered far and wide over the captive land, than murmurs and conspiracies began to distract it. Baldwin, no longer surrounded by his companions in glory, felt his throne totter under him before a year had waned; and, in the hope of contributing to its stability, he sent a pressing entreaty to the Hospitallers of Saint John, to form a settlement in his empire. In accordance with this invitation, a great number of knights repaired to Constantinople, and were put in possession of two establishments in that capital, together with extensive estates in the provinces. It is mentioned by a contemporary historian,* that Matthieu de Montmorency, one of the leaders of the crusade, dying in this memorable ex-

* Villehardouin.

pedition, was buried in the church of Saint John of the Hospital of Jerusalem. At this period there was not a potentate in Christendom who had not some Hospitallers in his council. At Florence, Pisa, and Verona, they had magnificent hospitals and churches; and the nuns of the Order were esteemed as perfect models of Christian virtue. It is told of one of these pious and charitable ladies, the blessed sister Ubaldina of Pisa, that she was the mother of the poor, the restorer of the sick, the comforter of the stricken-hearted; and, in short, that there was no kind of misery for which she had not a remedy or consolation. Those moments she could spare from her duties of mercy, were spent before the cross, and in continual meditation on death; and so cruelly did she mortify her body, that her biographers do not scruple to assign her, on that account, equal glory with the knights her brethren, who suffered martyrdom in captivity, and on the field of battle.

It belongs not to our narrative to follow closely the history of the Latin Kings of Constantinople. In the short space of two years from the surrender of that city, the Greeks, aided by Calo-John, chief of Bulgaria, recovered their freedom in the provinces, and captured the Latin Emperor himself in battle. Baldwin died in captivity, and was succeeded by his brother Henry, a valiant knight and skilful commander, in whose reign the Latins, in a great measure, regained the dominion they had lost under his more reckless and impetuous predecessor. With these two Emperors the male line of the Counts of Flanders ended; and, in right of their sister, Violante, who had married Peter de Courtenay, a French prince, that lord was recognised as

their legitimate representative ; but, in attempting to pass through Epirus, he was arrested by the despot of that country, a Greek of the family of Comneni; and died in bondage. His eldest son having rejected the Imperial diadem, it descended on his second son Robert, under whom the empire, assailed on all sides by the Greeks of Nice and Epirus, and bereft of the support of the remnant of the original conquerors, who all perished in a disastrous battle, fell rapidly into ruin. Robert, chased from his capital by a partial insurrection, closed his life in Italy, whither he had fled to implore the Pope to hurl his thunders against his rebellious people ; and his death led to the crown of Constantinople being placed on the head of a Christian knight, who had previously worn that of Jerusalem. But before noticing this event, it is necessary to resume the main thread of our narrative, from which, for the sake of perspicacity, it was requisite thus far to digress.

CHAPTER VI.

John de Brienne nominated King of Jerusalem—The Sixth Crusade—Unstable Conduct of Andrew, King of Hungary—Expedition to Egypt—Conquest of Damietta—Capitulation of the Christian Army—Expedition of the Emperor Frederic the Second—John de Brienne called to the Throne of Constantinople.

IN 1206, two years after the conquest of Constantinople by the chivalry of the West, Amaury de Lusignan, King of Cyprus and Jerusalem, died, and was speedily followed to the grave by his consort Isabella, by whom he had no issue. On their death, Mary, the daughter of Isabella and Conrad of Tyre, succeeded to the crown of Jerusalem, while that of Cyprus devolved on Hugh de Lusignan, son of Amaury by his first wife. The Christians of Palestine, again destitute of a king, and aware that none but a prince of ability and renown could repress intestine discord and foreign aggression, sent an embassy to Philip of France, supplicating him to name a husband for the young Queen capable of defending her inheritance. It was one of the characteristics of that chivalrous age, to call men from a private station to occupy thrones; and the French monarch named John of Brienne, a knight of a noble family of Champagne, greatly renowned for his wisdom and

valour, and in every way worthy of being nominated the champion of the Holy Land. This warrior, dazzled by the titular kingdom which public acclaim, equally with the judgment of Philip Augustus, conferred upon him, undertook, with knightly pride, the perilous duties that devolved on its monarch. When the deputies who had been intrusted with the negotiation departed to return to Palestine, he charged them with the most courteous and encouraging assurances to his future consort and her nobles; and these, magnified by the bearers, were received as indubitable evidence that all Christendom was arming in their behalf; and that the moment the armistice with Saphadin expired, a new crusade would deluge his dominions. Even that sagacious chief was deceived by the voice of rumour, and not only offered to renew the truce, but consented to restore ten towns or fortalices contiguous to the Latin frontier. The Grandmaster of the Hospitallers alone had the wisdom to perceive that the hopes of succours so extensive were fallacious, and strenuously recommended that Saphadin's proposal should be accepted. He was supported by the Master of the Teutonic Order, and many of the Latin grandees; but the Templars, who let slip no opportunity of opposing the Hospitallers in council, with their wonted pride and contempt of danger, voted for open and uncompromising defiance; and their voice prevailed. The Grandmaster of the Hospitallers did not live to see the accuracy of his inference verified. He died the same year (1208); and the Order chose in his stead Guerin de Montaigu, a knight of the language of Auvergne.

The utmost efforts of John of Brienne failed to bring together more than three hundred knights to

bear him company to Palestine; for the nations of the West no longer anticipated with affright the reign of Antichrist, and their pious enthusiasm was rapidly on the decline. With this small but goodly company, the Latins, to their unspeakable disappointment, saw him land at Acre. They had expected him to arrive at the head of a mighty army, and were consequently greatly chagrined when he presented himself with the mere retinue of a petty king. Nevertheless, his fame in arms was in itself like the sound of a trumpet, and they faithfully adhered to their engagements. He formally espoused the young Queen; and, without allowing himself time for dalliance, instantly took the field, to commemorate his nuptials by martial exploits on the Saracen frontier. Several small fortresses fell into his hands; but this bridal foray led to no important result. Saphadin drew together a strong body of troops to chastise him; and he had no alternative but to retire from the presence of so formidable an adversary. A short enjoyment of his new dignity sufficed to show him that he held his crown by a very insecure tenure; and in a letter to Pope Innocent the Third, he represented, in moving terms, the desolate condition of his kingdom, which was reduced to a few barely tenable fortresses, and entirely dependent for existence on the continuance of the civil wars that devastated the Moslem territories. Innocent, who, in common with most of his predecessors, cherished a strong predilection in favour of the expeditions which the pious ardour of the age had repeatedly directed against the Infidel potentates of the East, and who was also fully alive to the importance of the influence which the occupant of the Papal Chair thereby acquired over vast armies, received this intelligence with ostentatious

grief, and, in imitation of Urban the Second, summoned a general council of the Princes of the West, to commune on the affairs of the sinking state. A league formed at this period against France, by Otho the Fourth, Emperor of Germany, and several other European sovereigns, suspended this convocation; and it was not till after victory declared for Philip, on the plain of Bouvines, that it was able to assemble. At length, in 1215, deputies from almost every monarch in Christendom, and a prodigious multitude of ecclesiastical dignitaries, met at Rome, and were solemnly instructed by his Holiness as to the miserable debasement of the Christian kingdom which the swords of their fathers had reared over the Redeemer's tomb. In an assembly so constituted, such representations could not fail to be triumphant. The church of the Lateran, in which the Council was held, resounded with acclamations scarcely less ardent than those which burst from the multitudes, who shouted "God wills it!" in the ears of Urban, at the memorable Council of Clermont. It was instantly decreed, that such crusaders as chose to pass into Palestine by sea, should be ready to embark at Messina or Brundisium on the 1st of June 1217, and that, on the same day, the land armies should begin their march.

Though the eloquence of the representative of Saint Peter, and the zeal of his deputies, of whom Robert de Courcon, an Englishman, was the chief, partially revived that chivalrous piety which had achieved such wonders in former wars, the princes who embarked in the Sixth Crusade, among whom were the Emperor Frederic the Second of Germany, who had just succeeded Otho, Andrew, King of Hungary, and the Dukes of Austria and Bavaria, did not rush into the enterprise with the headlong

ardour of the companions of Godfrey of Bouillon. Each reserved to himself not only the right to fix the time of his departure for the Holy Land, but also the period to which his services should be extended, which was to be regulated entirely by the state of his health, and the situation of his kingdom. Andrew, King of Hungary, a prince on whom the monkish historians lavish the epithets of pious and magnanimous, * was the first leader who unfurled his banner. Joined by the chivalry of Austria and Bavaria, he embarked with his followers at Spalatro in Venetian vessels, after being strongly exhorted by Pope Honorius the Third, who had just succeeded Innocent, to undertake no enterprise against the Infidels without the concurrence and support of the Grandmaster of the Hospitallers—an exhortation which the King, who avowed a high respect for the Grandmaster's valour and capacity, not only pledged himself to keep in remembrance, but despatched a special invitation to that commander to meet him at the Island of Cyprus, to confer on the aspect of affairs, and to give him convoy with his squadron to the Syrian shore. The Grandmaster, attended by the principal officers of his Order, repaired to Cyprus accordingly; and after a grave conference on the state of the East, the joint squadrons, along with that of Hugh de Lusignan, King of the island, sailed for Acre, where they arrived without disaster. A domestic tragedy, however, which happened in Hungary immediately subsequent to the King's departure, and terminated in the assassination of his Queen, filled his mind with a disquiet, which even the important and spirit-stirring

* Vertot.

duties he had undertaken to discharge for the honour of the Cross could not conquer. The palace of the King of Jerusalem at Acre was offered to him as a residence ; but, weighed down with despondency, he declined the pomp of regal state, and, with the humility of a true disciple of Christ, became the guest of the Hospitallers, whose unostentatious beneficence greatly excited his admiration. In their company he visited the fortalices of Margat and Karac ; and afterwards, at his own special desire, was received into the Order as a brother. On that occasion, he gave, in perpetuity to the fraternity, an annuity of seven hundred merks of silver, leviable on the salt-works of Saloch in Hungary ; and as the continual jeopardy to which the garrison of Karac was exposed, pointed it out as particularly entitled to his support, it was expressly stipulated, that sixty merks of the grant should be regularly applied to the necessities of Raymond de Pigna, governor of that fortress, and his successors in office. The testimony which this generous prince bore to the merit and virtues of the Knights of Saint John, is the most honourable to be found in their annals ;—indeed, at this period, though the regulations were no longer enforced, in some instances, with their pristine vigour, these soldier-monks appear to have been in all things free of reproach, save in those points of honour which occasionally came to be discussed between them and their turbulent and imperious rivals the Templars. “ Lodging,” says he, “ in their house, I have seen them feed daily an innumerable multitude of poor ; while the sick were laid in good beds, and treated with great care, the dying assisted with an exemplary piety, and the dead decently buried. In a word, this noble militia are employed

sometimes, like Mary, in contemplation, and sometimes, like Martha, in action; and thus consecrate their days to deeds of mercy, and to the maintenance of a constant warfare against the infidel Amalekites, and the enemies of the Cross."

It may excite surprise, how an Order, one of whose fundamental rules enjoined perpetual poverty, and a total oblivion of individuality in regard to wealth, should receive into its bosom a crowned king, who could not possibly subscribe to these articles. But, as has been well said by a modern historian of chivalry,* the general principles of the religious societies of knighthood, fitted themselves to the times like the chain-mail, which was flexible to all the motions of the body. Ascetic privations gave place to chivalric gallantry; and when men of noble birth and high fortune became knights, the vow which imposed a community of property was dispensed with, or explained away to the satisfaction of conscientious scruples.

The King of Hungary, though sincerely disposed to do good service to the Christian cause, was too much harassed by the recollection of the misfortunes that had occurred in his own country, and perhaps naturally too unstable, to remain long at the head of the crusade. In the three months that the Syrian Christians enjoyed his presence, he only once took the field; and on that occasion, his army, which included the Kings of Jerusalem and Cyprus, the Grandmasters of the Hospitallers and Templars, and the Master of the Teutonic Order, presented so formidable a phalanx, that Coradine, Sultan of Damascus, and son to Saphadin, against whom it was

* Mills, vol. i. p. 335.

directed, suddenly abandoned a design which he entertained of besieging Acre, and retired within his own boundaries, leaving his frontier exposed to the foe. Soon afterwards, Hugh de Lusignan, King of Cyprus, withdrew to Tripoli, where he died; and the King of Hungary, despite the threats of excommunication by which the Patriarch of Jerusalem endeavoured to detain him, departed for his own country—having first, with all his troops, as was the wont of devout crusaders, laved his limbs in the sacred waters of the Jordan, on St Martin's eve.

This defection was in some measure supplied by the seasonable arrival of a new armament under William, Count of Holland, with considerable succours from that country; for even the phlegmatic natives of Friesland and Zealand did not escape the prevalent mania of the age. Prior to the arrival of this reinforcement, the King of Jerusalem, in concert with the Duke of Austria and the Hospitalers, refortified Cæsarea, while the Templars and Teutonic Knights placed a neighbouring stronghold, called the Castle of the Pilgrims, in a state of defence, by which means Acre itself was strengthened, and facilities given to the militants to extend their contributions on the adjacent districts, which the Infidels still retained.* Thus reinforced, the King, with the concurrence of the chief crusaders, determined, in a great council, to turn his arms against Egypt; and Damietta, the most regular fortification in that country, was pitched upon as the place which should be first assailed. A voyage of three days brought the army to the mouth of the Nile, where it debarked, unopposed, a little to the

* James de Vitri.

westward of Damietta (1218). The mouth of that branch of the river on which Damietta stood, was protected by an iron chain, which had to be broken before the fleet could effect an entrance. A strongly-fortified and insulated tower, which covered the town, was then attacked; and in this service the Knights of Saint John deported themselves in a manner worthy of their ancient renown. Grappling two ships together, they ran them close to the tower, and, by means of the masts and of ladders, clambered, amid a shower of fireworks, stones and spears, to the top of the rampart. But at the moment when they regarded the fort as taken, the mast of one of the ships yielded to the weight of the swarm of mailed warriors who crowded it; the ladders, which extended horizontally to the battlements, also gave way; and the knights, falling into the water in complete armour, were unable to rise again, and perished. Their fate only gave a fiercer impulse to the zeal of the survivors. The scalade was repeatedly renewed; and at last the German crusaders, planting a newly-invented machine against the tower, gained the summit of the wall, and the post was taken.

While the siege of Damietta, which, after the occupation of this fort, continued to be pressed with vigour, was still in dependance, vast succours, composed of Italians, French, Germans, and English, arrived in the Christian camp; and at their head came Cardinal Pelagius, a proud and arrogant priest, and Robert de Courcon, the Saint Bernard of the crusade, as legates of the Holy See. Among the English crusaders were the Earl of Chester, the famous William Longespee, Earl of Salisbury, son of Henry the Second, by the fair Rosamond, and the

Lord Harcourt, all noble and chivalrous men.* Meanwhile, Saphadin, stricken with grief, it is said, at the jeopardy of Damietta, terminated his reign, having first divided among his six eldest sons his extensive dominions. Malek-el-Kamel, who inherited Egypt, lost no time in imploring the assistance of his brother Coradine, Sultan of Damascus; and that prince, who possessed the warlike and vigorous disposition of his father, promptly obeyed the summons. Apprehensive that the Christians might repossess themselves of Jerusalem in his absence, he razed the fortifications of that city; and then, at the head of a considerable army, passed the desert, and, in concert with the Egyptian Sultan, threatened the crusaders' camp. The valour of the Christian knights, however, defeated all his stratagems. He found it impracticable to throw succours into the besieged city; nor could the garrison, though it made sally after sally with the impetuosity of despair, pierce the deep leaguer of steel-clad warriors interposed between it and relief. In repelling these sorties, the valour of the Hospitallers was constantly conspicuous; and, in the last that was made before the place was taken, the Marshal of the Order was left among the slain.

Coradine had set his heart on the preservation of Damietta; and no sooner was he made aware that the number and bravery of the crusaders left him no hope of relieving it by arms, than he sought to effect its redemption by negotiation. He offered to restore Jerusalem, Thoron, and several other important fortresses, to the Christians—to place the Holy City in a defensible condition—and to yield up the Holy Cross,

* Annals of Waverley in Gale.

which his uncle Saladin had taken in the battle of Tiberias, provided they would abandon their hopes of conquest on the banks of the Nile; and so advantageous did the King of Jerusalem consider these terms, that he at once expressed himself inclined to accept them. But the Legate Pelagius, whose coadjutor De Courcon had fallen a victim to the climate, and who assumed an unlimited authority in the camp, came to a different conclusion. His imperious arguments completely swayed the council in which the subject was debated; and the King, disgusted at finding himself bearded by an arrogant priest in the midst of his own lances, waited only a feasible pretence to quit the camp. After a siege of seventeen months, in which disease and the sword together swept down thousands of the crusaders, Damietta was taken in a night assault; but so resolutely had it been defended, that the Christians found it one vast tomb. Above fourscore thousand men had perished; and the few who survived, to see the conquerors burst their gates, had barely strength remaining to crawl into their houses to die. It is told, that Cardinal James de Vitri, who was present at the siege, purchased a vast number of orphans, with an intention, which was considered exceedingly laudable in those days, of having them baptized; but of this miserable multitude upwards of five hundred expired soon after, in consequence of the horrible privations to which the mothers that suckled them had been exposed.

So far the Legate triumphed; but his arrogance was destined soon to be humbled in the dust. The King had retired in disgust to Acre; but was subsequently prevailed upon to bridle his wrath and return, in order, as it were, that he might be a witness

of the upshot of the churchman's arrogance. In opposition to the advice of the experienced soldiers, over whom he had set himself in absolute authority, Pelagius, supported by the Hospitallers and Templars, ordered the army to advance into the interior of the country; and no sooner did the Sultan see these warlike strangers scattered over the low islands of the Delta, than he broke down the banks of the river, and encompassed them with an impassable lake. Shut up in an island, near the canal of Ashmoum, and destitute of supplies, the conquerors of Damietta were in danger of perishing by famine, and had ultimately to purchase bread and liberty by the restoration of that city, and the liberation of all the prisoners whom they had taken in the campaign. The Saracens, on their part, agreed to restore the true Cross and all their captives; but the former stipulation they were unable to fulfil,—the venerated relic having probably been lost or destroyed in the domestic troubles which followed the death of Saladin. The King, who had to offer his own person as a hostage, shed tears of indignation, as he confessed to Kamel that his troops were starving; and the generous Moslem, instead of exulting over his humiliation, threw open his granaries for their relief. On the ratification of the treaty, the Christian army disbanded; and thus, principally through the presumption of an ignorant priest, were John de Brienne's hopes of reconquering his kingdom destroyed.

In this expedition, the knights of Saint John expended above eight thousand byzantines in the public service, yet they were subsequently accused of having diverted to their own profit a part of the vast sums that had been remitted from Europe, to defray the expenses of the crusade—a calumny which they

triumphantly repelled. It adds no strength to the refutation, however, that the Legate was their strenuous advocate, in the inquiry which Honorius the Third conceived it proper to institute.

Though the descent on Egypt turned out so untowardly for the gallant armament that made it; there was still sufficient piety and enterprise in Europe to furnish the elements of another expedition. In 1222, two years subsequent to the restitution of Damietta, a grand council was held at Ferentino, in the Campagna di Roma, to take once more into solemn consideration the humiliating state of Palestine. This memorable assembly was attended by the Pope; the Emperor Frederic the Second, grandson of Barbarossa; John de Brienne King of Jerusalem; the Patriarch of that city; the Legate Pelagius, whose headstrong pride had already proved so injurious to the Christian cause; Guerin de Montaigu, Grandmaster of the Hospitallers; and deputies from the Templars and Teutonic knights. Frederic had thrice solemnly pledged himself to head an expedition for the redemption of the Holy City; and Honorius now vehemently urged him no longer to procrastinate. Frederic was not to be awed into obedience by the thunders of the Vatican; but priestly craft achieved what reproaches could not compass. It was proposed, that, being a widower, he should marry Violante, only daughter and heiress of the King of Jerusalem; and this suggestion meeting his approval, they were solemnly betrothed on the understanding that he should embark for the Holy Land in the course of two years, and re-establish the throne of Godfrey of Bouillon. It was expressly declared at the time this alliance was arranged, that it should in nowise affect the rights of the reg-

nant King of Jerusalem during his life; but that the Princess should only succeed her father in the natural course of events. The Pope, however, who was anxious not only to advance the cause of the Cross in Palestine, but who entertained an earnest desire to remove Frederic, whose power he feared; as far away as possible from his own territories; scrupled not to recommend, or rather command, John de Brienne to abdicate in his imperial son-in-law's favour; and, after some mortifying proceedings, that Prince, wearied of his regal honours, and filled with disinterested zeal, consented to resign a crown which he had no longer the power to retain. This done, he set out in company with the Grandmaster of the Hospitallers on a pilgrimage through various countries of Christendom, for the humiliating purpose of soliciting succours in behalf of a kingdom which was no longer his own.

The Emperor, who found it a difficult task to maintain his authority in his Italian territories, was in no haste, notwithstanding the princely manner in which he had been bribed, to fulfil his engagement. The two years' being come and gone, he solicited a further dispensation of two more, which was granted upon the express condition that he should then embark in person, and provide ample resources both of men and money for bringing the crusade to a favourable termination. Accordingly, in the summer of 1227, two years after Violante had become his bride, (for her youth had delayed their union), he hoisted sail at Brundusium with an armament of forty thousand men; but he had been at sea barely three days, when he became, if his advocates may be credited, grievously affected with ague, and, in compliance with the advice of his physician, put into the

port of Tarento. That sickness prevailed in the fleet to an alarming extent, is proved by the death of the Landgrave of Hesse, and the illness of several other lords. Once more safe on land, Frederic showed no inclination again to put to sea; and, enraged at his supineness, Pope Gregory the Ninth, a choleric and intemperate priest, who had just succeeded Honorius the Third, publicly excommunicated him from the pulpit in the great church of Anagni.

The ecclesiastical penalty of excommunication was in those days a sentence of terrible significance. It was a thunderbolt that shook thrones and affrighted nations. When levelled at a refractory prince, it not only affected him individually, but involved every person who acknowledged his sovereignty. In his territories, the bells of the churches ceased to be rung, and were even taken down from the belfries; the altars were stripped, and the crosses, relics, and figures of the saints that adorned them, cast down on the ground and covered, to indicate that it was a time of debasement and mourning. No sacrament was administered save that of baptism to new-born infants, and confession and the communion as a viaticum to the dying. The church-doors were closed, a perpetual lent was proclaimed, and the very commonest indulgences were forbidden. The people, deprived of the formalities of religion, speedily came to regard the prince who had brought them under the ban of the church, as an infidel whom it was sinful to obey, and meritorious to overturn; and few were the potentates who, in the course of their reigns, happened to be thus situated, who did not purchase the removal of the interdict, by prostration under the very feet of the clerical despot who

ruled the destinies of the Christian world. Had the curse which priestly indignation thus passed upon kings and nations been always merited, there would have been less reason to deplore its universality; but, in almost every instance, it was thundered forth for temporal purposes, and the attributes of heaven were thereby usurped to advance the base and venal interests of man.

Frederic was greatly enraged at the Pope's precipitate conduct, and publicly appealed to the sovereigns of Europe to judge between them. His Holiness took no further notice of his protestations than by excommunicating him anew; which intemperate rigour occasioned a partial insurrection among his own nobility; while the Emperor, naturally stern and revengeful, commenced a persecution against all who abetted the Holy See, and even sent Saracen troops from his Sicilian kingdom to ravage the patrimony of Saint Peter. Aware, however, that policy required him to restrain his wrath, and apprehensive that John de Brienne might, on his return to the Holy Land, resume the crown which he had reluctantly abdicated, he at last seriously resolved to repair thither. Prior to his departure, he endeavoured to reconcile himself with the Holy See; but the Pontiff scouted his apologies, and sent him for answer, that, far from considering his departute, under such circumstances, an expiation, he rather regarded it as an aggravation of his crimes. The Emperor, however, gave no heed to this prohibition, but sailed, in defiance of Papal authority, for Palestine.

In the meantime, that unhappy country had been reduced to the most calamitous condition. Torn by intestine disputes among its defenders, who acted

without concert, and reposed no confidence in each other, the succours which the Emperor had from time to time forwarded, had proved of no avail; and when the Grandmaster of the Hospitallers returned from Europe, he found the kingdom without a government, the military orders ready to turn their arms against each other, and that generous emulation which had once burned so brightly among the champions of the Cross, about to expire. Still there remained a considerable body of crusaders, who only required a skilful commander to lead them to victory; and who, at length, sick of lying inactive behind ditches and ramparts, demanded loudly to be led into the field, though the Christians were then enjoying a respite from the horrors of war, in virtue of a truce which had been ratified by the most solemn oaths. This proposition, which was started in a general council by the Duke of Limburg, the Emperor's lieutenant, was opposed by some honourable men, as a foul breach of faith; but the majority supported it, on the common argument, that it was not incumbent on them to respect a treaty with the Infidels, longer than they found it to their advantage to do so; and on this base principle, which the Pope himself did not scruple to countenance, preparations were made for securing Cæsarea and Jaffa, in order to facilitate the conquest of Jerusalem.

Such was the state of affairs in Palestine, when Frederic debarked at Saint John d'Acree, in the autumn of 1228. He was received by the clergy, the military orders, and the public functionaries of the city, with the respect due to his dignity; for, as yet, the circumstances under which he had left Europe were unknown; but, before the army could take the

field, messengers arrived with tidings of his contumacious defiance of the Holy See, coupled with an express injunction to the Hospitallers, Templars, and Teutonic Knights, not to obey him. The Hospitallers and Templars, whose revenues had been dilapidated, and many of their brethren treated with rigour by his officers in Italy and Sicily, in the course of his hostile operations against the Pope, for once curbing their mutual jealousy of each other, and acting in concert, immediately refused to serve in the expedition, if the Emperor commanded it; but the Teutonic Knights, regarding themselves as his subjects, and therefore less obligated to pay implicit deference to the Pontiff's mandate, agreed to follow him to the war. Accordingly, at the head of eight hundred horse, and ten thousand foot, Frederic unfurled his standard, and advanced along the coast towards Jaffa. The Hospitallers and Templars, though they held it a point of conscience and of duty to refuse to bear him company, could not behold the Christian banner once more unfurled in defiance, without feeling the keenest regret that their own pennons were not displayed in concert. Too fond of warlike emprise to remain within the walls of their fortalices, while their Christian brethren were in battle-array in the field, they pursued at a distance their line of march, for the ostensible purpose of covering their retreat, in case they should sustain a defeat; and Frederic, aware that he could ill dispense with their succour, after a little time suppressed his wrath, and consented to a compromise, by which it was agreed, that the orders of the camp should be issued, not in his own name, but in the name of God and Christendom. This point settled, the knights resumed their place in the

Christian ranks. The army entered Jaffa without opposition; but, while occupied in rebuilding the fortifications of that city, news reached the Emperor, which induced him to consider his Italian dominions in such danger, as to render the conquest of Jerusalem itself a matter of secondary consideration.

Prior to his embarkation for the Holy Land, Frederic had referred the incensed Pontiff to Rinaldo, Duke of Spoleto, as a person whom he had invested with authority to bring their differences, if possible, to an amicable termination; but Gregory, giving way to the uncharitable ire that possessed him, spurned at negotiation; and Rinaldo, in compliance with the Emperor's instructions, continued to devastate the papal territories. To oppose these aggressions, the Pope levied considerable forces; and, at the head of one body, he placed the dis-crowned John de Brienne, who, with that submission which he had always been so ready to display, even to his own humiliation, to the edicts of the representative of St Peter, readily accepted the command. In the war that ensued, both armies perpetrated great atrocities; and Europe stood aghast at the spectacle of the soldiers of the church ravaging the territories of a monarch who was absent in arms for the glory of the cross. Intelligence of these events made Frederic regard the Pope as his mortal enemy; and, though he subsequently entered Jerusalem in triumph, he found in that desolate city nothing to divert his mind from the resolution he had taken to leave Palestine to its fate. Far from securing the respect and fidelity of the Latin Christians by his achievements, they continued to regard him, with pious detestation, as a sinner suffering under the ban of the church; and, therefore,

neither to be honoured nor obeyed. At his coronation no priest would place the crown of Jerusalem on his head; and he had to take it from the altar of the Holy Sepulchre with his own hands, and request Herman de Saltza, the Master of the Teutonic Knights, to pronounce a laudatory oration. The church, in which the ceremony was performed, was placed under interdict by the Patriarch, who affected to consider it profaned; and, to complete his disgust, a foul plot was hatched by the Knights of the Hospital and Temple, to deliver him up a prisoner to the Saracens. Information was given to the Sultan of Egypt by these false Knights, * that the Emperor, prior to his departure, intended, as was the wont of all pious Christians who visited Jerusalem, to make a pilgrimage on foot, with a small retinue, to the Jordan, for the purpose of bathing in that sacred stream. The conspirators suggested, that, on this journey, a band of Saracen horsemen should intercept him, and either slay him on the spot, or bear him off a captive. But the Sultan, far less of a barbarian, than the cowed ruffians who had planned this diabolical deed, and engaged all along in an amicable but secret correspondence with the Emperor, whom he regarded as a friendly buckler between him and the ambition of his brother Coradine, received the proposition with abhorrence; and, with genuine magnanimity, sent the epistle that conveyed it to his imperial foe. Through other channels, Frederic had become aware of his danger before the treasonable letter reached him; but policy withheld him from seeking immediate revenge. The military or-

* Mat. Paris.

ders found him in after times, however, an implacable enemy.

This incident furnishes a lamentable index to the laxity of principle and thorough prostration of generous sentiment, which a long period of humiliation and misfortune had produced in a country which had long been the grand arena of chivalrous deeds. Historians, it is true, are at issue as to the truth of the allegations brought against the knights; but there is evidence sufficiently conclusive on the dark side of the question, to startle their staunchest advocates. Their fierce impatience of control—their hatred of the Emperor for the persecutions with which his lieutenants had harassed them in Europe—and, above all, their blind devotion to the Pope, who was strongly suspected of having suggested this mode of disposing of a troublesome adversary,—are circumstances that weigh heavily against the simple argument, that they were incapable of such atrocity. It is admitted, however, that the Templars were far more deeply implicated in the treason than the Knights of Saint John.

The courtesies which passed between the Sultan and the Emperor, terminated in a truce to last for ten years. The terms were singularly advantageous to the Christians; and, considering the sanguinary fanaticism that prevailed, the generosity of the Infidels may be ascribed rather to personal esteem for the imperial leader, than dread of his host. Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth, Tyre, and Sidon, were restored, with liberty to rebuild their fortifications; Christians and Mohammedans were declared entitled to equal privileges civil and religious within the Holy City; and all that the latter specially retained within the walls, was an exclusive right to the

mosque of the Temple, with the court and enclosure around it, from whence, in the language of their superstition, "the Prophet undertook his nocturnal journey to heaven." This toleration, however, was little in unison with the zeal which animated the Christian priests. It reduced the Emperor, in their estimation, to the level of the Infidels whom he protected; and when they heard him, before he departed for Europe, scornfully refuse to aid the military orders in raising new defences round the city, they turned their backs on him as one who had mocked the servants of Christ at the door of his sepulchre, and whose enormities were inexpiable.

The Emperor no sooner showed himself in his European dominions, than the fortune of war turned decidedly in his favour; and the Pope, despairing of subduing so formidable an adversary by temporal weapons, launched the final thunderbolt of the Church against him, by adding, to the sentence of excommunication already on record, a clause absolving his subjects of their oath of allegiance. This act brought Frederic to a full sense of the danger he ran in longer holding the Pontiff at defiance; and he instantly flung down the sword, and solicited peace. Nothing but unconditional submission would satisfy the enraged churchman; and the Emperor had no alternative but to throw himself on his mercy. Among other articles in the treaty that followed, it was stipulated, that the Hospitallers and Templars should be reimbursed for the spoliations which they had sustained at his hands; and that the whole expenses of the war should be defrayed from the Imperial treasury. These humiliating conditions were scrupulously fulfilled; but the Emperor's resentment against the military orders was never thoroughly

subdued; and within a year afterwards he countenanced the sequestration of their Sicilian possessions.

It has been mentioned, that John de Brienne, the ex-king of Jerusalem, provoked by the Emperor's ingratitude, had assumed the command of the Pope's army. Though advanced in life, and despoiled of the regal honours which had adorned him in the pride of manhood, he had still the spirit of a man, and the sword of a hero; and, from being the lieutenant of the Roman pontiff, he was invited, before he had an opportunity of measuring a lance with his son-in-law, to fill a much more elevated station. His aspect was martial, his age green and vigorous, though more than fourscore years; and, in size and stature, he surpassed the common measure of mankind.* In the noon of his renown, the grandees of Palestine had placed the crown of that kingdom on his head, as the Christian knight most capable of defending it; and, in the evening of his days, another diadem, scarcely less thorny, was given to him in trust, as the bravest and worthiest of Christian knights. The death of Robert of Courtenay, the fourth Latin Emperor of Constantinople, opened the succession to that throne to his brother Baldwin, a mere child; and the Barons of Romania found it necessary, for their own security, to place the reins of government in the hands of a warrior whose name could command respect alike in council and in camp. Their choice fell on John de Brienne; and, as it would have been an insult to his misfortunes to have offered him the regency, he was invested for life with the title and prerogatives of Emperor, on the sole condition that Baldwin

* Gibbon.

should marry his second daughter, and succeed to the throne when he arrived at man's estate. Thus, if by the marriage of one daughter with an Emperor he lost a crown, by the betrothment of another to a Prince of equal dignity, he acquired a nobler one in its stead. Twice he vanquished John Ducas, surnamed Vataces, the Greek Emperor of Nice, one of the greatest princes of the age, and Azan, King of Bulgaria, his ally, under the walls of Constantinople. Like the octogenarian Dandolo, he exposed his grey hairs in every onset with the intrepidity of a youthful knight. The rude bards of the age compare him to Hector Roland and Judas Maccabæus; and, when he died, the Latins deplored him as their last champion, and sunk gradually under the incessant attacks of the inveterate enemies who beset them. In 1261, Michael Palæologus, the Greek Emperor of Nice, entered Constantinople in triumph; and with Baldwin, who resigned his breath in inglorious exile, terminated the dynasty of the Latin chiefs. The Turks, who entertain a superstitious respect for a coincidence of names, afterwards remarked, that under a Baldwin the Latins won the city of the Seven Hills, and that under a Baldwin they again lost it.

CHAPTER VII.

Viceroyalty of Fitz-Auger—Puissance of the Hospitallers—Crimes laid to their charge—Canonized Knights—The Seventh Crusade—Restoration of Jerusalem—Death of Bertrand de Comps—Invasion of the Korasmians—Loss of Jerusalem—Battle of Gaza—The Eighth Crusade—Exploits of Saint Louis in Egypt—Battle of Massignora—Defeat of the Crusaders—Captivity of Saint Louis—Termination of his Crusade.

THE Emperor Frederic, prior to his departure from Palestine, had pledged himself to lose no time in sending fresh succours thither. But the ambitious projects in which he was involved subsequent to his return, banished that desolate heritage entirely from his memory; and, had it not been for the sort of protectorate which the Hospitallers and Templars exercised over it, his Asiatic realm would have utterly passed away. In the year following his departure (1230), Guerin de Montaigu, Grandmaster of the Hospitallers, closed an honourable and laborious life, and brother Bertrand de Taxis was elected in his stead. Two years afterwards, Alice, the widow of Hugh de Lusignan, King of Cyprus, half-sister by the mother's side to Queen Mary, the consort of John de Brienne, passed into Syria, in the hope of establishing a right to the crown of Jerusalem, in opposition to the claims of her sister's descendants.

The military orders, however, refused to countenance her pretensions. They had no desire to resign the government of the kingdom into the hands of a female far stricken in years; and therefore declared, that they could only recognise her right in the event of Prince Conrad, the son of the Emperor Frederic by the Princess Violante, and in right of his mother heir of Jerusalem, dying without issue, or of his voluntary abdication. This event warned Frederic that he held the fealty of the Latin lords by a precarious tenure; and, to obviate the hazard of their being gained over to support the new claimant of the throne, he despatched Richard Fitz-Auger, marshal of his army, and a body of Germans, to the Holy Land. Fitz-Auger had instructions from his master to exercise his functions of governor with rigour; and his natural disposition led him to yield implicit obedience to the command. The grandees and knights, long accustomed to live without law, and redress their own grievances, bore his severe rule with great impatience; and, at the end of four years, broke into open insurrection, and headed the citizens of Acre in a revolt against him. In this struggle the Germans were driven without the walls, and obliged to seek an asylum in Tyre, where the insurgents, headed by John d'Ibelin, lord of Berytus and Jaffa, threatened to besiege them. In this emergency the Emperor, who had been speedily informed of his Marshal's jeopardy, condescended to entreat the Pope to intercede in his favour with the Knights of Saint John, to whom he agreed to make restitution of the estates of which, eight years before, he had unjustly deprived them. The Pope, in accordance with this application, despatched the Archbishop of Ravenna to Palestine as a mediator.

The Grandmaster, with that deference to Papal authority which marked all the deliberations of the Chapter, no sooner perused the briefs which the legate laid before him, than he not only agreed to a reconciliation, but espoused the Emperor's cause with his whole Order. Through his influence, the disputes between the natives and the German troops were amicably adjusted; and the Imperial authority was again recognised in all the Christian towns of Palestine.

It has already been stated, that, through the magnificent donations of Lords and Monarchs, the Knights of Saint John had become possessed of princely estates in every country of Europe. Their European Commanderies were so many depôts from whence bodies of knights and hired troops were regularly drafted to serve in the distant wars; and it is recorded by a contemporary historian,* that at this time (1237), the forces of the Latin Christians having been greatly reduced by a defeat which the Templars had sustained in a conflict with the Sultan of Aleppo, the Grandmaster of the Hospitallers ordered large succours from the West, and that, among others, there went from the house of the Order in Clerkenwell, London, three hundred knights, preceded by Theodric their prior, at the head of a considerable body of armed stipendiaries. They marched with the banner of Saint John unfurled before them; and, as they passed over London Bridge, saluted, with hood in hand, the crowds who congregated to see them depart, recommending themselves and their cause, at the same time, to the prayers of the people. †

* Matt. Paris.

† The Hospital and Chapel of Saint John of Jerusalem,

During the Grandmastership of Bertrand de Taxis, Hugh de Forcalquier, Castellan of the Preceptory of Emposta in Spain, with a considerable number of Spanish knights, enrolled themselves under the banners of Don James the First of Arragon, and engaged in the war which that monarch waged with the Moors of Valencia. They performed such deeds of valour at the siege of that city, that, after its surrender, the King recompensed them with a grant of several towns and dependencies, in absolute property to the Order. This grant having excited the envy and indignation of the neighbouring Bishops, and the Hospitallers, who had been sent to colonize these towns, refusing, in virtue of their privileges, to pay tithes, the angry churchmen laid a general interdict on their new possessions, which it required the authority of the Pope to remove. But these triumphs in the West were obscured by a fatal blow which the reputation of the Order sustained through the machinations of the secular clergy of Palestine, between whom and the Hospitallers a mutual jealousy had long subsisted. A serious dispute arose between the Bishop of Acre and the

Clerkenwell, was founded early in the twelfth century, and dedicated by Heraclius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, when he visited England as ambassador, in 1185. It was the principal house of the Order in England. During the insurrection of Wat Tyler in 1381, it was set on fire, and continued burning for seven days. The Prior's house at Highbury was also destroyed, and the whole property of the Order in London subjected to spoliation. The Hospital was afterwards rebuilt with more than pristine grandeur; and Camden, speaking of it as it existed in the beginning of the sixteenth century, after the completion of the church by the Lord Prior, Sir Thomas Dockeray, says, "This house increased to the size of a palace, and had a beautiful church, with a tower carried up to such a height, as to be a singular ornament to the city."

knights, in regard to the tithe privilege; and the prelate, foiled at home, not only carried his complaints to the Papal chair, but when his claims were subsequently negatived by arbiters specially appointed, he, or some other enemy, secretly denounced the Order to his Holiness as false to its primitive vows, and disgraced by the grossest irregularities. The knights were accused of sheltering loose women in their houses; of having violated their vow of poverty; of protecting robbers, murderers, and heretics; of furnishing succours to Vataces, the Greek Emperor of Nice, an enemy of God and the Church of Rome; of daily retrenching their alms; of altering the wills of those persons who died in their hospitals, and of being generally suspected of heresy—a catalogue of crimes of no ordinary magnitude. Gregory the Ninth, of whose choleric disposition a specimen has already been given in the history of his quarrel with the Emperor Frederic, instantly dictated a letter to the Grandmaster, breathing the most furious zeal, and threatening the Order with a rigorous and humiliating subjection to the Archbishop of Tyre, if these flagrant abuses were not immediately corrected. The truth or falsity of the charges has never been substantiated. There is, however, much reason to conclude, that they were not entirely the offspring of calumny; for, unless the Pontiff had been furnished with satisfactory evidence that irregularities did exist, it is scarcely credible that he would have passed a severe and sweeping censure on a body, which had, for upwards of a century, been under the special protection of the Holy See, and which was always on the alert to extend and secure the papal domination. The foul plot to which the Emperor so near-

ly fell a victim, could not have found advocates in a society rigidly honourable and virtuous ; yet even at this period, when the principles that primitively regulated the Order must be supposed to have fallen into abeyance, their hospitals furnished what were esteemed in those days patterns of Christian excellence, worthy of canonization. Such were " The Blessed Hugh," preceptor of the commandery of Genoa, Gerard Mecati of Villa Magna, and Gerland of Poland. But the virtues of a few men, even though the Catholic Church, with its usual admiration of abstinence and mortification, gave them a passport at once to dwell with the saints in glory, go but a short way to confute the denunciatory brief which records the enormities charged against the Order ; and so profoundly sensible was the Grandmaster of this truth, that wounded pride is said to have hurried him to his grave (1231).

Brother Guarin de Montacute * succeeded Bertrand de Taxis ; and, five years afterwards (1236), he was in turn succeeded by Bertrand de Comps, a veteran knight of Dauphiny. † Palestine, deserted by the Prince who claimed its sovereignty, and in no subjection to his representatives, was constantly divided against itself ; and, in these ruinous disputes, the Hospitallers and Templars were, as usual, deeply implicated. Had not the Sultans of Egypt and Damascus been at variance, and equally solici-

* Fuller. Chron.

† Vertot, whose dates are often inaccurate, asserts, that the Grandmaster, Guarin, survived till the inroad of the Korasmians in 1243-4, and fell in battle against these barbarians. Boisgelin, on the contrary, insists, that it was Peter de Villebride, the seventeenth Grandmaster, who lost his life in that war ; and, as there is concurrent testimony to the same effect, the preference is here given to his authority.

tous to secure the amity of the rival chevaliers, a single effort would have been sufficient to shake into ruin the dilapidated kingdom of Godfrey of Bouillon;—indeed, nothing but the disunion that constantly prevailed among the Mohammedan leaders, subsequent to the death of Saladin, could have preserved it so long from destruction. But the spirit of crusading still burned in Europe, though not with its pristine brightness; and rumours of warlike preparations being in progress in the West having reached the ears of Malek-Kamel, Sultan of Egypt, he availed himself of the expiration of his treaty with Frederic to drive the Latins out of Jerusalem, in which inroad, the tower of David, which Christians and Mohammedans alike revered as holy, was overthrown. While affairs were in this critical position, a small body of Croises, under Thibaud, Count of Champagne, and, in right of his third wife, King of Navarre, Hugh Duke of Burgundy, and the Counts of Bar and Brittany, landed at Acre. These adventurers (the vanguard of the seventh crusade) had left Europe in contempt of the Emperor, who had entreated them to postpone their voyage, until he could head them in person; and disaster overtook them in the very outset of their enterprise. The Infidels allowed them to advance to Ascalon without opposition; but, in the vicinity of Gaza, they were completely discomfited by an inferior body of Saracens, under the Emir of Karac, a dependant of the Sultan of Damascus (1238). Disgusted with a country in which he had been so humbled, Thibaud patched up an insecure treaty with his vanquisher, through the mediation of the Templars; and then re-embarked in great haste for

Europe, in order that Richard Earl of Cornwall, brother of Henry the Third, King of England, who was daily expected to arrive in the Holy Land at the head of a new armament, might not witness his disgrace.

The Earl of Cornwall arrived soon after his departure, and with him came the famous William Longespee, or Longsword, son of the crusader of the same name who fought at Damietta in 1219, * and the chivalry of England. Finding, on his debarkation, that Thibaud and his knights were gone, and that the Emir of Karac could not fulfil his treaty with the Templars, he advanced to Jaffa, where he was met by an envoy from the Sultan of Egypt, with offers to enter into a new truce. This treaty the English leader ultimately subscribed. It was stipulated in it, that Jerusalem should become entirely a Christian city; that the Christians should possess all the castles and villages between the capital and the coast; and that they should be at liberty, in terms of the Emperor Frederic's treaty, to refortify all the restored posts. The services of the English Prince were confined to the execution of this truce, which, though less dazzling than the military exploits of many of his predecessors, was yet of vital importance to the interests of the kingdom, since it left it almost wholly in possession of the Christians. But all parties were not satisfied with the manner in which it was ratified. The Hospitallers, having refused to be included in the former treaty which the Templars had arranged between the Emir of Karac, as representative of the Sultan of Damascus, and Thibaud of Na-

* Dugdale's Baronage.

varre, the Templars, instigated by pride and spleen, revenged themselves in turn, by rejecting the amicable overtures of the Egyptian Prince.* This led to great confusion; for, while two truces were on foot, the military orders continued each in a state of war, the one against the Sultan of Damascus, the other against the Sultan of Egypt. But the Infidels, as has already been stated, were too busy warring with each other, to take advantage of this fatal schism. The Latins, notwithstanding their uncharitable disputes, and the extreme impolicy of their proceedings, once more beheld themselves the sole occupants of Jerusalem, and the banner of the Cross dominant from the Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea. The priesthood returned in swarms to the Holy City; the churches were reconsecrated; and the Hospitallers beggared their treasury, that the fortifications might be rebuilt.

The Hospitallers lost the Grandmaster Bertrand de Comps in 1241. Though far stricken in years, he might be said to die in his chivalric harness. The Turkomans, having made an irruption into the Prince of Antioch's territories, that Lord entreated the military orders to grant him assistance; whereupon the two Grandmasters took the field, with a strong array of knights and stipendiary forces. Thus reinforced, the Prince of Antioch gave the barbarians battle; and, after a hard-contested combat, drove them beyond his frontier. In the conflict, the Grandmaster of the Hospitallers, indignant at the resolute front which the Infidels, who fought with a valour worthy of the days of Saladin, continued to present to the chivalrous lances he led against them, and hurried away by an

* Mat. Paris.

impetuous valour, threw himself headlong into the midst of the enemy's squadrons. This intrepidity was mainly instrumental in securing the victory; but the Grandmaster was so grievously wounded, that he did not long survive.* The Chapter chose Peter de Villebride, a knight highly esteemed both for piety and bravery, in his stead.

At the end of fifteen years from the date of the Emperor Frederic's triumphant entrance into Jerusalem, the Latin inhabitants had increased to upwards of six thousand. The restoration of the walls, however, advanced but slowly; and its only defences were some slight intrenchments, when the Korasmians, a strange and savage people from the shores of the Caspian, driven from their own deserts by the arms of the Moguls, rolled like a deluge on Syria (1243-4). These "Parthian shepherds," cruel and brutal in their nature, and practising Pagan rites, were as abhorrent to the followers of Mohammed as to those of Christ. Saracen and Frank saw that it was their mutual interest to unite, and try to force back this headlong torrent; but their combined efforts were unable to stem its violence. Nogemadin, Sultan of Egypt, the son and successor of Malek Kamel, alone stood aloof. Far removed from the danger, and caring little what befell his brethren of Aleppo and Damascus, and still less how his Christian neighbours of Palestine fared, he not only refused to join their league, but, enraged at some aggressions of the Templars, communicated to the Korasmian leaders the defenceless state of Jerusalem, and invited them to invade it. † It was a matter of indifference to the Korasmians whither they

* Vertot.

† Mat. Paris.

directed their march. They had been driven from their native wilds by a merciless foe ; and, with a spirit as merciless as that which had expatriated them, they roamed over the face of the earth, in search of a new land to inhabit. Barbacan, their chief, was in Mesopotamia when the Egyptian envoys reached him ; and, at the head of twenty thousand horse, he instantly fell into Palestine, before the Christians suspected that he contemplated such an expedition.

The military orders, on whom the defence of Jerusalem necessarily devolved, and who, with all their mutual jealousies, rarely heard the atabal of the invader sounded in defiance on their frontier, without returning a proud war-blast to the challenge, saw at once that the open state of the city rendered it incapable of being maintained against the overwhelming host that was about to assail it. The inhabitants were therefore enjoined to evacuate it, and retire to Jaffa, which was in a defensible condition ; while the knights, with such forces as they could muster, prepared to wait patiently in the open country for a seasonable opportunity of giving the enemy battle. Many of the citizens, accordingly, quitted Jerusalem ; but numbers, unable to tear themselves from their household gods, threw up some weak intrenchments, and determined to make an effort at defence. The Korasmians found no difficulty in surmounting these feeble barriers. They entered the city sword in hand ; and neither age nor sex were spared in the horrible massacre with which they celebrated their victory. To deceive the fugitives who had quitted the city, they re-planted the Christian standard on the towers ; and many of the wanderers, seeing the sacred ensign still displayed,

persuaded themselves that the invaders had been repulsed, and, in opposition to the advice of the knights, returned in search of the homes they had abandoned, and were involved in the general doom.* The Holy Church of Calvary itself was profaned by the swords of these barbarians; and the blood of a crowd of helpless old men, nuns and children, was shed at the Redeemer's tomb. Thus was Jerusalem won from the Latin Christians by the swords of a barbarous people, never more to be regained. "Sleep, Jerusalem," says the chronicler, "sleep in thy ruins, at this day of little beautie and lesse strength, famous only for what thou hast been." †

The Sultan of Egypt, in virtue of his pledge to the Korasmian leader, sent a body of troops to cooperate with him; while, on the other hand, the Sultan of Damascus, at the urgent entreaty of his allies the Templars, despatched four thousand horse, under the command of Moucha, one of his generals, to give the Christians succour. Though the numerical superiority of the Korasmians was very great, the Christians, nevertheless, came off victorious in several partial conflicts; and at length, mainly at the instigation of the Patriarch, who chose for a time to lay aside his clerical character, and dictate to the warriors by whom he was surrounded, it was determined to hazard a general engagement. The army was marshalled in three bodies, in order of battle. The Grandmaster of the Hospitallers, with his knights, supported by Sir Walter de Brienne, Count of Jaffa, commanded on the left; Moucha, at the head of his Turkomans, was intrusted with the right; and the Templars, with the native militia,

* Mat. Paris.

† Fuller, b. iv. c. 9. p. 184.

held the centre. The hearts of the Christians throbbed with a proud anticipation of victory, and they made a gallant onset; but the inequality of numbers was too vast to render their bravery of avail. The Korasmians stood five to one in the field; and, to increase this immense disparity, Moucha and the Turkomans no sooner saw the combat waxing bloody and desperate, than, from cowardice or treachery, they broke their ranks and fled. Undismayed by their desertion, however, the Christians maintained the conflict for two whole days. Hospitallers and Templars vied with each other to be foremost in the battle; but, though the field was strewn with their slain enemies, a mere handful of chivalrous lances could not penetrate the dense phalanxes of barbarians against which they dashed themselves. Borne down by a constant succession of combatants, and unable, from utter exhaustion, to wield longer their bloody falchions, the Christian knights fell one by one around their banner. The Grandmasters of the Hospital and Temple, and the Commander of the Teutonic Order, were all slain, fighting valiantly at the head of their respective companies; and there escaped from the sword or captivity only thirty-three Templars, sixteen Hospitallers, and three Teutonic knights.

This fatal battle, which was fought on the eve of Saint Luke, 1244, on the sea-coast near Gaza, completed the calamities of the Holy Land; for it annihilated in a manner that valiant militia, which had, from the days of Godfrey, been its chief bulwark and pride. The miserable remnant who escaped the scimitars of the Korasmians, immured themselves within the walls of Acre, where the Hospitallers chose William de Chateaufneuf, a rigid ob-

server of the regular discipline, who had passed through all the offices of the Order, to be their chief, in the room of the hero who had so recently sealed his vow of fidelity to the Cross with his blood. Scarcely were they secure in this asylum, when the Korasmians and their Egyptian allies, having razed the fortifications of Ascalon, encamped before Acre, and also invested Jaffa. Sir Walter de Brienne, the Lord of the latter fortress, had been made captive in the late battle, and, to induce his vassals to surrender, he was exposed to their view on a gibbet. But, with the hardihood of a valiant knight, he adjured his soldiers to put no faith in the promises of his captors. Notwithstanding this intrepid defence his life was spared, but it was only to reserve him for a darker doom in an Egyptian dungeon. The sword, however, which on this occasion smote the Christian ranks so mercilessly, had but a short-lived triumph. Like locusts, the Korasmians had overspread the land, and, like locusts, they began to devour each other, when it ceased to furnish them with other sustenance. Sanguinary feuds broke out in their camp; many of them fell in fratricidal combats; and a still greater number were slaughtered without mercy by the Syrian peasants, who pursued them with implacable revenge wherever they wandered. In short, so totally were they exterminated, that, from that date, their name is no more to be found importantly interwoven with the history of mankind.

Had the military orders not possessed ample means of recruiting their ranks, by drafts from their European commanderies, they could scarcely have recovered the loss which they sustained in their gallant but futile effort to repel this inroad. In Christ-

endom the knights were still in force; and at this very period, when their banners were trampled in dust and blood on the sacred soil, that of Saint John was victorious in successive battles against the Moors in Spain and the Tartars in Hungary. Before these triumphs became known in Syria, however, Christendom was again agitated by the war-shout of a new Crusade. Pope Innocent the Fourth, who then occupied the Chair of Saint Peter, was duly instructed, by the Patriarch of Jerusalem and his bishops, of the desolation of that city, and the slaughter of its bravest champions; and the ghostly councillors before whom he laid the moving epistle in which these facts were communicated, adjured him with tears to summon the nations of the West once more to Paynim strife. The enthusiasm of the age had not so thoroughly evaporated as to be proof against a narrative which described the servants of Christ as decapitated at his tomb, and the ashes of the heroic Godfrey and his successors as wantonly unconfined and scattered to the winds. At a general council, convoked at Lyons, it was resolved, that a Crusade (the Eighth) should be preached throughout Christendom; that for four years, no Christian prince should disturb the general tranquillity; and that ample revenues should be contributed by the faithful to defray the expenses of the expedition. In no country was this appeal so warmly entertained as in France, which was then under the rule of Louis the Ninth—a prince who combined, with an exaggerated piety, the best virtues that can adorn a king, a hero, and a man. While suffering under the pangs of a severe illness, he had solemnly pledged himself, as was the custom of the times, to visit the Holy Land as a deliverer, if health were re-

stored to him; and no sooner did he announce his resolution of bearing the Oriflamine thither in person, than his three royal brothers, the Counts of Artois, Poitiers, and Anjou, together with the Duke of Burgundy, and all the renowned knights in his dominions, demanded permission to follow him. From the moment he determined to assume the Cross, he abstained from all pomp of dress, and exchanged the royal purple for a religious habit.* Three years elapsed before the situation of his kingdom allowed him to depart; but, in that interval, he sent ample succours to the East; while the military orders, cheered by the prospect of support from such a quarter, drained their European priories both of men and treasure to enable them to make a goodly array in the field when the Christian standard should be again unfurled. It had hitherto been a rule with the Orders, to regard those knights who yielded themselves captives in battle as lost to the Cross, and to leave them to die in slavery; but, at this juncture, they held it prudent to depart from the severity of their statutes, and offer a ransom to the Sultan of Egypt for the knights who had fallen into his hands when the Korasmians overwhelmed them. Nogemadin, a politic and formidable prince, in whose reign the Mamelukes were first introduced into Egypt, was at that time its sovereign. The two knights who were intrusted to negotiate the ransom of their companions, were received by him with contumelious reproaches, and their gold scornfully rejected. He upbraided them with their mutual jealousies and disputes—their treachery to their Empe-

* Hist. of St Louis, by Joinville, seneschal of Champagne—the Villehardouin of the expedition.

ror—their breach of the truce which he had concluded with the Earl of Cornwall, whom the Templars, in contempt, styled “the boy:” “And yet, in the late battle,” said he, “I beheld those very Templars, those proud and arrogant traitors, abandon themselves to flight; and he who bore the *Bauseant*—that banner which they boast of being always in the front of danger—was the first who fled. The statutes of these military knights restrict their ransom to their capuce and girdle; and I will not, by accepting their gold, outrage divine justice, and strengthen their number. I can make no distinction between a knight that is a captive, and a knight stretched dead on the field.”

With this stern answer, which the Papal historians ascribe to a secret and strict alliance which the Sultan is supposed to have concluded with the Emperor Frederic, who detested both Orders, the negotiants were forced to depart. The reproach of treason was, as has already been stated, but too applicable; but that of cowardice was probably a mere spurt of Musselman slander. The Templars, equally with the Hospitallers and Teutonic knights, receive from the Christian historians the meed of renown for their valour on the fatal eve of Saint Luke; and had their bannerman been, in reality, the first to turn his back on the battle, the survivors of the rival Orders would scarcely have consigned to oblivion so remarkable an event, even to save the honour of Christian knighthood. The Templars have been accused of many vices, and not a few dark charges have obtained general credence against them; but that of a craven dread of the swords of their enemies, is not of the number; nor on the vague au-

thority of a prejudiced adversary ought it to be entertained.

The King of France having arranged the political circumstances which had procrastinated his departure, went in solemn procession to the Abbey of Saint Denis, on the 12th of June 1248, when Eudes de Chateauroux, the Pope's legate, delivered to him the Oriflamme, * with the palmer's scrip and staff. He was attended by his three brothers; and of the " princely quaternion " it has been said, that Louis was the holiest, Alphonso the subtillest, Charles the stoutest, and Robert the proudest, of Christian knights. † Having installed his mother, Blanche, as regent of his kingdom, he embarked at Aiguesmortes, at that time a famous port, but now an inland town several leagues from the sea, and set sail for Cyprus on the 28th of August, at which island he arrived after a voyage of twenty days. Henry de Lusignan, who at that time wore the crown of Cyprus, received him with marked distinction. The Pope, who let slip no opportunity of exasperating and humbling the Emperor, had recently conferred on Henry the title of King of Jerusalem, in right of his mother the Princess Alice; and that prince saw at once the policy of securing the favour of a monarch who was on his way, at the head of a powerful armament, to deliver Palestine from Moslem thrall. Had Louis consulted his own inclinations, he would have made but a

* *Aurea flamma*.—The banner of the Abbot and Monastery of Saint Denis. In the reign of Charles the Seventh, the white ensign superseded it. The lance was gilded, and the colour of the materials of the standard red; from which circumstances it received its name.—*Du Cange*.

† Fuller.

short stay at Cyprus, which he justly considered an inconvenient and unhealthy place of rendezvous ; but part of his army did not arrive with the punctuality he anticipated, and eight months elapsed before he was able again to put to sea. During that interval, however, he successfully exerted himself to advance the Christian cause. Through his mediation, the uncharitable jealousy that subsisted between the Hospitallers and Templars was allayed ; and he also compassed an adjustment of certain differences which threatened to terminate in a war between Bohemond the Fifth, Prince of Antioch, and the King of Lesser Armenia. It was during his stay in Cyprus that the knights of the Hospital and Temple consulted him as to the liberation of those members of their Orders whom the Sultan of Egypt held in durance ; and so impatient were they to obtain the freedom of the captives, that they proposed to the chivalrous King to enter into an amicable accommodation with the Mohammedan prince. Louis, burning with holy zeal, indignantly rejected the proposition ; and the enemies of the Templars, seeing them in disgrace, denounced the Grandmaster of that Order as a secret ally of the Sultan, with whom, they averred, he had cemented an unholy friendship, by each opening a vein, and allowing their blood to flow into the same bowl. It was not unusual for the Infidels, who had too frequently reason to complain of the bad faith of the Christians, to ratify their compacts by a similar ceremony, and even to mix the sanguine stream with wine, and drink it as a sacred libation ; * but either the answer which the Egyptian prince is reported to

* Joinville.

have given to the ambassadors of the military orders, who tried to arrange the terms of ransom, was fabricated, or else there is no truth in the allegation.

Louis at length saw his armament in readiness to menace the Paynim coast, and he accordingly re-embarked with his queen, the princes Robert and Charles, and the vast suite of lords and gentlemen who attended him. France had almost beggared itself, both of soldiers and of treasure, to render the expedition worthy of the august chief who headed it. Eighteen hundred sails covered the sea of Cyprus, and at the most moderate enumeration, his military force amounted to fifty thousand men. This mighty fleet sailed on Trinity Sunday 1249, and six days afterwards, clothed in complete armour, the Oriflamme waving over him, Louis leaped foremost on the Egyptian shore, and put to flight the Saracen phalanxes that were drawn up on the beach to oppose his landing. The conflict though short, was bloody. Many French soldiers were pierced by the Saracen javelins, and on the side of the Infidels two Emirs were slain. Damietta, in the neighbourhood of which the crusaders debarked, though the strongest fortress in Egypt, was instantly abandoned by the garrison; and the inhabitants, remembering the terrors of the former assault in the days of John de Brienne, set the city on fire, and, loading themselves with their most valuable effects, fled by night into the interior of the country. Louis, on being informed of this event, entered the place in triumph; and the legate having purified the principal mosque, *Te Deum* was solemnly chanted in honour of the victory.

The misfortunes which had overtaken the army of John de Brienne, through the obstinacy of the legate Pelagius, were still fresh in the recollection of

the crusaders ; and the King of France, apprehensive of a like disastrous issue to his expedition, were he to advance rashly into the interior of the country, was in no haste to quit the fortress which had thus fortuitously fallen into his hands. At Damietta, he was joined by the two Grandmasters of the military Orders from Acre, at the head of a band of chosen knights ; and also by his brother the Count of Poitiers with the arriere-ban of France. * There came likewise to the war two hundred English lances, led by the famous William Longespee, the fellow-crusader of the Earl of Cornwall, whose chivalrous nature never heard unmoved the call to honourable warfare, and who, on this occasion, suffered his earldom of Salisbury to be confiscated, rather than remain at home in obedience to his King. † Strengthened by these reinforcements, and encouraged by the general panic which his arrival occasioned in every part of Egypt, Louis held a council as to his future proceedings ; and ultimately, in accordance with the advice of his brother the Count of Artois, and the more impetuous of his barons, resolved, instead of attacking Alexandria, as some cautious Lords recommended, to advance directly on Grand Cairo.

The army quitted Damietta on the 20th of November ; and, scarcely had the King commenced his march, when he received intimation of the Sultan Nogemadin's death. In the absence of his son and heir Tooran Shah, who was in Mesopotamia, Sacedeen, a commander of note, whom the Emperor Frederic had honoured with knighthood, out of respect for his military talents, took the command of the Egyptian forces. As the crusaders advanced,

* Joinville.

† Camden.

they found the country deserted. A profound silence pervaded it; and, for a time, not so much as a single turbaned warrior crossed their line of march, which was exceedingly slow, in consequence of it being often necessary to dam up armlets of the river. But as they approached Massoura, * a town situated on the Thanis, or Ashmoum branch of the Nile, the Saracens began to show themselves in considerable numbers; and at one place the Templars nearly fell victims to a stratagem, infinitely more dangerous than open enmity. Five hundred Egyptian horsemen, affecting to be deserters from the Mohammedan ranks, came over in a body to the King, who received them without mistrust, and placed them as guides in the van of his army. But no sooner did this treacherous band find a fitting opportunity to assail the Croises at a vantage, than they threw off the mask of friendship, and became merciless adversaries. A squadron of Templars having advanced considerably in front of the army, the Mameluke guides suddenly unsheathed their scimitars, and charged them with shouts of battle. But the Knights of the Red Cross were too familiar with the Saracen war-cry to yield at the first onset. They rallied speedily round their Grandmaster, and kept their ground with their usual valour, until their brethren in arms came to their rescue; when the Mamelukes were immolated to a man.

The Egyptian Emir had intrenched himself on the farther bank of the Ashmoum canal, between it and

* Massoura, or Mansoura, was built by the Sultan Kamel, at the time the crusaders under John de Brienne were besieging Damietta — *Macrizi, Hist. of Dynasties of Egypt*. Mansoura, in Arabic, signifies, The Victorious.

Massoura. The French encamped on the hither side ; and the canal being deep and unfordable, the King attempted to raise a causeway across it ; but the Greek fire of the Saracens burnt the *chas-chateils*, or wooden galleries, under cover of which the work was commenced, and the labour of a month was ruined in a day. These operations were carried on in the midst of constant skirmishes with the Egyptian horse. At last a Bedouen Arab, tempted by five hundred golden besants, pointed out a ford, which the Count of Artois entreated leave to secure, with the support of the military Orders. The King, knowing the impetuous disposition of the prince, hesitated to intrust him with so important a movement ; but at length he acquiesced, on condition that the Knights of the Hospital and Temple should take the van, and that the Count should attempt no farther enterprise until the whole army was in a position to co-operate.

At break of day, at the head of fourteen hundred knights, and two hundred English crusaders, commanded by William Longespee, the prince left the French encampment, and flung himself into the ford, which had a firm bed, and was every way practicable. Though three hundred Egyptian horse waited to receive him on the opposite bank, which was steep and elevated, the Count effected the passage with trivial loss ; and the Saracens, seeing it useless to offer further resistance, disbanded at the first charge, and galloped back to their camp. Hurried away by a reckless ardour, the Prince forgot his pledge to his royal brother, and, despite the warning shouts of the two Grandmasters, who were apprehensive of strategem, pursued the fugitives sword in hand to their intrenchments, which

he entered along with them pell-mell. Rash, however, as this action was, it had a triumphant result. The Saracens, concluding that the whole Christian army had burst upon them, hastily abandoned their tents and fled; while the garrison of Massoura, infected with the same panic, threw open the gates, and, liberating several carrier-pigeons to announce to the inhabitants of Cairo that all was lost, joined the runagates in their flight. Enchanted with his good fortune, the French prince instantly proposed to the Grandmasters to follow up the victory, by storming Massoura.* These knights earnestly entreated him to pause until the whole of the Christian army should have crossed the canal; but in vain did William de Sonnac, Grandmaster of the Templars, a veteran warrior, strive to enforce the propriety of this advice, by describing the flight of the enemy as a panic likely to subside the moment they came to discover the small number of troops brought against them. The prince, naturally proud and impatient of control, answered hotly, "I now see that it is not without reason that the Knights of the Hospital and Temple are accused of favouring the Infidels; for in this speech, I have proof of their treachery and sedition. It is for selfish ends alone that they drain the West of gold, and prevent the war from being brought to a termination. They dread being subjected to the dominion of the Western princes; and for this base reason have they poisoned so many lords and princes, or suffered them to perish in battle. Who is there that knows not with what difficulty the Emperor Frederic escaped their snares and ambushes?"

* Mat. Paris.

This was language not to be borne tamely by the soldier-monks against whom it was directed. They replied, with dignity and indignation, "Think you, great prince, that we have abandoned our fortunes and our homes, and taken the religious habit in a strange land, where our lives are constantly in danger, only to betray the Christian church, and to lose our own salvation?" At the same time, the Grandmaster of the Templars, transported with resentment, cried out to the standard-bearer of the Order, "Display your banner; arms and death must this day decide our fate and honour. While united, we were invincible; but division will destroy us."

William Longsword, who had for some time been obnoxious to the Count, * interposed, and endeavoured to restore amity, by pointing out to the French prince the respect which the counsel of so experienced a soldier as De Sonnac was entitled to obtain. But the Count answered him slightly, as he had done the Grandmaster; and, in allusion to a current belief, that the English, by way of punishment for the murder of Thomas à Becket, had been reduced to the condition of brutes, exclaimed, "Behold the courage of these cravens, who wear tails! How fortunate would it be for the army if we were quit of them!"

The English knight's indignation threatened to blaze out at this coarse gibe; but he scorned to notice it farther than by saying, "Count Robert, I will go so far in danger this day, that you shall not even dare to keep at the tail of my horse." This hasty boast closed the altercation. Inflamed by pas-

* Fuller, b. 4. c. 14. p. 194.

sion, and regardless alike of discipline and co-operation, the crusaders flung themselves, in mad rivalry, into Massoura, and began to pillage that city. A small band, however, headed by the Count of Artois, continued the pursuit; and no sooner did the flying Saracens discover the numerical inferiority of their vanquishers, than they rallied, and with their usual impetuosity renewed the conflict. Bendocdar, a brave soldier, who afterwards usurped the supreme power, took the place of their leader, Sacedeen, who had been slain; and the French were driven back in disorder, and forced to seek refuge in Massoura, which the Mameluke general instantly invested, and at the same time threw a powerful body of troops between the town and the army, which was advancing with the King at its head. No sooner did the inhabitants of Massoura discover the perilous situation of the strangers who had sought shelter behind their ramparts, than they openly engaged them in the streets. Stones, arrows, and Greek fire, were showered incessantly on the Christians from the tops of the houses; and in this terrible combat, the Count of Artois, the valiant Longespee, and nearly all the knights of the Hospital and Temple, perished. It is said, that, in the heat of the battle, the Count's heart smote him for his former arrogance; and, turning to Longespee, he exclaimed, "Fly, fly, for God fights against us!" But the English Earl bravely replied, "God forbid that my father's son should flee from the face of a Saracen!" and dashing, unhorsed and wounded, into the thickest of the conflict, he breathed forth his gallant spirit on a pile of slain.* The Grandmaster of Saint John was made captive; and

* Hakluyt, vol. ii.

scarcely a knight of renown escaped, save the Grandmaster of the Templars, who, deprived of an eye, and covered with wounds, cut his way through the enemy, with barely strength sufficient to support him to the King's presence. Only four Hospitallers, three Templars, and three Teutonic knights, survived this disastrous fight. *

The French King no sooner became aware of his brother's jeopardy, intelligence of which was brought him by Evart de Severy, a knight who had received a frightful scimitar-gash in the face, † than he made haste to cross the Ashmoum canal, with the hope of preventing the total rout of his vanguard. In his advance, he was met by the Templar, William de Sonnac, covered with dust and blood; and, roused to vengeance by the tale of defeat of which that knight was the bearer, Louis, clad in burnished mail, instantly charged the Egyptian host in person, fighting gallantly in the brunt of the battle. In this renewed engagement, the Grandmaster of the Templars, who had already lost one eye, received a wound in the other, which terminated his existence. Saracen and Christian mutually claimed the victory; but although it may have been that the crusaders were triumphant, the ultimate result could scarcely have been less lamentable though they had suffered a total defeat. A Saracen force cut off all communication between them and Damietta; all supplies were intercepted; and a fatal disease broke out in the camp, in consequence of the pestilential air arising from the unburied bodies, and of the troops being reduced to eat eels which had fed on corpses in

* Mat. Paris. Joinville.

† Savary's Letters on Egypt.

the river. This shocking disorder shrivelled their flesh to the bone, and made their very gums rot away. Louis would gladly have retreated to Damietta; but while he was meditating a retrograde movement, the Saracens burst into his camp, and commenced a general slaughter of the debilitated multitude that filled it. The King himself was oppressed with the prevalent disorder; but no sooner did he again hear the Moslem war-cry, than he grasped his battle-axe, and, supported by Sir Godfrey de Sergines, threw himself into the midst of the assailants. Sergines, who watched vigilantly over his safety, succeeded, after a time, in drawing him from the combat, and carried him to a village, wounded, and overcome with lassitude. The Oriental annalists confess, that Louis might have escaped if he could have been prevailed upon to abandon the gallant army which the scimitars of the Saracens were mowing down around him; but the royal crusader was incapable of such base desertion. Reduced by disease to a state of utter helplessness, he was taken prisoner, along with the Counts of Anjou and Poitiers, and the greater part of his chivalrous followers. Their captors behaved with rare generosity. The King and his nobles, instead of being loaded with chains, were clothed with robes of honour, and treated with humanity and kindness; but those captives who were too ill or too poor to redeem their lives by service or ransom, were barbarously put to death; and the ramparts of Cairo were decorated with a circle of Christian heads. *

This expedition bore a striking resemblance, in many respects, to that of John de Brienne, which

* Savary, *Lettres sur l'Egypte*.

the arrogance of the legate Pelagius had delivered into the hands of the Infidels in the same pestilential marshes. Louis ransomed himself and his army by the payment of eight hundred thousand besants,* and the restitution of Damietta; and as the royal treasure-chest was unable to furnish the stipulated amount, the King solicited a loan from the military Orders. The Hospitallers assisted him to the utmost extent of their means; but the Templars opposed the institutes of the Order to his request; and, on the argument of necessity, he made a forcible appropriation of the funds in their coffers. By the treaty which settled the terms of ransom, a ten years truce was concluded between the belligerents. Scarcely had the Sultan ratified it, when his Mamelukes—the warlike slaves who had achieved the victory for him—revolted against his authority; and in the flush of conquest, Tooran Shah, the last Sultan of the Ayoubite race, fell a victim to their ferocity. Notwithstanding this untoward event, the treaty, after some procrastination, was recognised, as far as respected the King's deliverance; and, with the relics of his army, he was permitted to depart (1250). Two years after his departure, a report being spread in Egypt that the Franks contemplated another descent at Damietta, the place was razed; so that not a vestige remained save the grand mosque; and eleven years afterwards, the Sultan Bendocdar closed the Damietta mouth of the Nile in such a manner as to render it inaccessible to large vessels. The modern Damietta stands on the same side, a league and a half higher up the river. †

* About £16,000.

† Macrizi, Hist. of the Dynasties of Egypt.

Unwilling to return to France with the stigma of defeat on his renown, Louis was prevailed upon, by the representations of the Hospitallers and Templars, who still regarded the situation of the Holy Land as exceedingly miserable and precarious, to repair to Acre. During the four years that he lingered on the Syrian coast, such was the insecurity of Palestine, which was constantly desolated by the warring hordes of Egypt and Damascus, who ultimately joined forces against the Christians, that he never had the satisfaction of imploring the blessing of heaven on his expedition at the tomb of Christ. The Sultan of Damascus, on one occasion, offered him safe-conduct to and from the Holy City; but Louis, though he earnestly desired to behold the sacred places, refused, as Richard Cœur-de-Lion had done before him, to visit Jerusalem with a palmer's staff. During his sojourn at Acre, he received an embassy from the Old Man of the Mountain, who sent two of his assassins to exact the tribute, or safety-bribe, which princes were in the habit of paying him. These deputies represented, that Frederic of Germany, Andrew of Hungary, the Sultans of Egypt, and many other potentates, had paid it, knowing well that they held their lives solely at the Mountain Chieftain's pleasure; and that Louis must either subscribe to the custom, or procure the Lord of the Mountain an exemption from the tribute which he was compelled to pay to the Grandmasters of the Hospital and Temple.* The envoys were asked why they did not sacrifice the Grandmasters who subjected them to this exaction; to which they replied, that though one Grandmaster

* Joinville.

might be slain, another would instantly rise up in his room; and that no advantage, therefore, could result from his immolation. The King, disdain- ing to treat with such barbarians, referred them to the Grandmasters; whereupon the Hospitaller, William de Chateaufort, after declaring that their character of deputies alone prevented him from ordering them to be thrown into the sea, commanded them to return to their chief, and tell him, that unless he made satisfaction to the King for his insolence within fifteen days, the knights of the two Orders would see to his chastisement. Within the time limited, the amend required was made, accompanied by the gift of a shirt and a ring to the King, in token of attachment and protection.

Louis, having repaired the fortifications of Acre, and rebuilt those of Saide, Cæsarea and Jaffa, embarked for France in April 1254. He left the Syrian Christians a considerable succour both of troops and money; and, though he had gathered no victorious laurels in his transmarine expedition, he carried back with him to Europe the admiration not only of his Christian allies, but of his Saracen foes, who knew not whether to honour him most for his valour in war, or his fortitude under defeat.

CHAPTER VIII.

Sanguinary Feuds between the Hospitallers and Templars—Vigorous Administration of Hugh de Revel—Loss of the Castles of Assur and Saphoury—Conquests of Bendocdar—The Ninth and Last Crusade—Exploits of Prince Edward of England—Fatal Expedition of Saint Louis to Africa—Council of Lyons—Loss of Margat—Siege of Acre—Expulsion of the Latins from the Holy Land.

THE departure of Louis placed the Grandmasters of the military orders once more at the head of the kingless government of Palestine; and the Pope, anxious to show his sense of the past services of the Hospitallers in the cause of the Cross, and to incite them to future exertions, bestowed upon them the monastery of Mount Tabor—a structure built in the manner of a fortress—and the Castle of Bethany, which had also, prior to the loss of Jerusalem, been a religious retreat. The position of these places rendered the grants more perilous than beneficial to the Order; for the garrisons which the Grandmaster thought it prudent to station in them, were exposed to constant jeopardy from the close vicinage of the Damascene territory. The Order, a short time afterwards, fortified Karac, a castle between Arca and Tortosa, in the county of Tripoli; and a hundred knights, with a body of stipendiary

troops, were also placed in the Castle of Azotus, or Assur, another important post. Unfortunately, though these warrior-monks were sensible that party collisions among the Syrian Christians had been the cause of most of the disasters that had befallen them, and that, without unanimity, the kingdom of Jerusalem would speedily pass away, the ambitious feuds subsisting between them and the Templars burst forth about this period (1259) with unexampled violence. Instigated by that mutual jealousy and boundless arrogance which perpetually hurried them into disputes touching precedency and military prowess, they proceeded from insolence to open war. Wherever the White and Red Crosses met—save when in opposition to the Paynim banner—these symbols of a meek and charitable creed were drenched in kindred blood. From single combats, the cavaliers came to attack each other in detachments; and at length the *elite* of the two fraternities met in a general engagement. Never, in the ranks of Moslem war, had they fought with more desperation than on this fratricidal field. Victory favoured the Knights of Saint John; and scarcely a Templar survived to proclaim the issue.* The remnant, too weak to take revenge, had to suppress their rage; and, in the course of time, new companions from Europe gradually restored the Order to its former strength. Fortunately, before it was sufficiently recruited to cope once more with the Order of Saint John, civil discord was forgotten in the more honourable ambition of overwhelming the enemies of the State. In the midst of these domestic broils, one redeeming virtue still maintained its pre-

* Mat. Paris, 846.

eminence. The Knights never forgot that the way-worn palmer was dependant on them for succour and protection; and, even at the time their swords were reddened with the blood of their Christian brethren, the houses of the Hospitallers were open to every weary pilgrim who sought relief.

The Grandmaster, William de Chateauneuf, died in 1259, and was succeeded by Hugh de Revel, a cadet of a noble family of Auvergne.* It was in this grandmastership, or at the close of that of William de Chateauneuf, that the knights were authorized, by a bull of Pope Alexander the Fourth, to wear a black cloak (*clamides nigras*) in hospital, and a red tunic bearing a white cross, in the camp, to distinguish them from the serving-brothers. † It was in this government, too, that the representative of Saint Peter first formally conferred on their chief the title of *Grand-master*. ‡ Several important changes were also effected in regard to the management of the revenues of the Order. Hitherto, the princely estates which it possessed in almost every country of Christendom, had been under the superintendence of knights dignified with the title of Preceptors or Commanders, who, after deducting what was required for the subsistence of their preceptories, remitted the residue to the Supreme House and Treasury of the Order. But, as it sometimes happened that the expenses of these administrations were equivalent to their revenues, and as the Order had repeatedly experienced the disadvantage of having a fluctuating income, it was determined, in a general Chapter held at Cæsarea, that each Commandery should pay

* Boisgelin. Chron. of Malta.

† Sebastian Paoli.

‡ Boisgelin.

a fixed sum annually into the public chest. These Commanderies were afterwards ranged under different Priories; and it was the Prior's duty to oversee them, and forward to Palestine, "either in troops or money, the ordinary contributions, which were styled *responsions*, and might be augmented or diminished according to the occasions of the Order, pursuant to the regulations and decrees of the Chapter." * By the same Chapter, and consonant with a principle founded on their vow of poverty, the Knights were forbidden to make wills, appoint heirs, or bequeath any legacies whatever, not even to the extent of an extraordinary gratuity to their servants, without the express consent of the Grandmaster. Thus, while, on the one hand, they subscribed to a statute, framed merely to pander to aristocratical pretence, they rivetted others which annihilated individuality of interest, and rendered them rich only in their collective capacity.

Though the feuds with the Knights of the Temple had terminated before Hugh de Revel succeeded to the government, he was allowed but a short respite from the perilous cares incident to his station. Bibars, or Bendocdar, † the Mameluke who had rallied his companions in arms so gallantly on the fatal day of Massoura, had risen, by great talents and a merciless exercise of his dagger, to the throne of Egypt. Three Mameluke chiefs had preceded him in the supreme authority; the last of whom having been assassinated at his instigation, under pretence that he paid too great a respect to the treaty with the

* Vertot.

† "The full name of this gentleman was Al Malek al Dhaker Rokneddin Abulfeth Bibars al Alai al Bundokdari!"—*Mill's Hist. of Crusades.*

Christians, he no sooner found the diadem firmly fixed on his brow, than he commemorated his accession by a bloody inroad into Palestine (1263). His Mamelukes, savage as the Korasmians, and entertaining a ferocious antipathy to all the followers of Christ, carried fire and sword to the very gates of Acre. The churches of Nazareth, and the monastic fortress of Mount Tabor, were demolished, and the country was almost depopulated by these barbarians, who, at length, invested the Castle of Assur (1265), one of the strongest places in Palestine, which had ninety chosen Hospitallers among its defenders. After sustaining several assaults, the fortress was at last reduced; but, in the breach by which he entered it, the Mameluke leader passed over the corpses of the whole of its intrepid defenders, who had fallen to a man at their posts.

In the following year, the Knights of the Temple sustained a similar reverse. Bendocdar, after ravaging the neighbourhood of Acre, Tyre, and Tripoli, laid siege to the fortress of Saphet, or Saphoury, which made an obstinate defence; but, at length, its Governor, the Prior of the Temple, seeing his works ruined, and the enemy on the point of entering sword in hand, agreed to a capitulation. One of the articles of surrender stipulated, that the Prior, with his knights and stipendiary troops, to the number of six hundred men, should have safe convoy to the nearest Christian station; but no sooner did the Sultan find himself in possession of the fort, and see its defenders disarmed, than he announced to them, that they had only a few hours to choose between conversion to Islamism and death. The Prior, who was a pious and honourable knight, at once chose the nobler destiny; and, aided by two Franciscan monks,

so effectually exhorted his companions in arms to prefer martyrdom to apostasy, that they one and all unanimously refused to renounce their creed. Bendoctar, exasperated at their firmness, ordered the Prior and his ghostly assistants to be flayed alive ; * and, by the slaughter that followed, the illustrious militia of the Temple were again almost all destroyed.

The conquest of the Castles of Assur and Saphet was only the commencement of Bendoctar's triumphs. Taking advantage of the consternation of the Christians at the fall of so many of their choicest champions, he reduced Jaffa and the Castle of Beaufort, and, at length, extended his operation to the important city of Antioch, which, either through treachery, or the cowardice of its inhabitants, threw open its gates without even the formality of a siege (1268). Like a genuine son of the desert, Bendoctar left them small reason to exult in their debasement ; for seventeen thousand victims fell under the scimitars of his Mamelukes, and an hundred thousand were carried into slavery. Lastly, Laodicea, and the stronghold of Karac, submitted to his arms. The Knights of Saint John, to whom the last named fortalice appertained, defended it with the same bravery that they had done that of Assur. Rejecting every proposal to capitulate, the Knights, on whom its defence devolved, perished in the breach, and the Sultan entered it over their mangled remains. The Prince of Tripoli preserved the shadow of sovereignty, by the sacrifice of half his possessions ; and Acre itself escaped being stormed, solely by a report that the King of Cyprus had despatched an armament to its relief.

* De Guignes.

In the spring of 1271, Prince Edward of England, afterwards King Edward the First, who had assumed the Cross along with Louis of France in a new crusade (the ninth and last), which never reached the shores of Palestine, and from which the English separated themselves almost at the outset, arrived at Acre with a thousand men. This small force, which included several English Lords of renown, was calculated to excite but little dread among the Infidels; but it was led by a Plantagenet, and they trembled to hear that a Prince of the race of Cœur-de-Lion had taken the field. The Christians took comfort and courage at his arrival; and the Sultan of Egypt no sooner became aware of the new enemy he had to contend with, than he withdrew his Mamelukes from the vicinage of Acre, pursued by the English leader, who, by the junction of the Latin chivalry of Palestine, found his little army swelled to seven thousand men. Nazareth was wrested from the Egyptians, and a powerful body of them defeated and put to flight. But the triumphs of the English Prince were tarnished by a sanguinary implacability which afterwards cost Scotland tears of blood; and the barbarities that disgraced his entrance into Nazareth were an epitome of those which stained the conquest of Jerusalem by the first crusade.* From that day victory deserted the English banner. Sickness attacked the army; and Edward not only suffered from the prevalent distemper, but narrowly escaped with life from a murderer's poniard. A hired assassin, by means of a feigned tale, found admittance into his chamber, and thrice wounded him with a poisoned dagger; but the

* Chron. of Mailros, i. 241.

Prince had sufficient strength left to dash the ruffian to the floor, where he stabbed him to the heart.*

Surgical skill and a vigorous constitution restored the Prince to health. Some historians say, that he was indebted for his life to the devotion of the Princess Eleanor, his consort, who sucked the poisoned wound, "so sovereigne a medicine is a woman's tongue, anointed with the vertue of loving affection." Having assisted the military orders to conclude a ten years' truce with the Sultan of Egypt, who had other wars to engross his attention, he and his followers quitted Syria for their native land.

It is honourable to the memory of the Grandmaster Hugh de Revel, that, even in these days of despair, when Palestine, without a king and without an army, relied, for preservation from the Moslem yoke, solely on the swords of the few Hospitallers and Templars who had survived so many successive defeats, he possessed energy sufficient to enforce the regular discipline of the Order, and to enact additional regulations. In the midst of these desolating wars, he held no less than five chapters, at which he confirmed, among other ancient usages,

* Old Fuller (Holy War, B. iv. c. 29, p. 219.) gives the following history of this adventure:—"The fifth time of his (the assassin's) coming, he brought Prince Edward letters from his master, which, whilst he was reading alone, and lying on his bed, he struck him into the arm with an envenomed knife. Being about to fetch another stroke, the Prince, with his foot, gave him such a blow, that he felled him to the ground; and, wresting the knife from him, ranne the Turk into the belly, and slew him; yet so, that in struggling he hurt himself therewith in the forehead. At this noise, in sprang his servants, and one of them with a stool beat the brains out of the dead Turk's head, shewing little wit in his own; and the Prince was highly displeased, that the monument of his valour should be stained with another's crueltie."

one which rendered it imperative that every postulant of the first class, except the sons of Counts, and persons of a higher rank and quality, should be of legitimate birth, and the offspring of parents noble alike in name and in arms. The same statute was made applicable to nuns of the Order; and by another decree, candidates who had previously worn the habit of any other institution were declared inadmissible. The employment of strange confessors was also expressly prohibited, unless sanctioned by the Bishop in ordinary of the Order. In these monastic cares, however, which indicate the progress of aristocratical distinction, and the gradual disappearance of that humility which was so conspicuous in the infancy of the fraternity, the Grandmaster did not lose sight of the jeopardy of his adopted country. No sooner was the truce with Bendocdar ratified, than, in company with the Grandmaster of the Templars, he departed for Europe, in the hope of once more stirring up the Princes of the West to succour the heritage of Christ. Gregory the Tenth, a scion of the noble house of Visconti, at that time filled Saint Peter's chair. He had beheld with his own eyes the desolation of the Holy Land, and had left it to take possession of the Papal throne, with the Psalmist's words on his lips—"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning!" The Grandmasters found him actively employed in gathering together the elements of a new crusade; and, at their instigation, he summoned a general council to assemble at Lyons, as the surest means of inciting the faithful to make another effort for the redemption of Palestine.

Four years prior to the convocation of this assembly, which did not meet till 1274, and twenty years

after his defeat and capture in the marshes of Egypt; Louis of France had flung away his life in another rash descent on the African coast. His pious ardour had survived his youth; and a latent dread that his personal renown had been tarnished under the walls of Massoura, together with the capture of Antioch, and the lamentable state of the Holy Land, induced him, after his hairs were silvered by time, to resume the Cross, and awake once more the crusading trumpet. Once more the Abbot of Saint Denis delivered the Oriflamme into his hands; and, followed by the chivalry of France, he embarked, half disposed, like Genseric the Vandal, to leave to the winds of heaven the regulation of his course.* His army amounted to sixty thousand men; and among the leaders were the Lords of Flanders, Brittany, and Champagne, who had before done him good service, and whose ancestors had repeatedly distinguished themselves in the Syrian wars. An embassy from Omar el Muley Moztanca, Prince of Tunis, who feigned a desire to embrace the Christian faith, tempted the credulous King to steer first for the African coast, in the hope of adding that barbarian to the true church; and in the month of July 1270, the French fleet cast anchor in sight of the ruins of ancient Carthage. The Moorish Prince, far from manifesting a friendly disposition towards the armament that had thus unexpectedly descended on his shores, threatened to put to death every crusader who attempted to disembark; but despite his menaces, the army landed, and encamped on the isthmus, and among the ruins of the

* Chateaubriand.

Carthaginian capital, after expelling the Moors from a fortress which commanded them.

This partial success was followed by immediate reverse. A contagious disease in a few days swept away half the army. The crusaders panted and died on the burning sands; incessant engagements with their sleepless and merciless enemies wasted their remaining strength; and the ditches of the camp were filled with corpses, for which the living were unable to provide a grave. Louis beheld his favourite son, the Count of Nevers, expire in his arms; and at last, stricken himself by the same malignant malady, the unhappy monarch sunk down in his tent on a bed of ashes, and, with a pious aspiration to heaven, resigned his breath. *

Thus perished, amid the ruins of one of the most illustrious cities of the world, surrounded by the wreck of a mighty army, which the wind of the desert had annihilated, and stretched in the dust in token of humiliation, the warrior-king, who had twice, in the spirit of a genuine but extravagant piety, unfurled the banner of France in Paynim war. While the last sigh yet lingered on his lips, the fleet of his brother, the King of Sicily, appeared on the horizon; but the trumpet-blast that intimated his arrival was unanswered; and Charles of Anjou landed only to weep over his royal kinsman's remains. With the life of Saint Louis terminated this ill-fated expedition; for no sooner had he closed his eyes, than Philip the Third, surnamed the Hardy, his son and successor, gave the signal of retreat; and the miserable remnant bade adieu for ever to the inhospitable shore. †

* William of Nangis. Annals of Saint Louis.

† The body of the royal martyr was carried to France, and,

The council summoned by Pope Gregory the Tenth, for the purpose of stimulating the chivalry of Europe to new efforts in behalf of the Holy Land, was opened at Lyons on the 2d of May 1274. The Pope attended it in person; and in his train were the Grandmasters of the Military Orders, who were treated with marked distinction. It was finally determined, that Christendom should be again roused by pious declamations, and that the clergy should defray the expense of the armament, by contributing a tenth of their revenues for six years. No less than two emperors, Rodolph of Germany and Michael Paleologus, and two kings, Philip of France and Charles of Sicily, agreed to engage in this crusade; but within two years after the sitting of the Lyonese council, Gregory the Tenth died; and, with the life of its chief promoter, the enterprise ended. *

Charles, King of the Two Sicilies, had pledged himself to join this crusade, ostensibly to repair the disasters which the imprudence of the Count of Artois, had brought upon the Christian arms at Massoura, but, in reality, to secure the titular crown of Jerusalem, in virtue of a conveyance made to him at the council of Lyons, by Mary, Princess of Antioch, daughter of Bohemond the Fourth, and Millescent, child of Queen Isabella and Amaury of Cyprus, her fourth husband. But Hugh the Third,

says Fuller, in his usual quaint style, "was most miserably tossed; it being observed, that the sea cannot digest the cruditie of a dead corpse, being a due debt to be interred where it dieth." Louis was canonized by Pope Boniface the Eighth; and the 25th of August, the day on which he went on ship-board on his last expedition, was consecrated to his memory.

* Hist. Holy War, b. iv. p. 217.

King of Cyprus, justly maintained, that, in consequence of the extinction of the Suabian dynasty, the crown had devolved to him, as the lineal descendant of Alice, daughter of Isabella by Henry, Count of Champagne ; and the Christians of Palestine found ample employment, in the tranquil interval that followed the crusade of Edward of England, in settling these rival pretensions. Hugh of Cyprus was formally crowned at Tyre ; while the King of Sicily, finding it inconvenient to proceed in person to take possession of the remains of his new kingdom, despatched Roger de Saint Severin thither, to govern it as his lieutenant ; and, through the influence of the Venetians, he was honourably received. The Latin grandees were divided between the rival claimants. The Grandmaster of the Templars, on his return from the Council of Lyons, declared himself in favour of the King of Sicily ; while the Hospitallers, by a profession of neutrality, on the insincere ground that their statutes forbade them to engage in such disputes, virtually countenanced the Prince of Cyprus ; in consequence of which, they incurred the special displeasure of the Sicilian monarch, who made a seizure of all their possessions within his dominions.

In 1277, Bendocdar, the Scourge of Palestine, died of a wound received in battle with the successors of Zengis Khan ; and in the following year, the Hospitallers lost their Grandmaster Hugh de Revel, who sunk into the grave completely worn out with the harassing duties which he had so creditably discharged, and the anticipation of the calamities which he saw impending over the Christian cause. Brother Nicholas de Lorgue, a knight of a placid and temporizing disposition, was chosen in his stead ;

and scarcely had he assumed the cares of office, when, through the indiscreet conduct of the Christians garrisoning Margat, who plundered some Moham-
medan traders, Keladun, Bendocdar's successor, de-
clared the truce violated, and one of his Emirs made
a sudden inroad to the very gates of that fortress.
The knights of Saint John, to whom Margat apper-
tained, instantly attacked the pillagers, and cut the
greatest part of them to pieces; to avenge which
slaughter, the Sultan despatched an army of five
thousand men into the neighbourhood. The knights,
conscious that stratagem as well as force was requisite to
place them on an equality with these new adversaries,
sallied out to give them battle, leaving part of the
garrison in ambuscade near the gates. After a slight
skirmish with the Infidels, the Hospitallers, pre-
tending to be dismayed at their superior numbers,
retreated on their ambush, hard pressed by the confi-
dent foe. But at the moment the Saracens thought
themselves secure of victory, the hidden band sud-
denly burst from their covert, and with loud shouts
intercepted their retreat. Surprised and routed, the
Infidels, after a faint resistance, fled in every direction.
Many of them were slain, and, among the captives,
was the Emir who commanded the expedition.

Three years elapsed before the Sultan found lei-
sure to take vengeance for this second defeat. At
the end of that time, he invested Margat with a for-
midable army, and, though it was defended by a brave
and numerous garrison, attempted to carry it by sca-
lade. But no sooner did his Mamelukes fix ladders
to the walls and attempt to mount them, than they
were assailed with showers of stones, scalding water,
and Greek fire; and, after seeing hundreds of his
bravest soldiers fall dead in the ditches, the Sultan,

who superintended the siege in person, was obliged to open regular trenches, and to raise battering engines against the walls. The knights strove gallantly to effect his dislodgement. Their sallies were incessant, and they repeatedly carried terror into the Saracen camp; but at the very moment when they were battling thus intrepidly, their citadel was indefensible. Mines had been excavated by the Saracen engineers, in such a manner as to leave a large portion of the walls no other support than props of wood; and when the besieged treated the announcement of this fact with derision, the Mohammedan prince invited two of the bravest to come and inspect his subterranean works. Two knights, accordingly, paid a visit to the mine, and were so fully convinced that the Sultan had merely to set fire to the props to open himself a passage into the place, that they at once recommended capitulation. By this treaty the knights were permitted to march out with the honours of war. The fortress, however, was razed, to deprive them of all hope of regaining it at a more favourable juncture. *

The castle of Laodicea next fell into the Sultan's hands; and he was preparing to invest Tripoli, when one of his Emirs deprived him of life, and usurped his throne. Mansour, the new Sultan, inherited the hatred of his predecessor towards the Christians of Palestine; and as soon as he found himself secure in his authority he besieged Tripoli, which he stormed and razed as Keladun had done Margat. The loss of Tripoli reduced the Christian territory to

* Abulfeda, the most celebrated of the Arabian historians, then a boy of twelve years of age, made his first campaign against the Cross in this expedition; and was also present at the subsequent sieges of Tripoli and Acre.

one solitary city, and Acre was crowded with Christian fugitives of all nations. Fortunately, at this distressing juncture, Henry the Second of Cyprus, who had banished the adherents of the King of Sicily, and been acknowledged King of Jerusalem, managed to conclude a truce with the Sultan, and for a short time longer averted the ruin which impended over the last stronghold of Christian chivalry in Palestine.

In the short pause that followed, Nicholas de Lorgue, the Grandmaster of the Hospitallers, visited Rome, in order to make a personal appeal to the Pontiff in behalf of the Syrian Church; but all the succour he could obtain from Nicholas the Fourth, who was then in the chair of Saint Peter, was fifteen hundred men, most of them robbers and vagabonds, the refuse of the Italian States. This paltry reinforcement, composed of materials so base, only served to augment the disorders which desolated Acre, which was crowded with a population beyond its means of support, and in a constant state of turbulence and strife. Various individuals and bodies claimed an independent jurisdiction within the walls; national jealousies often burst forth in acts of violence and blood; and seventeen tribunals, all pretending to be beyond appeal, exercised the power of life and death.* In the midst of these troubles, Nicholas de Lorgue died, and John de Villiers, a knight of the language of France, succeeded him as Grandmaster.

The frightful profligacy that disgraced Acre, the inhabitants of which are described, by the concurrent testimony of various historians, as a people blackened by the most atrocious crimes, was not long in ex-

* Fuller, Holy War, book iv. ch. xxxii.

hibiting itself in acts of outrage, which the Saracens, who held in scornful detestation the robbers and murderers it sheltered, construed into a direct violation of the armistice. Parties of the banditti, which Nicholas de Lorgue had so innocently introduced into the city from Italy, made an inroad into the adjacent country, and plundered several Mohammedan villages; and the kingdom having no governor whose authority was generally respected, the Sultan found it impracticable to obtain reparation. The Hospitallers and Templars strenuously urged that his demands should receive attention, but their advice was contemned; and, as they foresaw, the Mohammedan prince renewed the war, and, at the head of a mighty army, came down against the devoted city, with the resolution of effecting its total destruction. But, on the march, he was poisoned by the lieutenant-general of his army, whom he, however, lived to see drawn and quartered; and the reduction of Acre devolved on his son Khalil, who was stimulated to the enterprise by his father's dying breath.

On the 5th of April 1291, Khalil, whose army amounted to sixty thousand horse, and one hundred and forty thousand foot, drew his leaguer round Acre—the last leaguer that Christian chivalry was to endure within its walls. Many of the richer inhabitants, panic-stricken at the prospect of a long and perilous siege, took refuge on board the numerous vessels that rode at anchor in the bay; and the defence of the city was intrusted to twelve thousand soldiers, chiefly knights and stipendiaries of the military orders, and a few hundred Cypriot auxiliaries, with their king at their head. As titular king of Jerusalem, the Cypriot prince had the strongest claim to the chief command; but his renown in arms

was questionable, and the aspect of affairs too menacing, to allow so important an office to devolve on a leader who had not the confidence of the garrison. Peter de Beaujeu, Grandmaster of the Templars, a knight of tried valour, who had grown old in the command of armies, was called to the government by acclaim; and the scorn with which he rejected the bribes of the Sultan, who offered him a vast sum to betray his trust, proved that he was worthy of the honour. He made sortie after sortie, and the atmosphere was tainted with the slaughtered Saracens who strewed the adjacent plain; but their host was too mighty to be effectually smitten by the few thousand Christian lances which the valiant Templar could direct against it. The Sultan slowly, but steadily, pushed forward his works. His miners burrowed under the fortifications; several towers were thrown down, and among them the Cursed Tower, which was regarded as the chief defence of the city. In it fought the King of Cyprus, who, with his islanders, maintained till night-fall a desperate conflict with the assailants. But, with the sunset, his valour departed. He foresaw that, with the morrow, must come chains or death; and after prevailing with the Teutonic knights to take his post, on the pretence that his troops required repose, and would resume it at daybreak, he pusillanimously fled to the port, and, seizing a few ships, sailed for Cyprus.

Next morning, the horns and atabals of the Saracens announced that they were about to renew the assault. The Teutonic knights, though so basely deserted, manned the breach with their wonted bravery; but the torrent of Saracen steel swept them away like weeds; and the clangor of battle rose in

the very centre of the city. At this perilous juncture, when the Infidels shouted victory within the walls, the Marshal of Saint John, in compliance with the Grandmaster's orders, rushed to the succour of the Germans, at the head of a body of his knights; and so impetuous was his charge, that the Saracens retired again through the breach, leaving the fosse choked with their dead.

On the following day, a similar conflict took place. No sooner was one Saracen phalanx broken, than the Sultan, prodigal of blood, ordered another to advance; and thrice the breach was won and lost. Night again parted the combatants; and next morning the Infidels, discouraged at the brave resistance they had met with among the ruins of the Cursed Tower, directed their assaults against a part of the fortifications near the gate of Saint Anthony. It was the station of the two Grandmasters; and their knights, animated by their presence, fought with the desperation of men who knew there awaited them only victory or an honourable grave. Nor were the Saracen warriors less intrepid in the *melée*. They repeatedly pitted themselves in single combat with the Christian knights; and it was difficult to determine to which side the meed of superior prowess appertained. But the numerical superiority of the Infidels achieved what individual bravery could not compass. The knights, one after another, sank down in death at their posts; and at length the Marshal of the Hospitallers, an intrepid soldier, whose sword, for many successive days, had flashed foremost in the battle, was stretched lifeless on the pile of corpses that choked the breach. The fall of this brave man filled the Grandmaster of the Templars with dismay; and, turning to the Grandmaster of Saint John, he

exclaimed, "We can hold out no longer! The day is lost, unless you make a diversion against the enemy's camp, and allow us time to refortify our post!" This hint was enough to the gallant knight to whom it was addressed. Calling on a few chosen lances to follow him, John de Villiers leapt into his war-saddle, and, quitting the city with five hundred horse, by an obscure sally-port, ventured into the open plain. But the Sultan was too vigilant to suffer a surprisal. His cavalry speedily drove back the detachment; and, on re-entering the city, the Grandmaster received the disastrous intelligence that the Governor, Peter de Beaujeu, had been slain by a poisoned arrow; that the flower of his knights were cut in pieces; and that the Saracens were victorious in every quarter. Seeing further resistance impracticable, the Grandmaster directed his whole attention to the safety of the little band that crowded round him, and retired towards the port. Covered by a number of cross-bowmen, who galled the Saracens with their arrows, he succeeded, along with the remnant of his knights, in reaching the deck of a carrack. Three hundred Templars, who endeavoured to gain the port for a similar purpose, were intercepted by an impenetrable phalanx of Mamelukes; and, finding their retreat cut off, threw themselves into the Tower of the Temple, with the resolution of perishing in its ruins. After a gallant resistance of several days, during which the Egyptian miners sapped the foundations of their fortalice, they agreed to evacuate it, on condition that they should have a free and honourable departure, and that no insults should be offered to a crowd of Christian women, who had resorted to the same place of refuge. In terms of this treaty, the gates of the Tower

were opened ; but the latter article was instantly violated by the Infidels, and the Templars' swords again leapt from the scabbard. Driven once more beyond the gates, the ferocious Mamelukes attempted to carry the tower by escalade ; but the structure, mined at every point, was unable to sustain the living burden, and sank down with a terrible crash, burying the combatants, and the miserable females whom it sheltered, in its fall.

The atrocities that followed the conquest of the city, were such as Palestine, familiar as it was with scenes of blood, had scarcely witnessed throughout the domination of its Latin Kings. Sixty thousand persons perished within the walls, or were carried into slavery ; and the Sultan, to annihilate for ever the hopes of the Christians of effecting a new settlement on the Syrian shore, razed the fortifications of every city on the coast. It is told by the Monkish historians, that the nuns of the convent of Saint Clare cut off their noses, and made gashes in their cheeks, to render themselves objects of abhorrence to the Infidels ; and so effectually did they succeed, that their pious zeal was rewarded with immediate martyrdom. A great part of the population tried to escape by sea ; but the elements, nearly as merciless as the Saracens, conspired to impede their flight ; and many perished in the tempestuous waves, in sight of their burning city.

Thus terminated, in blood and desolation, a war, which had lasted, with little interruption, for one hundred and ninety-four years, and which retains the appellation of " Holy " to this day ;—a war, says the chronicler, " for continuance the longest, for money spent the costliest, for bloodshed the cruellest, for pretences the most pious, for the true intent the most

politic, the world ever saw." * After the fall of Acre, the military orders no longer attempted to maintain themselves in Palestine. The remnant of the Order of Saint John took refuge in Cyprus, as the Christian haven nearest the country which they had sworn never to abandon to the undisputed dominion of the enemies of Christ. The few Templars who survived, also reassembled, in course of time, in the same island; while the Knights of the Teutonic Order, utterly despairing of the future redemption of the Holy Land, retired into Prussia and Livonia, which their Order enjoyed in absolute sovereignty. An hundred thousand Latin Christians are said to have simultaneously deserted the blood-fertilized soil, from which the banner of the Cross was thus so calamitously driven; "and a mournful and solitary silence prevailed along the coast, which had so long resounded with the world's debate." †

* Fuller, Hist Holy War.

† Gibbon.

CHAPTER IX.

Retreat of the Knights-Hospitallers to Cyprus—Discomfort of their situation there—Their unsuccessful expedition to Jerusalem—Conspiracy of the King of France and the Pope against the Templars—Conquest of Rhodes by the Knights of Saint John—Persecution of the Templars—Martyrdom of Jacques de Molai—Suppression of the Order of the Temple.

HENRY of Cyprus received the refugees with a humanity that in some measure atoned for his hasty retreat from the shattered walls of Acre; and none were more kindly entertained by him than the battle-scarred friars of Saint John. "It was a moving spectacle," says their most popular historian,* "to see these brave knights come out of their vessels, covered with wounds, with looks suitable to their fortunes, and infinitely affected at having survived the utter loss of the Holy Land." † The King of Cy-

* Vertot.

† Among the most redoubted champions of the Cross, in the latter days of Christian dominion in the Holy Land, was Sir Giles de Argentine, an illustrious Hospitaller, who, in 1314, fell under the banner of England, in the memorable battle of Bannockburn. Having rescued the English monarch from the perils of that great fight, he declared, that "it was not his wont to fly, turned back, cried his war-cry, galloped boldly against the victorious Scots, and was slain, according to his wish, with his face to the enemy."—*Sir Walter Scott. Hist. of Scotland.*

prus assigned to them and the Templars the town of Limisso as a place of retreat ; and, to prevent the total extinction of the Order in the Levant, the Grandmaster, John de Villiers, sent a general summons to all the knights that were dispersed throughout Christendom, to repair to his banner. In accordance with this mandate, every commandery in Europe poured forth its chevaliers, who flocked to Cyprus, burning for glory and revenge. Pope Nicholas the Fourth, though he had manifested a most parsimonious indifference to the fate of Acre while it was in dependence, no sooner heard of its fall, than he bestirred himself with considerable activity, to rekindle, in the West, that pious ardour which had dashed its chivalry so often against the Paynim world. But success attended not his labours. Men had grown wise by dint of dire and protracted experience in the Moslem wars ; and when he turned him to the East, he found the selfish Greek, the Armenian schismatic, and the savage idolater—for even in heathen lands he sought for allies—all equally indisposed to grapple in mortal combat with the warlike slaves, who had finally added Palestine to the Egyptian crown.

Meanwhile, the Knights of Saint John, who had congregated at Limisso, held a solemn chapter to determine how they could most efficaciously discharge those duties which their vows imposed on them. They resumed their hospitable attentions to such pious adventurers as still repaired to the Holy Land, notwithstanding the innumerable perils that beset the pilgrimage, and the grievous exactions to which the avarice of the Infidels subjected them ; and the few barks which the Order had at its command, were employed to convey pilgrims from Europe to the Syrian coast. It was the wont of these vessels, which

were partly manned with knights, to visit the chief ports of Italy and France at the latter end of March and August, and there take on board the devotees who were anxious to obtain their convoy; and this traffic coming to the knowledge of the corsairs of Egypt and Tunis, who had begun to swarm in the Levant, several of these rovers at length had the audacity to intercept the squadron of the Order, but, after some bloodshed, were captured. Such was the origin of those naval armaments which afterwards obtained respect for the flag of Saint John of Jerusalem all over the Mediterranean sea. The Syrian shore was lost to the Order; but the ocean was still free to its barks, as an arena in which they might meet the Infidel in equal warfare. The success, however, that attended their maritime enterprises, had ultimately a pernicious influence on the discipline and principles of the knights. Enriched by valuable prizes, they relaxed the statute which imposed a community of property; and many of the younger knights, seduced by the blandishments of an island which the heathens consecrated to Venus, ceased to observe that monastic austerity which their vows enjoined. By a wholesome exercise of authority on the part of the Grandmaster, with the support of the Chapter, these abuses were fortunately repressed before they arrived at such a height as to stain indelibly the reputation of the Order.

In 1294, Pope Boniface the Eighth ascended the Papal throne, by a series of criminal artifices not uncommon in the history of priestly rule; and one of his first acts was to secure the affection of the two puissant Orders, whose warlike achievements had shed such lustre on the last days of Christian sovereignty in Palestine. The Kings of England and

Portugal, imagining the Orders abolished by the loss of the Holy Land, sequestrated their possessions, as grants never intended to support them in indolence and luxury; but the representations and menaces of Boniface, who still recognised the knights as the chosen champions of the Cross, procured a revocation of the interdict. In the same tone he addressed himself to the King of Cyprus, who, under a natural impression that the knights would soon become as powerful at Limisso as they had been in Palestine, forbade them to purchase estates within his dominions, and subjected them to a poll-tax in common with his own people. Boniface arrogantly ordered, that this "horrible and detestable" tax should be abolished. But Henry, instead of obeying the mandate, rigorously levied the impost, and, enraged at the Pontiff's interference, let pass no opportunity of annoying the two Orders. The Cypriots, disgusted at length with his avarice, and encouraged by the Templars, and Amaury, his brother, titular Prince of Tyre, broke out into open revolt. Henry was made a prisoner, and sent into banishment among the mountains of Cilicia, while Amaury assumed the government; but scarcely had he done so, when a faithful attendant of the dethroned prince stabbed him to the heart, and, by a new revolution, restored his master to liberty and his crown.

The Hospitallers, with their accustomed prudence, did not engage in these commotions; but the death of their Grandmaster, John de Villiers, which occurred about the time of Henry's restoration, plunged them into serious domestic controversies. Odo de Pins, a Provençal knight, was chosen to succeed the hero of Acre; but, though venerated alike for his

age, his piety, and his exact observance of the regular discipline, the knights quickly came to discover that he was not a man qualified to increase the revenues, or extend the renown of the Order. He was constant in his vigils at the altar; but the knights held, that, with the chief of the Order of Saint John, prayers should give place to the exercise of arms. It may have been, that the good knight spent more of his time in the oratory than was compatible with the duties of his office; but there is also reason to conclude, that the fiery spirits whom it was his province to keep in subjection, were less given to pious observances than their habit required. The small encouragement which he gave to military enterprises subjected him to contempt; and at length the knights, who existed almost entirely by the legal piracy which they carried on in the adjacent sea, formally reported him to the Pope as incapable of governing, and entreated that he might be deposed. Upon this, Boniface summoned the Grandmaster to Rome, to defend himself. Odo, who was less formed to command than to obey, instantly embarked for the capital of the Christian world; but death terminated his career, before he was able to throw himself at the Pontiff's feet.

The Hospitallers, on learning this event, chose William de Villaret, of the language of Provence, as his successor. The new Grandmaster was at the time resident at his grand-priory of St Giles in France; and before he repaired to Cyprus, he visited all the priories of the three French languages, for the purpose of restoring the discipline of the Order to its original purity. A brother of Villaret's wore, at the same period, the Cross of the Order, in which he ranked as one of the most distinguished knights; and

Jourdain de Villaret, their sister, was the first prioress of the convent of Fieux. On landing at Limisso, the Grandmaster found himself anxiously expected. The brethren had formed the highest estimate of his talents and valour; and a Tartar horde having burst into Syria shortly after his election, and wrested greater part of it from the Egyptians, the knights, who were on a good understanding with the victors, entertained a hope that, with the aid of an intrepid leader, the city of Christ might yet be regained. The Grandmaster entered warmly into the project; and having secured the co-operation of Cazan the Mogul Sultan of Persia, the flag of Saint John once more fluttered in defiance on the shore of Palestine. The knights disembarked without opposition; and at the head of a body of Tartar cavalry which Cazan placed under their command, passed through the open and desolate country directly to the Holy City.* But they found it, like every other town in the land, totally indefensible and almost depopulated; and while they were hesitating whether they should attempt to refortify it, the Tartar prince was obliged to repossess the Euphrates, and recall his troops. This retrogression, and the rapid advance of their implacable enemy, the Sultan of Egypt, at the head of an overwhelming force, crushed the enterprise. The knights made all haste back to the coast, and, with the aid of their war-gallies, safely regained their insular retreat, leaving so few traces of their short visit to the sacred territory behind them, that it has become a question with historians whether it ever took place. †

The Mogul prince, through whose alliance

* Vertot.

† Mill's Hist. of the Crusades, Note, vol. ii. p. 282.

the Hospitallers achieved this adventure, afterwards sent an embassy to Rome, to urge the Pope to engage the Princes of the West in a new crusade. The cunning Tartar saw, that he could not have a better barrier between his Syrian conquests and the Saracens of Egypt, than an army of Christian lances; and for that reason, he was anxious to lure the Latins back to Palestine. Boniface, who was then contesting with Philip the Fair the supremacy which he claimed over all the Christian states, availed himself of the arrival of the Tartarian embassy, to display his power over that monarch. Philip was solemnly instructed, that he should cross into Syria at the head of an army without delay, and, in conjunction with the barbarian allies, who were prepared to support him, drive the Egyptians into the desert. But the Pontiff had to deal with a prince jealous of his privileges, and prompt to assert his independence. The nuncio, who was the bearer of this insolent mandate, was indignantly dismissed; and the Hospitallers, who entertained confident expectations that a new league for the deliverance of the Holy Land would be the result of the Tartar mission, were doomed to deplore its total failure.

The Templars had still greater reason to bewail the implacable nature of the quarrel between Boniface and the French monarch. In an evil hour they had, according to various historians, pledged themselves to support the Pontiff with their swords, in case he should find it necessary to take the field as a temporal belligerent against his royal adversary; and from that hour Philip, who was at once a revengeful and rapacious prince, exerted himself to compass their destruction. The death of Boniface, the brief pontificate of his immediate successor, and the

election of Bertrand de Got, Archbishop of Bourdeaux, a prelate of whom history has nothing good to record, to the popedom, paved the way for the accomplishment of this design. The Archbishop, who assumed the title of Clement the Fifth, attained his elevation solely through the influence of Philip and the Transmontane members of the Conclave; and in gratitude to the King, he pledged himself to the performance of six articles, one of which was not expressed until after his election. This mysterious condition was the entire extinction of the Knights of the Temple, whom the King accused of "incredible and abominable crimes;" and Clement, who was every way his bondsman, and as anxious as himself to divide the possessions of the Order, at once agreed to entertain his accusations, and institute a strict inquiry as to their truth. To further this investigation, he summoned the Grandmasters of both Orders (1306) to repair to his presence, under the pretence of consulting them relative to the propriety of a new crusade. They were instructed "to come speedily, with as much secrecy as possible, and with a small retinue;" there being, in his estimation, a sufficient number of knights on the hither side of the sea to attend them. At the same time, he recommended them to leave Limisso well defended during their absence, and to bring in their train such knights as were distinguished for wisdom, experience, and zeal.

This letter found the Grandmaster of the Hospitallers on the deck of his war-galley, planning the enterprise which afterwards placed the banner of Saint John in triumph on the towers of Rhodes; and he at once wrote back to his Holiness to excuse his attendance. But Jacques de Molai, Grandmas-

ter of the Templars, instantly obeyed the mandate. Disgusted with the exactions to which the King of Cyprus had subjected the two Orders, he left that island with the intention of abandoning it for ever; and in his train went sixty knights, who carried with them a treasure of 150,000 florins of gold, and a vast quantity of silver money, the whole requiring twelve horses to carry it. The Grandmaster met with a gracious reception, not only from the Pope, but from the French King, whose plans for extirpating the Order were not yet complete. The treasure which he had brought from the Levant was deposited in the house of the Temple at Paris; and it is more than probable, that it was his design ultimately to establish the chief seat of the Order in that city. One of the first acts of the Pope, after the Grandmaster appeared in his presence, was to hand him two documents; the one requesting his counsel as to the practicability of recovering the Holy Land, the other suggesting the union of the two Orders. The Grandmaster drew up two memorials in reply, which history has handed down uncurtailed.* In the one he stated, that nothing short of the combined efforts of Christendom could wrest Jerusalem from Mohammedan grasp. In the other, he strenuously objected, on various grounds, to the projected union. The proposal, he remarked, was not a new one. It had been made on a much more comprehensive scale during the pontificate of Gregory the Ninth, and in the Council of Lyons, when it was proposed to incorporate all the military orders; but the objections urged against it, on the latter occasion, had been held decisive of its impropriety. He admitted,

* Vertot. Proof IV.

that Pope Nicholas the Fourth had ascribed the loss of the Holy Land chiefly to the perpetual feuds subsisting between the Templars and the Hospitallers; but adduced, in contradiction of this calumny, the fact, that the Grandmaster of the Temple, the Marshal of the Hospital, and upwards of four hundred knights, had fallen in defence of Acre alone, and that only ten Templars escaped from the ruins of that devoted city. On a subsequent occasion, Pope Boniface the Eighth had also been persuaded to abandon a similar design of incorporation, on the argument, that it was unwise, and adverse to the constitution of both Orders. Finally, he maintained, that, far from suppressing the feuds and jealousies that prevailed between the knights, incorporation would only render these more bitter, by bringing the brethren into closer collision;—and that the charitable expenditure of a conjunct Order, would inevitably fall short of that of two separate associations, who were rivals in almsgiving, as well as in chivalrous deeds. Under these impressions, though he did not deny that the new Order would be more powerful in war against the Infidel, and maintained at less expense, he entreated that the consolidation might not be ordained without mature deliberation.

History is silent respecting the effect produced by his representations on the prelate to whom they were addressed. It is possible, that Clement felt some remorse at the assistance which he stood pledged to give the King of France in the suppression of an illustrious association, which had for so long a period been one of the noblest bulwarks of the Cross; and that he purposed, by this union, to redeem the Templars from the fate which Philip desired should overtake them. But this is putting the

fairest construction on the conduct of a priest, whose memory is all but infamous in the annals of his time. The history of the whole transaction, as Fuller remarks, "is but in twilight, not clearly delivered, but darkened with many doubts and difficulties."

In 1307, the Grandmaster of the Hospitallers paid the debt of nature after a long illness, and was succeeded by his brother, Fulk de Villaret. The last years of William de Villaret's life had been specially dedicated to the interests of his Order; and, in his brother, he left behind him a governor well acquainted with his plans, and gifted with the valour and discretion requisite to carry them into execution. The Hospitallers, equally with the Templars, had long regarded their retreat in Cyprus as undignified and insecure; and it naturally occurred to them, that, in a sea strewn with islands, like the Levant, they might easily succeed in fixing themselves in a more convenient and independent station. Rhodes, from its proximity to Palestine, and the excellence of its port, was the point to which their views were ultimately directed. That island was, at that time, inhabited partly by Greeks, and partly by Turks and Saracens, whose corsairs the native princes openly sheltered from the pursuit of the Christian galleys. A close estimate of the population, and the natural and artificial defences of the island, convinced William de Villaret, that, without assistance from Europe, it would be madness to attempt to subdue it; but of that assistance he saw no reason to despair, and he was preparing personally to entreat the Pope and the Western Princes to grant him the requisite succours, when the malady seized him which carried him to the grave. His brother and successor lost no time in agitating

the same important enterprise. He instantly repaired to Poitiers in France, where both the Pope and Philip the Fair then were, and, in a private audience, earnestly represented to them the advantages that would arise to Christendom from the conquest he contemplated. The chivalrous nature of the proposition charmed the stern and worldly-minded potentates. They contrasted the eagerness of the Knights of Saint John to harass the Infidels on their own shores, with the voluptuous and indolent lives which the Templars led in their rich European commanderies; and at once agreed to support him in so meritorious an object. The Pope, conceiving that the conquest of Rhodes would reflect honour on his pontificate, advanced ninety thousand florins to levy an army; and so successfully did he exert himself to rekindle that ardent zeal, which, for two centuries, had hurried the flower of Christian chivalry to Palestine, that the Knights found it impracticable to embark a third part of the crusaders that rendezvoused at Brundisium to be enrolled under their banner. Many gentlemen of the noblest families in Germany assumed the habit of Saint John on this occasion, and joined the expedition, with Heltwig de Randersack, Grand Prior of that language, at their head.

The fleet sailed from Brundisium early in the spring of 1308, and blessings in abundance followed it from Saint Peter's chair. Great care had been taken to propagate a report, that the crusade was destined for the Holy Land; so that even the knights engaged in it were ignorant of the true nature of the enterprise. The fleet touched at Limisso, in Cyprus, to take on board the knights that were in that island, and all the effects of the Order. Sailing from thence

to the coast of Lycia, it put into Macri, to await the return of several spies whom the Grandmaster despatched, to ascertain the most vulnerable part of Rhodes, and the exact nature of the opposition he was likely to encounter.

Rhodes, though it now holds so insignificant a place in the estimation of the world, was, in ancient times, one of the most celebrated of the States of Greece, and unrivalled for its wealth, its commerce, and its maritime power. It is about one hundred and twenty miles in circumference, and divided from the continent of Asia Minor by a channel twenty miles broad. The climate is delicious;—the summer being free from intense heat, and the winter mild and humid. The soil is singularly fertile, and produces fruits in abundance. “Wild roses hang around the base of the rocks; beds of flowering myrrh perfume the air; and tufts of laurel-roses adorn the banks of the rivulets with their gaudy flowers.”* Rhodes was among the last of the Grecian States that yielded to the Roman arms; and it was not till the reign of Vespasian, that it submitted to be governed in the manner of a Roman province. From that period the island is no more mentioned with distinction in history, till the Knights of Saint John made their descent on it. Its inhabitants, after their complete subjugation to the Roman yoke, lost those arts which had rendered their ancestors so renowned; and the proud navies it had sent forth in the days of its independence and glory, dwindled down, in the course of time, to a few piratical galleys, the property chiefly of Saracen merchants, whom the na-

* Savary, *Lettres sur l’Egypte*.

tive governors had admitted to the rights of naturalization.

During his short sojourn on the coast of Lycia, the Grandmaster publicly proclaimed the object of the expedition. This done, he again put to sea, and ran down directly on Rhodes, where he landed his troops, provisions and military engines, with little opposition. But though the natives, both Greek and Saracen, were taken by surprise, they speedily united, and made a stout and protracted resistance. A war not of weeks or months, but of years, ensued—the Christian knights resolutely maintaining the footing they had gained. The Greek Emperor Andronicus retained only the nominal sovereignty of the island, which was completely in the hands of the rebellious natives, whose main strength lay in the Saracen auxiliaries whom they had called to support them in their revolt; but no sooner did a mission from the Grandmaster of Saint John inform him of the armament fitted out to conquer it, than he became exceedingly anxious about his rights; and not only refused to grant an investiture of it to the Order, but despatched a powerful body of troops to co-operate with its natural defenders. This succour arrived after a constant succession of skirmishes and battles had greatly thinned the Christian ranks, and at a time when the crusaders, sickened by the successful efforts of two whole years, daily drew off in hundreds from the war; but Fulk de Villaret had entered on the enterprise, with the determination that it should either terminate triumphantly, or in the entire extinction of the Order; and, in defiance of the Greek reinforcement, he invested the strongly fortified city of Rhodes, the chief town of the island. He was nobly sup-

ported by his knights, who, though they saw themselves almost entirely deserted by the secular crusaders, refused to abandon their lines, and turned the siege into a blockade. In this situation, they were themselves encompassed by a Greek and Saracen leaguer, and their supplies of provisions and forage obstructed; but the Grandmaster having procured a considerable pecuniary loan from the Bank of Florence, with which he levied new stipendiaries in Europe, was enabled to liberate himself from this perilous thrall. Determined to conquer or leave his corpse on the field, he sallied out of his intrenchments, and offered his enemies battle, which they readily accepted. A long and sanguinary conflict followed, in which both armies fought with extraordinary desperation; the one for life and honour, the other for all that the heart of the patriot values—the land that gave him birth. The Grandmaster beheld the bravest of his knights hewn down before his eyes; but victory ultimately declared for his banner; and the Saracens, totally routed, threw themselves into their galleys, and carried to the Lycian shore, and the islands of the Archipelago, the first news of their defeat. Availing himself of the panic this event occasioned among the troops that garrisoned the city, the Grandmaster stormed the outworks. Amid a shower of arrows and other destructive missiles, his knights gained the breach, and, on the 15th of August 1310, planted the standard of the Order permanently on the walls. The historians of these times are almost silent regarding the occurrences that befel the Christian arms in this descent; for the expedition, less fortunate than the fifth and eighth crusades, had neither a Villehardouin nor a Joinville to chronicle its triumphs. The Hospitallers knew better how to wield

the battle-brand than the pen; and all that posterity knows of this insular war is, that it cost the lives of many valiant knights, and that four years elapsed before the island and its dependencies was finally won.

Of the strict justice of this achievement little can be said. It had the approbation and support of the Christian church, and was regarded by Christendom as an event so honourable to the Hospitallers, that they were afterwards universally designated the Knights of Rhodes; but, in reality, it was nothing better than a piratical enterprise, justifiable only on the ground, that the natives had entered into a league with the Infidels, and given shelter to Saracen corsairs in their ports. But, in those days of broil and outrage, even the most upright and magnanimous men were accustomed to decide partially on all questions which promised them renown in the field, and spoil after the battle was ended.

When the Grandmaster had succeeded in rendering his authority supreme in every corner of the island, he directed his attention to the subjugation of such dependencies in the adjacent sea as were likely to be easily occupied. Having partially restored the fortifications of Rhodes, which had been almost razed during the siege, he provisioned his fleet, and set sail in search of new conquests. In this expedition he reduced the islands of Nisara, Lero, Calamo, Episcopia, Chalce, Simia, Tilo, and Cos. The last of these islets alone was entitled to be called a valuable acquisition, the others being sterile and shelterless rocks, inhabited by a scanty and indigent population. Nisara was granted by the Grandmaster in fief to the brothers John and Bonaville Assatiers, who had distinguished themselves in the conquest of

Rhodes, on condition that they should maintain a galley of six score oars, duly manned and provided, for the service of the Order. The importance of Cos induced him to erect a fortress in it, and the island ultimately became so prosperous and powerful under the government of the Order, that it was considered another Rhodes, and made a bailiwick, and an episcopal see under the metropolitan of that city.

The Grandmaster returned to Rhodes in triumph, but not to furl his war-pennon, and enjoy in tranquillity the fruits of his victory. The Mohammedan refugees who survived the loss of the island, eager to regain the territory which the Christians had wrested from them, threw themselves on the protection of Osman or Othman, (the Bone-breaker), Sultan of the adjacent countries of Asia Minor—a wise and warlike prince, whose name still distinguishes the dynasty that inherits the Turkish diadem—and obtained his promise that he would drive the Order from Rhodes, and restore that island to its former possessors. A Turkish flotilla, having on board a considerable army, accordingly put to sea; and scarcely had the knights time to place their capital in a state of defence, when they beheld the Mohammedan phalanxes closing round it. But it is not in walls or bastions, but in the indomitable spirit of its garrison, that the strength of a beleaguered city lies. Day after day the Turkish commander endeavoured to storm the fortifications, but the knights were not to be beaten from behind their shattered battlements; and, wearied at length of the enterprise, the victor of a hundred battles abandoned the siege and the island, leaving the ditches of the city choked with his dead. It is asserted by several historians, that Amadeus,

Count of Savoy, was the deliverer of Rhodes on this occasion. * That prince is said to have arrived with powerful succours, while the Ottomans were encamped before the city, and to have defeated them in a sanguinary battle, after which they fled panic-stricken to their ships. Other writers refuse to credit this story, on the argument that Amadeus never engaged in any such expedition; † and as there is concurrent testimony that he was in attendance on Henry Count of Luxembourg, Emperor-elect of Germany, at the very period at which the Turkish army is stated to have made its descent, ‡ the evidence is decisive, that the knights raised the siege solely by their own valour. §

Warned by this invasion, the Grandmaster lost no time, after the flight of the Turks, in restoring the

* Boisgelin—Chron. of Malta.

† Vertot.

‡ Guicheron.

§ Before closing the history of this event, it is incumbent to state, that historians of the deepest research have expressed doubts as to whether any such descent ever took place. Gibbon remarks, that Vertot, on whose authority it is here narrated, “betrays his ignorance in supposing that Othman, a freebooter of the Bythnian hills, could besiege Rhodes by sea and land;” and certainly, when we find it stated by the Turkish historians, that Solyman, the son of Orcan, the second Sultan of the Ottoman line, crossed the Hellespont on a raft, for lack of a better conveyance, some scepticism naturally arises as to the flotilla of his grandfather. But it is admitted on all hands, that the Rhodians whom the knights expelled were a maritime people; and there seems nothing improbable in the supposition, that, even in their exile, they were able to equip a fleet of small vessels, sufficiently large to transport over a strait, only twenty miles in breadth, a considerable army. It is worthy of note, that Boisgelin, who had personal access to the records of the Order, and who has purged its history of many errors, credits the descent of Othman, which he places in 1315.

ancient fortifications, and strengthening them by new works. This done, he directed his attention to the commercial prosperity of the island; and so judiciously did he foster mercantile enterprise, that Rhodes gradually became as renowned for its trade as for the valour of its new sovereigns. The port was thrown open to the ships of every Christian nation; and vast numbers of Latin Christians, who had been expelled, along with the knights, from the Holy Land, sought an asylum in the island, and enriched it by their industry and maritime skill.

The conquest of Rhodes, and the rapid advances it subsequently made as an independent state, filled Christendom with admiration and joy. The Hospitallers were lauded to the skies as a band of heroes whom no seductions could emasculate, and no reverses dismay; while the Templars, their former rivals in glory, were repudiated as lazy cravens, who were contented to fatten in inglorious sloth on the rich possessions which had been bestowed on them, solely to secure their services in Paynim war. Philip the Fair, who had never lost sight of his design to exterminate the Red Cross Knights, though he had been compelled to procrastinate its execution, saw that the time had now arrived when he might with safety complete the persecution he had for several years waged against them. The most odious calumnies had long been industriously circulated against the Templars; and on the evidence of two convicted felons, who had a personal object to gain in giving a false testimony, they were proclaimed guilty of a variety of atrocious crimes. The two ruffians alluded to were Squin de Florian or Flexian, a citizen of Beziers, and an apostate Templar called Noffo Dei, a Florentine by birth, who, having occupied the

same dungeon at Paris or Toulouse, (for the place of their confinement is uncertain), framed a scheme whereby they might conciliate the King, and extricate themselves from the thralldom to which their manifold offences had subjected them. The apostate confessed himself to Squin, of many foul and abominable crimes of which individually he had unquestionably been guilty; and his confidant grounded on these transgressions a series of charges against the whole Order to which the culprit had formerly belonged. The governor of the prison was informed that Squin was in possession of a secret of more importance to the King of France than the conquest of a kingdom, but that to the monarch alone would he divulge it. This circumstance was communicated to Philip, who, eager to solve the mystery, had him brought into his presence, and promised him not only a full pardon, but a reward if he should furnish him with veritable and conclusive testimony against the Order. On receiving this pledge, Squin boldly charged the whole Knights of the Temple with treachery, murder, idolatry, Islamism, and "many other villanies out of the rode of humane corruption." * He declared that every member of the Order was bound to defend its interests, right or wrong—that the novices were made to spit and trample on the Cross, and to blaspheme Christ—that if any novice, disgusted with this profligacy, wished to withdraw from the Order, he was secretly murdered—that they sacrificed men to an idol which they worshipped—that they had roasted a Templar's bastard, and drunk his blood—that they had sold the Holy Land to the Infidels—and, in short, that

* Fuller, b. v. c. 2. p. 230.

their houses were the abode of every "damnable sinn and bestiality."

The precise date of Squin de Florian's confessions has escaped history; but whether they were made prior or subsequent to the justification of the Order by Jacques de Molai, as already narrated, is a matter of trivial significance. They furnished Philip with that apology which his cupidity coveted; and he urged the Pope so earnestly to acquiesce in his ruthless project, that his Holiness, whose conscience, though not particularly tender, still smote him for having leagued himself against the Order, sought to smother the King's avarice by declaring, that if the Templars were found guilty of the crimes laid to their charge, their effects and revenues should be dedicated exclusively to the redemption of the Holy Land. To a monarch of Philip's warm and imperious temperament, this dilatory mode of proceeding was any thing but satisfactory. Contemning the jurisdiction of the Pontiff, he sent secret instructions to all his governors to arm themselves on the 12th of October 1307; and next day all the Templars in France were arrested and thrown into durance.

This sudden step filled Christendom with surprise; and the Pope, when he heard that a council, consisting, among others, of William Imbert, the King's Confessor, William de Nogaret, the Chancellor, a man who stickled at no atrocity to gratify his master; and William Plesian, a personage equally unprincipled, had been nominated to examine the prisoners, suspended the powers of the first named individual, who held the office of Inquisitor-General, and inhibited the Bishops of France from taking any cognizance of the matter. He addressed, at the same time, a letter to the King, reproaching him

with usurping the privileges of the Holy See, and demanding that the persons and effects of the Templars should be delivered into his own keeping. But Philip answered him slightly, that God abhorred nothing so much as the dilatoriness he showed in seconding him in this just prosecution; and that none but sacrilegious wretches could have advised him to insult the whole prelates of France, by interdicting them in one of the most essential functions of their dignity. * Clement, startled at the tone of this epistle, and remembering that the hand that penned it had plucked the beard of his predecessor Boniface in the very centre of Italy, instantly succumbed to a temper he could not control. To accommodate matters, it was agreed that the prisoners, though guarded by the King's soldiers, should be nominally confined in the name of the Pope and the Church; and, in return for this small concession, the obnoxious interdict on the Confessor and Bishops was removed; and the former was authorized to sit in judgment on the unhappy men whom the King was so anxious to extirpate.

Notwithstanding the sensation which this event excited over Europe, Edward the Second of England alone showed a disposition to befriend the Templars in the dire extremity to which they were reduced. On receiving an invitation from Philip to follow his example, and commence a persecution against the Order, he treated the charges submitted to him as incredible calumnies, and wrote to the Kings of Portugal, Castile, Arragon and Sicily, beseeching them to receive with caution the rumours that were in circulation. But a Papal edict

* Dupuy—Hist. de la Condem. des Templiers.

reiterating the charges, and calling on him to imitate the King of France, and place all the Templars and their goods within his dominions in safe keeping, overcame his reluctance to declare himself among their enemies. All the Templars in England were forthwith thrown into confinement, and the persecution even extended to Ireland, Scotland and Wales; but it never wore, in any of these countries, that aspect of barbarity which characterized it in France.*

The fiat of Philip against the Order had gone forth at that season of the year when the cell of the captive is rendered doubly dreadful by the rigour of winter. The sufferers were deprived of the habit of their order, and of the rites and comforts of the church; only the barest necessaries of life were allowed them; and those who refused to plead guilty to the hor-

* The principal house of the Order of Saint John in Scotland, was at Torphichen, in West Lothian. It was founded by King David the First, and consecrated to Saint John. Several of the Commanders, or Preceptors of Torphichen, were notable men; among whom were Sir Henry Livingston, of the family of Kilsyth, who died in 1463—Sir William Knowles, who was killed at the battle of Flodden—Sir George Dundas, a knight of great learning—and Sir Walter Lindsay. The last Preceptor was Sir John Sandilands, a cadet of the Calder family. At the Reformation, he resigned all the possessions of the Order in Scotland into the hands of Queen Mary, and received them back again in feu as his own private property, with a temporal lordship, which his representatives enjoy to this day.

The principal residences of the Templars were at the Temple on the South Esk; Balantradoch, now called Arniston, in Mid-Lothian; Aboyne and Tulloch, in Aberdeenshire; Maryculter, in Kincardineshire; Oggerstone, in Stirlingshire; Saint Germain, in East-Lothian; and Inchynan, in Renfrewshire; all which places devolved to the Knights of Saint John, when the Templars were suppressed.—*Vide Cat. of Scottish Bishops.*

rible crimes of which they were accused, were subjected to every species of torture. Shrieks and groans resounded in all the prisons of France; their tormentors noted down not only their words, but even their tears and sighs; * and the spirit of many a knight whom the terrors of Paynim war had failed to subdue, quailed at the stake and on the rack. But if some criminated themselves to escape the torments to which a cruel and flagitious policy subjected them, many bore their sufferings with invincible firmness, and died with as much of martyr-heroism, as the most intrepid of their Order had ever met the nobler doom of death in battle. The Pope examined seventy-two himself, who confessed themselves guilty. A real or pretended letter of Jacques de Molai, their Grandmaster, was shown them, in which he admitted several of the charges, and exhorted the whole Order to do the same; but, on a sudden, the persecutors were foiled by the recantation of many who had previously confessed, under a protestation that they had been driven by torture to defame themselves, and that they now scorned the pardon which such cowardice had purchased. All those who relapsed in this manner were removed to Paris; and, after a solemn consultation among their judges, were proclaimed recusants who had renounced Christ. The Pope having once imbrued his hands in the blood of these devoted men, showed no scrupulosity in according his unqualified suffrage to all the merciless schemes which their chief persecutor invented for their destruction.

* Raynouard.—*Monumens Historiques Relatifs à la Condamnation des Chevaliers du Temple et l'Abolition de leur Ordre.*

On the 12th of May 1310, fifty-four Templars who had confessed, but afterwards recanted, were burnt alive at Paris in a slow fire. They, one and all, died asserting their innocence, and the honour of their Order, with their latest breath. The Grand-master De Molai was brought in fetters before the Commissioners, and questioned whether he had any thing to say in defence of his knights. He answered nobly, that he was an illiterate soldier, more skilled in war than in forensic subtlety, and could not therefore undertake their defence as a legal advocate ; but that, in any knightly way, he should be infinitely proud to maintain their innocence in the face of the whole world. He then entreated that he might be allowed to hire counsel ; but the Commissioners replied, that, as heretics, the accused were not entitled to any such indulgence. They then read over to him a confession which he had made himself, vitiated by the grossest interpolations. On hearing it read, he crossed himself in great astonishment, and emphatically denounced the three Cardinals who had subscribed it, as deserving of the death which the Saracens and Tartars, with whom he had so often combatted, condemned liars and forgers to die.

Notwithstanding the rigour of the persecution, a few knights were entirely acquitted. Others, whose confessions had not been so unqualified, were sentenced to a canonical penance, and to shave the long beards which all the Order wore, in conformity to the custom of Eastern nations. At length the King, determined to bring the matter to a termination, held a solemn council with the Pope at Vienne, in the end of 1311. All the bishops who attended it, with the exception of three French prelates, entreat-

ed, but in vain, that an illustrious Order, which had for nearly two centuries been one of the bulwarks of Christendom, should not be utterly swept away, without its principal functionaries being heard in their own defence. But the votes of three hundred mitred priests were of no avail against the unjust decision of a triple-crowned dotard, and the rapacity and implacability of a merciless king. After six months of procrastination, the Pope, finding the prelates firm in their opinion, rose suddenly in the midst of them, and exclaimed, that, since they would not gratify his dear son, the King of France, by passing a judicial sentence on the Templars, without a tedious and improper formality, the plenitude of the Papal authority should supply every defect. This decided the fate of the Order. In the following spring, he formally promulgated its suppression, reserving to himself and the church the disposition of the persons and estates of the whole brotherhood.

The next question necessarily came to be, how the princely possessions of the Order should be disposed of. The partisans of France insisted that a new Order should be created, into which all the other military fraternities, including the Knights of Saint John, should merge; but the Pope, who foresaw that such an arrangement would remove all the warrior-friars in Europe and Asia from under his jurisdiction, urged that the confiscated property should be consecrated to the defence of the holy places, and the pilgrims that visited them; and that the Knights of Rhodes should have the unrestrained administration of it. The majority of his ghostly councillors acceded to this proposition; but it was with manifest reluctance that the King of France ac-

corded it his approbation. The whole estates of the Templars, except such as were situated in Spain, which were specifically dedicated to the defence of that country against the Moors, who still retained the sovereignty of Granada, were forthwith adjudged to the Knights of Saint John; and the council was dissolved.

In the following year (1313), this cruel and unjustifiable persecution terminated in the final arraignment of the Grandmaster Jacques de Molai, and the three Grand Preceptors, Guy, Grand Prior of Normandy, brother to the Prince of Dauphiny, Hugh de Peralde, Grand Prior of France, and the Grand Prior of Aquitain. The Pope had reserved to himself the cognizance of their case, but ultimately devolved it on a commission, which met in the French capital. An earnest desire was entertained by the persecutors, that these illustrious knights, who were the dignitaries of their Order, should adhere to the partial confessions which the terrors of the rack had extorted from them. All Christendom shuddered at the fires that blazed in every corner of the French territory; and the Pope and King were consequently anxious to justify, by irrefutable testimony, the implacable pertinacity with which they had followed up the work of proscription. It was determined to mitigate the punishment of the four prisoners to perpetual imprisonment—if such a doom may be called a mitigation—provided they adhered to their former confessions; and, under an impression that the populace of Paris required the most incontestable assurance that so many Templars had not been hurried to the grave without just and potent reasons, it was resolved that the Grandmaster, and his companions in misfortune, should make a public

declaration. A scaffold was erected in front of the cathedral church, on which the prisoners were exposed in sight of a pile of faggots, which, they were given to understand, was to consume them in case they recanted. An elaborate oration was then made by one of their judges, in which he dwelt with much bitterness on the abominations which had disgraced the Order; and when it concluded, they were called upon to renew, in the hearing of the multitude, the confession of their crimes and errors. The Priors of France and Aquitain, intimidated at the prospect of the stake, obeyed; but when it came to the Grandmaster's turn to speak, that magnanimous knight, shaking his chains, advanced, with a countenance full of resolution, to the edge of the scaffold, * and, raising his voice, exclaimed, "It is but just, that, in this terrible day, and in the last moments of my life, I should expose the iniquity of falsehood, and make truth to triumph. I declare, then, in the face of heaven and earth, and to my own eternal confusion and shame, that I have committed the greatest of crimes; but it has been only in acknowledging, that the atrocious charges so implacably urged against the Order to which I belong, have a shadow of justice. I made that confession, to suspend the tortures of the rack, and mollify my persecutors. I know that this recantation will subject me to new torments; but the horrible sight they now offer to my eyes, cannot intimidate me to confirm my first departure from truth by a second lie. Life has already become hateful to me, and, on a condition so infamous, I scorn to retain it. What good purpose would it serve me, to purchase a few

miserable days by a confirmation of the blackest calumnies?" *

The persecuted knight would have spoken more, but it was deemed politic to interrupt him. Guy, Grand Prior of Normandy, made his recantation in the same solemn and forcible manner; and they were both burned alive in a slow fire the same day, on the very spot which has been adorned, in modern times, with a statue of Henry the Fourth. † The Grandmaster met death with the spirit of a martyr. He repeated his protestations as to the innocence of his Order; but admitted that he deserved to suffer for having, in a moment of human weakness, maligned it. It was popularly asserted at the time, ‡ that, when almost stifled with the smoke of his funeral pyre, he cried aloud, "Clement, thou unjust judge and barbarous executioner, I cite thee to appear, in forty days, before the judgment-seat of God!" —a story which doubtless originated after the death of the Pontiff, to whom it was applicable. Be this as it may, the tears of the people watered the warrior's ashes, which were carefully gathered up, and treasured as a martyr's dust.

Thus died the last of the Templars—those dauntless warrior-monks, whose banner had for two centuries been always one of the foremost in Paynim war, and who, had they not been caught, as Fuller says, like lions in a net, would, instead of being tamely hunted down, have made good their part against all the power of France. Similar proscription and confiscation, but under more humane circumstances, overtook them in every corner of Europe.

* Villani, lib. 8. c. 92.

† Mill's Hist. of Crusades, vol. ii. p. 323.

‡ Mezeray.

In Portugal alone was a shield thrown over them, and the persecution limited to a mere change of their title from the Soldiers of the Temple to the Soldiers of Christ. In Arragon, they took refuge for a time in their fortresses, from whence they dictated a pressing remonstrance to the Pope, indignantly repelling the accusations brought against them, and imploring permission to maintain their innocence with their lances, according to the custom of knighthood and of the times. This appeal, it need scarcely be said, was made in vain. James the Second of Arragon, in compliance with the Pontiff's instructions, stormed their strongholds; and, except in France, there was no country in Europe where the edict of extinction was more scrupulously obeyed.*

It still remains to be determined, whether the charges against these knights were true or false. As far as history bears on their tragical fate, its testimony is exceedingly dark and conflicting; for few points have been more warmly debated. That the Templars were arrogant, ambitious, and disputatious, the history of their services in the Holy Land furnishes ample evidence; and that several of the vices which originate in sloth and luxury, were latterly in-

* None of the other military orders ever attained, in England, the same eminence as the Templars. They enjoyed immense estates in every province of that kingdom; and the Prior of London sat in Parliament as first baron of the realm. The number of knights imprisoned in the British isles, during the persecution, was about two hundred and fifty; and William de la Moore, the Grand Prior of England, maintained, with nearly as much dignity as Jacques de Molai, the innocence of his Order. The number of Knights-Templars in Christendom, at the time of the dissolution of the Order, was about fifteen thousand.

cluded among their errors, is also but too probable, seeing the proverb, "He drinks like a Templar," is current to this day; but to believe that they were, one and all of them, the brutes and monsters Philip of France was pleased to proclaim them, were to entertain a foul libel on human nature. Vicious and unprincipled men may occasionally have found admission into the Order; but in so vast an association, it would have been much more surprising if every postulant had been strictly pious and virtuous. The recantation and dying testimony of Jacques de Molai reduce their confessions on the rack and at the stake to falsities, subscribed to avert torture and death; and it is a fact not to be lightly passed over, that the major part of their admissions related to charges which were most improbable and preposterous. They admitted, for instance, that the devil, in the guise of a cat, assisted at their conclaves—which, unfortunately for them, as respected this investigation, were held in secret, and by night; but no Templar confessed that he had abjured Christ, or sold the Holy Land. Their true crime, in the eyes of Philip, was their wealth; and the pretence and arrogance it engendered accelerated their downfall. Could he have despoiled them of their possessions, without impugning their principles, not one helmed head would have fallen; but so puissant and venerated over Europe was the Order, that he knew the honey was not to be come at, till he had burned out the bees. Their fatal errors were lapsing into slothful and luxurious habits after the loss of the Holy Land, and indulging in ease in their European preceptories, while the Knights of Saint John, their rivals in chivalrous enterprise, swept the Levant with their war-gallies, and claimed the admiration of

Europe, by their struggles to re-establish themselves in permanent sovereignty on the Asiatic coast. Had the Hospitallers also taken refuge in their cismarine Commanderies, one or other of the rapacious monarchs of Christendom would have held it an equally laudable undertaking to effect their extirpation. The fierce zeal, which had crowded Palestine with palmers and crusaders for so many years, was quenched forever; and the Princes of the West were prepared to regard the military orders as the broken tools of Papal supremacy, which the father of the Christian world was imperatively called upon to throw away.

The persecution of the Templars, and the spoliation of their possessions, annihilated the Order as a political body; but its suppression as a confraternity was not entirely accomplished. Jacques de Molai, anticipating martyrdom, named a successor to the Grandmastership; and the succession has been maintained regularly and uninterruptedly to the present day, as the archives of the Order, preserved at Paris, along with the seals, the standards, and other relics, testify.* Several of the bravest cavaliers of France, and, among others, the famous Bertrand du Guesclin, held the dignity in after times. The Order is still in vigorous existence in the chief cities of Europe; but the modern Templars affect no titular rank. Their bond of union is, like that of the Freemasons, mystical, and unrecognised as that of a legalized fraternity; and the prodigious changes that have occurred in the state of society, since the political annihilation of the Order, renders it almost impossible that it, or any other military brotherhood, can ever again attain princely independence.

* Manuel des Chevaliers de l'Order du Temple. Paris, 1817.

CHAPTER X.

Division of the Revenues of the Templars—Insurrection of the Knights against the Grandmaster Fulk de Villaret—Election of Maurice De Pagnac—Grandmastership of Helion de Villeneuve—Legend of the Serpent—Conquest of the Castle of Smyrna—Deodato De Gozon elected Grandmaster—Expedition to Armenia—Dishonourable Policy of the Pope—Attack on Alexandria—Robert de Julliac Grandmaster—Election of Heredia—His Expedition against Patras, and Capture.

THE vigilance of the Pope had nominally secured to the Knights of Rhodes the revenues of the martyred Templars; and the Grandmaster, Fulk de Villaret, possessed too much ambition and worldly sagacity, to reject so vast an accession of wealth to the Order he governed. Without assuming a title to investigate the merits of the terrible persecution, which had terminated in the extinction of their ancient rivals, it was resolved to invest the principal Knights-Commanders in Christendom with full powers to treat with the several sovereigns of the West, relative to the conveyance of the new possessions in perpetuity to the Order of Saint John. A knight Grand-Cross, of great capacity and experience, was nominated procurator-general, and lieutenant of the mastership in Europe, with authority to act as visitor, reformer, administrator, and comptroller in or-

dinary, of all the houses situated on this side the sea.

In France, to which the commissioners first directed their steps, they met with a very cool reception. Philip declined to part with the Temple lands, until he should have reimbursed himself for the vast expenditure which he had incurred in suppressing the Order, and at the same time have received a pledge that the Knights of Saint John would appropriate the revenues to proper purposes. The secular administrators required to be largely bribed, before they could be brought to abrogate their trust; and Philip dying before any final arrangement, his son and successor, Louis Hutin, greatly increased the amount of the indemnification which his father had demanded. Nearly three hundred thousand livres were retained, for what were termed the expenses of the prosecution; and so slowly were the landed estates resigned, that it was not till 1317 that the Hospitallers discharged all their demands upon the confiscated property.* To the infamy of Pope Clement be it told, he was strongly suspected of having accepted a large share of the plunder.† In Naples and Sicily, Charles the Second retained the immoveable property as long as he lived, and, like his royal kinsman of France, made a division of the moveables with the Pontiff.‡ The estates in Spain and Portugal had been originally exempted by the Pope from the grant to the Knights of Rhodes; but subsequently he partially revoked this edict, and the Hospitallers were put in quiet possession of all the Temple lands in the Balearic Islands. The

* Dupuy, p. 184.

† *Ib.* p. 59.

‡ Nostradamus, *Histoire de Provence* an 1307.

King of Arragon, disapproving of the ready submission of that insular kingdom to papal authority, instructed his ambassadors to intimate to the Pope, that he trusted he would not extend the rights of the Hospitallers to his dominions, as he intended to take the revenues of the Templars entirely into his own hands, and appropriate them to extirpate the Moors who infested his territories. A long and unsatisfactory negotiation followed, which ended in the Knights of Rhodes being persuaded, not only to desist from their pretensions to the estates of the Templars situated in the kingdom of Valencia, dependent on the King of Arragon, but also to resign to the Pope, for behoof of the Knights of the Spanish Order of Calatrava, all the Commanderies of their own Order, except that of the town of Valencia, and a castle called the Torrent.* In exchange, they received, with the exception of seventeen frontier posts, all the possessions of the Templars in Arragon and Catalonia. In Castile, though the Templars had been declared innocent, very considerable estates that had belonged to them were annexed to the royal revenues. In Portugal, King Denis, who had all along treated the persecuted knights with great humanity, transformed them into a new Order, and left them in quiet enjoyment of their possessions. In Germany, the Teutonic knights who had established themselves in sovereign independence on the shores of the Baltic, shared the spoil equally with the Hospitallers. In England alone, did the latter find their rights strictly respected. Edward the Second fully confirmed the Papal grant; but several of his nobles managed, as

* Vertot.

heirs of the original donors, to attach much of the forfeited property. It was not till the reign of Edward the Third that they got entire possession of the Temple, which they subsequently devised to a society of common law professors. These lawyers divided themselves into two bodies—those of the Inner, and those of the Middle Temple; and held the mansion as tenants of the Hospitallers, till the dissolution of the Order in England in the reign of Henry the Eighth, when they became tenants of the Crown. *

This vast accession of wealth, conjoined with the conquest of Rhodes, raised the Order of Saint John to a degree of splendour and renown which no military fraternity had ever before attained. But increase of revenue, and of popular acclaim, had a blighting influence on those very virtues which had led to this pre-eminence. Europe poured the younger sons of its aristocracy into the White Cross ranks; and with these high-born aspirants for knightly honours, came pride and luxury, and arrogance and disunion—the very sins that had prostrated the Templars in the dust. The statute enforcing community of property was permitted to become obsolete—while the younger knights, regarding valiant deeds on the deck of their war-gallies as the only duties imperatively required of them, squandered, in gaming and debauchery, the spoil which they tore from the Infidels on the waves. In vain did the old commanders, who had been severely schooled in the siege of Ptolemais, enjoin a strict observance of the discipline which had secured to the Order a deathless reputation. The fiery spirits whom they aspired to con-

* Stow's London, B. 3. p. 271.

tol, persisted in cherishing valour alone, as the cardinal virtue of their profession; and Fulk de Villaret himself, the hero under whom they had achieved their last conquest, was not proof against the dangerous belief. Blinded by the glory which he had acquired in the Rhodian war, and of too mercurial a temperament to receive with philosophy the homage which a host of parasites paid him, he indulged in regal state, to the great injury of the public revenue, and displayed the most obnoxious favouritism in the dispensation of the offices in his gift. While his courtiers had free and constant access to him, those knights who were not of the chosen number were rarely admitted to his presence; and, when so honoured, were exposed to marked indignity and neglect. The Grandmaster, in short, had come to look upon himself as a sovereign prince, whom his fellow-knights, equally with the natives of the island which his sword had subjugated, were bound to honour and obey; not in virtue of his office, but of a distinct personal right which he imagined his services had created.

In an Order constituted like that of Saint John, a system of unmitigated despotism was not likely long to be tolerated. A faction was formed against the Grandmaster, which first affected to remonstrate with him; and finding that mode of proceeding of no avail, summoned him judicially to appear in Council, and give an account of his administration. Villaret treated this summons with disdain; upon which the malecontents chose Maurice de Pagnac, an old commander, as their leader, and prepared to accomplish their deliverance by violent measures. Pagnac was a strict observer of the statutes, bitter in zeal, inflexible in purpose, and not entirely free from selfishness in his revolt. He suggested that they should

arrest the Grandmaster; and, having done so, impeach and try him before the Council, in defiance of his partisans. Such a proposal suited the proud and daring men to whom it was submitted; and they at once agreed to carry it into execution. This, however, was an undertaking of difficulty. The Grandmaster was surrounded by a numerous and devoted household, and never stirred abroad without being well attended. An attempt was made to bribe one of his confidential attendants to admit the conspirators secretly by night into his chamber; but the faithful menial rejected the bribe, and divulged the plot to his master, with such exaggerations as rendered the latter apprehensive that nearly the whole knights were leagued against him. Conceiving himself no longer safe in the city, he rode forth into the open country, under pretence of enjoying the chase, and then made directly to the castle of Lindus, a fortress on the eastern side of the island, about seven miles from Rhodes. In this castle, which was well garrisoned and provisioned, and had besides the command of a spacious roadstead, in which several galleys, well equipped, and completely under his control, were constantly anchored, he securely established himself, and not only defied the conspirators, but notified to them that he appealed to the Holy See from every enactment which they should authorize prejudicial to his person and dignity. But the malecontents were too seriously exasperated to be intimidated by this bold manœuvre. His flight from the city hurried many of the more moderate and considerate knights into the league against him. A general cry arose for his deposition; and, in contempt of his appeal to the Pope, a majority, congregating in a tumultuous manner, proclaimed his authority at an

end, and nominated Maurice de Pagnac Grandmaster. Immediate notification of this event was forwarded to Pope John the Twenty-second, who instantly despatched two commissioners to Rhodes, with ample authority to suspend the powers of both Grandmasters, and to institute a strict inquiry as to the true origin of the commotion. His Holiness, at the same time, summoned both Villaret and Pagnac to appear before him, and account for their conduct; and Gerard de Pins, a knight of the language of Provence, who had remained neuter during the tumult, was intrusted with the temporary government of the Order, with the title of Vicar-General. In accordance with the Pope's mandate, the two Grandmasters set out for Avignon in France, where his Holiness held his court. On the way they visited Rome, where Villaret, whose fame had gone before him, was received with marked distinction; while Pagnac was contemned as a rebel, who deserved nothing better than a halter. Their claims were publicly debated by the most famous lawyers of the court of Avignon; but, notwithstanding the ability of his counsel, Pagnac was not slow to discover, that the Pope, affronted at the little respect that had been shown to Villaret's appeal, was secretly disposed to contravene his cause. Apprehensive of being deposed by a solemn judiciary sentence, and thereby placed under the ban of an incensed enemy, he became oppressed with melancholy. Leave was given him to retire to Montpellier, where anxiety and bodily ailments combined, soon after put a period to his existence.

His death superseded the necessity of a judicial sentence. Villaret was re-established in all his functions as Grandmaster; but, by a private agreement, he

bound himself to abdicate his government to the pontiff within a limited time, and to accept in lieu of it a great priory independent of the jurisdiction of his successor, and exempted from the responsions exigible by the Order.

As was to be expected, the notoriety of the dissensions that divided the knights encouraged a new enemy to assail them. Orcan, the son and successor of the redoubted Othman, conceiving Rhodes to be almost defenceless in consequence of the absence of the rival Grandmasters, and the disunion of the Order, made a descent on it, in the hope of extirpating the knights, and colonizing it with followers of the Prophet. Having taken possession of the island of Episcopia, he made it a depôt for the settlers whom he had brought in his train, and then stood away with his fleet directly to Rhodes. Gerard de Pins, the Vicar-General, no sooner heard that this armament had put to sea, than he determined to encounter it on the waves, rather than tamely await its debarkation behind his ramparts. All his war-gallies save four were cruising in distant parts of the Levant ; but fortunately six Genoese vessels chanced to be in the port at the time, and their commanders agreed to join his little squadron. All the knights and soldiers in the island, and the bravest of the natives, were embarked in this flotilla, of which the Vicar-General personally took the command. By a skilful manœuvre he got the wind of the Turks, and then ran down boldly into the centre of their line. The knights, familiar with maritime enterprise, fought with the valour of men secure of victory, while the Turks, naturally cowards on the sea, and crowded into vessels altogether unfit for warfare, anticipated discomfiture from the first onset. Orcan beheld his

fleet totally defeated; and the miserable colonists whom he had left in Episcopia, were all either put to the sword by the victorious knights, or sent into slavery.

Meanwhile, Fulk de Villaret, in accordance with his agreement with the Pope, resigned the Grandmastership for the Priory of Capone, and retired to Languedoc, where he died. His successor was Helion de Villeneuve, who was elevated to the Grandmastership by a conclave of knights specially convened in the Papal palace. Villeneuve was openly favoured by the Pontiff; and the vote of the assembly merely confirmed the Prelate's nomination. He showed his gratitude to his ghostly patron, by investing him with the rights of certain possessions belonging to the Order, in and near Cahors, which his Holiness was anxious to purchase for the ennoblement of his own family, which was exceedingly obscure—he being the son of a poor cobbler. During the Grandmaster's sojourn in France, he held a general Chapter at Montpellier, which declared all knights incapable of attaining any official dignity in the Order, until they had been actually resident in the principal Hospital for a certain number of years. In 1330, he repaired to Marseilles to embark for Rhodes, but was detained there a considerable time by a dangerous illness; and it was not till 1332, several years after his election, that he arrived in that island. He found matters there in a most unpromising condition. The discipline of the Order was at the lowest ebb; the principal knights, each acting on his own authority, had retired, one after another, from the jars and contentions that prevailed in the island, to enjoy tranquillity in their European commanderies; and the walls

of the city, breached in many places by natural decay, were fast falling into ruin. The Grandmaster spared no exertions to introduce an immediate reform. The statute-book was reopened, the fortifications promptly repaired and strengthened, and the half-deserted war-gallies remanned with the knights whom he had brought in his train from the West. In a short time the island was again crowded with gallant soldiers, and the flag of Saint John restored to its former supremacy in the Levant. If an undue exercise of Papal influence had raised Villeneuve to the Grandmastership, the energy and wisdom with which he discharged the multifarious duties that devolved on him, and the prosperous results that flowed from his administration, in some measure compensated the Order for the ancient privilege which the Pope had virtually usurped.

It is in the annals of this Grandmaster's government that the following legend finds a place. A huge serpent, or crocodile, for it is described as an amphibious animal, had taken up its abode in a cavern on the brink of a marsh situated at the base of Mount Saint Stephen, about two miles from the city, from whence it sallied forth frequently in search of prey. Not only cattle, but even men, became its victims; and the whole island trembled at its voracity. Knight after knight, ambitious of the renown of slaying such a monster, stole singly and secretly to its haunt, and never returned. The creature was covered with scales, which were proof against the keenest arrows and darts; and at length the Grandmaster held it his duty to forbid his knights from courting so unequal an encounter. Deodato de Gozon, a knight of the language of Provence, alone failed to respect this prohibition, and resolved

to deliver the island from the monster, or perish. Having often reconnoitred the beast from a distance, he constructed a model of it of wood or pasteboard, and habituated two young bull-dogs to throw themselves under its belly, on a certain cry being given, while he himself, mounted and clad in armour, assailed it with his lance. Having perfected his arrangements, he bestrode his charger, and rode down privately into the marsh, leaving several confidential attendants stationed in a spot from whence they could behold the combat. The monster no sooner beheld him approach, than it ran, with open mouth and eyes darting fire, to devour him. Gozon charged it with his lance, but the impenetrable scales turned aside the weapon; and his steed, terrified at the fierce hissing and abominable effluvium of the creature, became so ungovernable that he had to dismount, and trust to his good sword and his dogs. But the scales of the monster were as proof against his falchion as his lance. With a slap of its tail it dashed him to the earth, and was just opening its voracious jaws to devour him, helmet, hauberk, spurs and all, when his faithful dogs gripped it tightly with their teeth in a vulnerable part of the belly. On this, the knight quickly sprung to his feet, and thrust his sword up to the hilt in a place which had no scales to defend it. The monster, rearing itself in agony, fell with a tremendous hiss on the knight, and again prostrated him in the dust; and though it instantly gasped its last, so prodigious was its size, that Gozon would have been squeezed to death, had not his attendants, seeing the object of their terror deprived of life, made haste to his assistance. They found their master in a swoon; but after they had with great difficulty drawn

him from under the serpent, he began to breathe again, and speedily recovered. The fame of this achievement being bruited in the city, a multitude of people hurried forth to meet him. He was conducted in triumph to the Grandmaster's palace; but that dignitary, heedless of popular acclamation, sternly demanded, wherefore he had violated his orders, and commanded him to be carried to prison. At a subsequent meeting of the Council, he proposed that the culprit should atone for his disobedience with his life; but this severe sentence was mitigated to a deprivation of the habit of the Order. To this degradation he was forced to submit; but in a little time the Grandmaster relented, and not only restored him to his former rank, but loaded him with favours.*

It is unnecessary to point out the fabulous character of this story. The simple truth seems to be, that the knight Deodato de Gozon killed an animal which had excited dread throughout the island, and thereby acquired great renown. Thevenot, in his travels, † describes the effigy of the monster as in existence in his time. It was, he says, larger than that of a horse, the mouth reaching from ear to ear, the teeth, eyes and nostrils, enormous, and the skin of the colour of dust. Traditions of the same kind are prevalent in almost every country of Europe. ‡

* Vertot.

† Edition of 1637.

‡ It is stated by Diodorus Siculus (lib. 5.), that Rhodes being overrun, in ancient times, by enormous serpents, some of which devoured the inhabitants, the oracle of Delos was consulted, and recommended that Phorbas, a warrior of distinction then in Thessaly, should be sent for to destroy them. An embassy was despatched, accordingly, and returned with Phorbas, who exterminated the monsters, and settled in the

The severity of Villeneuve's government, at its commencement, restored the Order for a time to its pristine purity; but gradually his rigour began to abate, and, in the end, complaints were carried to the Pope, that the knights had become negligent of their duties, and left the Turkish corsairs sole possession of the Archipelago and Levant. The Pope, (Clement the Sixth), fretted by these reports, wrote sharply to the Grandmaster, upbraiding the knights for their fine horses, their good cheer, their rich apparel, their services of gold and silver, their hounds and hawks, their avarice, and their inattention to the safety of Christian pilgrims travelling beyond sea. To enforce an immediate reformation, he intimated, that it was proposed to denude the Order of a part of its revenues, for the endowment of a rival institution, as the only way of resuscitating that laudable emulation which had rendered the early Hospitallers and Templars so renowned. He further recommended, that the knights should bestir themselves to arrest the conquests of the Turks, who were preparing to pass the Hellespont and to overrun Romania, to the utter ruin of the Christian faith in that country. To avert this terrible calamity, he had, he said, formed a league with several Christian Princes, for the equipment of a naval armament, sufficiently powerful to sweep the seas; and he called upon the Order of Saint John, as having a richer treasury than any potentate in Europe, to furnish six gallies to act in concert with this fleet.

The Grandmaster, though indignant that his detractors had obtained credence at the court of Avig-

island. It is possible that this ancient tradition may have furnished a groundwork for the legend of Deodato de Gozon.

non, lost no time in obeying the Papal mandate. Rich garments and wines were expressly forbidden ; the knights were restricted to one dish a day ; six gallies were promptly equipped for sea ; and, lastly, the pontiff was formally invited to suggest such re-trenchments as he conceived requisite, and to send commissioners, invested with his apostolical authority, to enforce an exact observance of the new regulations.

The Pope was mollified by this ready obedience ; and the armament, of which he had spoken, having put to sea under the command of a Genoese captain, called Gingarrìa, it was joined by the Rhodian gallies. But the admiral-in-chief was more of a merchant than a warrior ; and the legate of the Holy See, who sailed in the same ship, and, in accordance with Papal policy, enjoyed in reality the supreme command, closely imitated the trafficking Genoese. Gingarrìa's mismanagement becoming known to the Princes of the league, he was superseded, and the squadron confided to John de Biandra, a knight of Rhodes. Biandra commemorated his appointment, by an achievement worthy of the banner under which he fought. Smyrna, a considerable seaport of Anatolia, served at that time as a place of refuge to all the corsairs of the Archipelago ; and it occurred to him, that he could not do a worthier service to Christendom, than storming that nest of hornets. With this view, he embarked a strong body of Rhodian troops, commanded by several chosen knights, and sailed directly into the deep gulf, at the head of which Smyrna lies (1344). Fortune smiled so far on his enterprise, as to put him in possession of the citadel, which commanded the port ; and being promptly reinforced from Rhodes,

the Christians were enabled to establish themselves permanently in it, though the upper town, which was ruinous and uninhabited, and the whole of the adjacent country, remained in the hands of the enemy, who, for upwards of a year, harassed them by incessant attacks. At length, Morbassan, the Turkish general, had recourse to a strategem, in the hope of achieving their expulsion. Affecting to turn the leaguer into a blockade, he retired into the interior of the country with the principal part of his army, leaving his camp in charge of a very insignificant force; whereupon the knights, with their usual impetuosity, forced the intrenchments, and scattered the few remaining Turks without resistance. Inflated by this easy victory, they proceeded to celebrate it on the spot; but, in the midst of their high festival, while the wine-cup circled gaily, and the shout of revelry mingled with the clarion's victorious blast, the atabal of the Infidels sounded a point of war on their flank, and called them to resume the battle. In vain did they try to make a stand against the fierce host which Morbassan brought down on them. Thrown into ruinous disorder by the first onset, the combat became a massacre. The Papal legate, who had incautiously repaired to the field to partake in the general joy, was slain with nearly all his suite; and the few knights, who escaped a similar fate, had infinite difficulty in regaining the shelter of their own battlements. A succession of reinforcement from Rhodes, however, enabled the Order to maintain the castle till the beginning of the fifteenth century, when the hordes of Tamerlane dashed down in blood the Christian banner.

In 1346, the Grandmaster Helion de Villeneuve terminated his honourable career. It is recorded of him,

that he paid all the debts of the Order, strengthened and enlarged the fortifications of the city and island, built a church in honour of the Virgin at his own expense, and left a fund sufficient for the maintenance of two chaplains, to celebrate mass in it daily for the repose of his soul. Several knights aspired to the honour of being nominated his successor; and the Order was divided as to their comparative merits; the elder brethren arguing, that the new governor ought to be a rigid disciplinarian; while the younger desired only a valiant commander to head them in war, and teach them to win riches and glory. It is told by some historians, that among the electors was Deodato de Gozon, the knight who had immortalized himself by slaying the dragon, and who had latterly acted as Villeneuve's lieutenant. On being asked to give his vote, he said, "When I entered this conclave, I made a solemn vow to give my suffrage in favour of the knight whom I should esteem most deserving of this great dignity, and whose intentions seemed to me most calculated to advance the general good. Having gravely considered the present state of Christendom—the perpetual war which we are sworn to wage with the Infidels—and the resolution and vigour necessary to prevent a relaxation in our discipline—I declare that I myself am the man best qualified to be your Grandmaster." He concluded this singular address with a fine harangue on his own virtues, in which, of course, his rencontre with the serpent was duly remembered; and the knights, taken by surprise, and filled with admiration at a mode of proceeding so widely at variance with that which had hitherto been considered becoming in a candidate for the supreme

honour, voted by a majority in his favour. * Pope Clement the Sixth's brief, however, which is dated the 18th of June 1346, puts a contrary construction on the whole affair; for it attests, that, so far from being anxious to obtain the grandmastership, Gozon was with difficulty induced to accept it. † The truth, probably, lies between these statements. † It could scarcely happen, that a man of Gozon's intrepid character could have been either so devoid of modesty or of ambition as they represent him.

The energy with which he entered on the duties of his office, speedily proved to the knights the propriety of their choice. By his individual exertions, he partially revived the maritime league; and prevailed on the Christian princes who comprised it, to place their combined squadrons under John de Biandra, the same Hospitaller who had before so honourably commanded it. This gallant knight lost no time in signaling his appointment, by an action worthy of his renown. He ran down with his little squadron to the mouth of the Dardanelles; and, finding a Turkish flotilla at anchor off the small island of Imbro, fearlessly engaged it. The Turks, surprised and taken at a vantage, were unable to offer effectual resistance. One hundred and eighteen feluccas, or armed barks, were destroyed or taken; but, by dint of skilful management, thirty-two galleys escaped to sea. The Christians afterwards landed a body of troops on the island; and, in accordance with the mode of warfare usual at the time, laid it waste.

In the same year, the Grandmaster received a formal application for assistance from the King of

* Vertot.

† Boisgelin, Chron. Malta.

Lesser Armenia, whose frontiers had been violated by the Egyptian Saracens. Though it was the policy of the Latin Church to encourage nearly as utter a detestation of Christian schismatics, as of the followers of Islam, Gozon was a knight too fond of warlike emprise, to allow the Armenian Prince to become the prey of the Infidels, merely because he and his subjects had espoused the Greek ritual. At his suggestion, the council, to which the matter was submitted, agreed to send the suppliant monarch very considerable succours; and, accordingly, a large fleet was equipped, which carried the flower of the knights, together with a powerful body of stipendiaries, to the Asiatic shore. The point at which they made their descent has escaped history; but, from the fact that the Armenian army made a diversion towards the coast, and that a junction was effected without much difficulty, it in all probability took place somewhere in the Great Gulf of Scanderoon. In the first battle that ensued, the knights, roused by the sight of their ancient adversaries—the barbarians who had mined and burnt them out of their last stronghold in Palestine—in a great measure secured the victory to the Armenian standard. The sight of the well-known banner of Saint John, in the brunt of the conflict, struck surprise and panic into the breasts of the Saracens; nevertheless, they fought long and obstinately; but, when they did at length give way, their discomfiture was complete. The bravest of them perished on the field; and much spoil, and many prisoners, afterwards fell into the hands of the conquerors. This victory was followed by the recovery of all the towns which the invaders had wrested from Armenia (1347); and the Knights of Rhodes did not withdraw from the

war, until they had totally freed the country from Saracenic aggression.

As this expedition, conjoined with the force which the Order was obliged to maintain at sea, in terms of the maritime treaty to which it was a party, pressed hard on its finances, the Grandmaster conceived it his duty to call upon those commanders who had not paid up their responsions, to remit them without delay. In particular, he wrote to the Commanders of Sweden, Denmark and Norway, peremptorily charging them to make the requisite contributions, and at the same time draft the youngest of their brethren for the public service in Rhodes. He also took occasion to reproach them with having furnished neither money nor men since the loss of the Holy Land. * Shortly afterwards, the Venetians and Genoese having declared war against each other, the combined squadrons separated; and the league which had been framed for the protection of the Levant was dissolved. Many knights of Rhodes, led away by patriotic attachments, and in violation of the vow which bound them to make war only against the enemies of Christ, engaged in the quarrel of the rival republics. The Pope sharply reprimanded the Grandmaster for this dereliction, which the latter justly represented as the offence of individuals, not of the Order; yet some years afterwards, Clement's successor Innocent the Sixth, with an inconsistency not unusual in the occupants of Saint Peter's chair, strenuously urged the knights to interfere in the intestine feuds which then desolated Constantinople. But the Grandmaster refused to engage in a civil war between Christian princes; and, finding himself

* Bosio.

harassed by the intractability of many of the European Commanders, who persisted in withholding their responsions, to the great dilapidation of the treasury, he requested permission to resign a dignity which had become burdensome to a man of his advanced age. The Pope, sensible of his meritorious services, declined at first to consent to his retirement; but a second application was attended with more success. Before the license for a new election reached Rhodes, however, death liberated the Grandmaster from the cares of mortality (1353). The admiration and tears of his brethren, and of all the inhabitants of the island, followed him to the grave; and the monument that was reared over it bore this inscription, "HERE LIES THE VANQUISHER OF THE DRAGON!" *

Peter de Cornillan, a knight of the language of Provence, was elevated to the vacant dignity. He was a man of an austere habit, and of a severe morality; and, like several of his immediate predecessors, he instantly set about reforming abuses, and reviving regulations which were in danger of falling into disuse. While he was thus creditably employed, another attempt was made to despoil the Order of those possessions which had devolved to it on the suppression of the Templars; but though it had many secret enemies at the court of Avignon, they failed in their endeavours to subvert its reputation to the desired extent. Still, the calumnies which they propagated rendered the Pontiff suspicious and captious. The rapid progress which the Turkish arms were making to the northward of the Hellespont, made him tremble for the safety of Italy, and

* Vertot.

inclined him to lend a willing ear to those courtiers who represented the Knights of Saint John as indolent, luxurious, and negligent of the Christian interests. Persuaded that they required to be removed from their insular fastnesses to a more exposed situation, where they would have less time for sinful dalliance, and more hard shocks with the Infidels, he despatched a special mission to Rhodes, headed by the Knight Juan Fernandes de Heredia, Grand Prior of Castile, his confidant and favourite, with powers to submit to the Chapter a proposition to that effect. His Holiness recommended that Rhodes should be abandoned, and the chief Hospitium transferred to some nook of the neighbouring continent, he cared not whether in Syria or Anatolia,* where the knights might rekindle such a flame in the heart of the enemy's territory, as would divert him from extending his European conquests, and direct all his attention to securing his Asiatic domination. This was either the scheme of a dotard incapable of foresight, or of a hypocrite who was anxious to betray the Order to its ruin. In their seagirt territory, their shores bristling with forts, their creeks crowded with war-gallies, the knights were a thorn in the flank of the Ottoman, which all his might, puissant as he had become, could scarcely eradicate. But, on the continent of Asia Minor, they would have been his certain prey, at whatever time he chose to direct his fanatical legions against them.

This proposition was accompanied by a threat, that if the knights did not devote themselves to certain death in the manner he pointed out, it would place him un-

* Vertot.—Boisgelin says, "The Continent of *Europe*."

der the necessity of employing forcible measures to secure obedience; and that, in particular, he would feel it his duty to deprive them of the estates of the Templars, which he would employ for the endowment of a new military order, whose zeal should either excite their emulation, or become their reproach. The Grandmaster, unwilling to exasperate the Pontiff, and equally averse to compromise the existence of the Order, demanded time to consult a general Chapter. To this his Holiness assented; but ordered that the assembly should meet within his immediate jurisdiction. The Grandmaster did not live to see the settlement of this harassing debate. He had only been eighteen months superior of the Order when he died.

Roger de Pins, a knight of Provence, succeeded Cornillan. He was a member of the same illustrious Languedocian family from which Odo de Pins the twenty-third Grandmaster, and Gerard de Pins, the Vicar-general who repulsed the armament of Orcan, second Sultan of the Ottoman line, were descended. The assembly, convoked to discuss the papal proposition regarding the removal of the Order, having met at Avignon, brothers William de Mailly Grand Prior of France, and William Chalûs, Grand Prior of Auvergne, were nominated presidents in the Grandmaster's name. Happily, before the Chapter met, a new whim seized the Pontiff, who was brought to believe that it would be more for the protection of Italy and the security of Christendom, if he could establish the Knights of Rhodes in the Morea, as a barrier to the barbarian torrent which had already flooded the greater part of Thrace. Two Christian princes, Robert, titular-emperor of Constantinople, and James of Savoy, laid claim to the

Morea ; but while their mutual pretensions were in wordy dependence, the Turk hovered ready to pounce on the disputed soil. The knights relished this proposal nearly as little as they did that which recommended their banishment to the continent of Asia, and exercised all their craft to spin out the preliminary negotiations. In the end, James of Savoy dying before any definite arrangement was affected, the design was virtually abandoned.

Though, by skilful diplomacy, the project entertained by the Pope to root the Order out of Rhodes was rendered abortive, he managed, by an act of mendacious usurpation, to invest himself with one of the most important privileges enjoyed by the Grandmaster. Heredia, the same Arragonese knight who had carried to Rhodes the unpalatable proposition of removal, had wormed himself so deeply into the Pontiff's favour, that the latter exerted all his authority to aggrandize him ; and, after loading him with honours at his own expense, nominated him, in breach of the privileges of the Order, Grand Prior of the Pories of Castile and Saint Giles. This innovation exasperated the whole body of knights. They had reason to suspect that the ambitious Arragonian had projected the extraordinary scheme which had just fallen to the ground, with the ultimate view of getting himself installed Bailiff of Rhodes, with sovereign powers, through the papal influence ; and they therefore strenuously protested against his enrichment, as an indication that the Pope meant to subvert their constitution. The Grandmaster tried to bribe Heredia to resign the commanderies he had thus illegally monopolized, by naming him his lieutenant on this side the sea ; but the insatiable Spaniard, not only retained what he had already got, but made his new

commission an authority to intercept the responsions of other commanders. A subsequent attempt was made to prosecute this false knight, as an usurper of the revenues of the Order ; but the secret machinations of the Pope prevented any ulterior proceedings, and ultimately secured him in all his dignities. All that the Grandmaster could effect, was the enactment of certain regulations calculated to prevent, for the time to come, a similar mal-appropriation of the dues of the Order. In the same Chapter it was decreed, that no serving brother should thereafter be awarded the cross of knighthood—a rule which had been allowed to fall into partial desuetude. The Grandmaster did not long survive the dissolution of this assembly. The inhabitants of Rhodes bewailed his death as a public calamity ; and from the circumstance of his having, at a time when the island was devastated by pestilence and famine, devoted his whole income, and even sold his furniture and plate, to relieve the indigent portion of the community, the honourable title of Almsgiver descended on him in his grave.

Raymond Berenger, a knight of the language of Provence, succeeded to the vacant superiority (1365). He was a native of Dauphiny, and had in his veins the blood of kings—whether Italian or Catalonian, is a point which his biographers have not been able to determine. He was an honourable and intrepid soldier ; and, scarcely had he attained the supreme command, when he was presented with a fitting opportunity for chivalrous daring. Corsairs, equipped in the harbours of Egypt, harassed the Christian flag in every corner of the Levant ; and finding that they constantly eluded the pursuit of his war-gallies, the Grandmaster agreed, in concert with the King of

Cyprus, to fit out an armament sufficiently large to follow them even into the port of Alexandria. A fleet of nearly an hundred vessels, great and small, was collected, and a body of stipendiary troops, chiefly drawn from France, and commanded by the chosen chivalry of Saint John, were embarked. The Pope alone (Urban the Fifth) was intrusted with the destination of the armament, which the King of Cyprus and the Grandmaster headed in person. In five days after weighing anchor from Cyprus it arrived on the Egyptian coast, when the troops debarked, and, suddenly presenting themselves at the gates of Alexandria, attempted to take that city by scalade. But the inhabitants, though taken by surprise, and greatly startled to see the standard of the Cross unfurled at the base of their ramparts, were too numerous, and the garrison too brave, to fall by a *coup-de-main*. The war-blast of the Christian trumpet brought thousands of soldiers and citizens to defend the walls. Stationed in firm phalanxes on the parapet, and armed with spears and javelins, they hurled back the assailants into the ditch, where they were either crushed by huge stones, or transpierced by arrows. Fire too, and boiling oil, were flung into the midst of the storming ranks; and many soldiers, enveloped in flames and shrieking with intolerable agony, fled from the combat, and cast themselves headlong into the water to quench the flames. But the knights had come to the battle, prepared for a fierce resistance and great bloodshed. Animated by the ancient war-cry of their Order—the first time that the majority of them had heard it raised at the foot of a Saracen rampart—they persisted in the assault, and, mounting over the slain, leaped upon the parapet, and from thence into the town. Massacre and spoliation followed; and yet,

after all, barely half the city was won. The greater part of the inhabitants strongly intrenched themselves in the lower town; and the Christian commanders, having intelligence brought them that the Sultan of Egypt was advancing at the head of a powerful army, held it prudent to abandon their conquest, and betake themselves to their ships with the vast booty they had become possessed of. Having set fire to all the Saracen vessels in the port, and embarked such prisoners as they cared to carry away with them, they sailed for their own insular fastnesses, which they regained without disaster. In this expedition a hundred Hospitallers lost their lives.

The Grandmaster did not return from the perils of war to enjoy uninterrupted tranquillity in his palace. The same intractability on the part of the European commanders which had sent his immediate predecessor down in sorrow to the grave, rendered his duties peculiarly harassing and ungracious. In vain did he require these defaulters to pay up their responsions. They treated his authority with contempt, and employed the revenues of their commanderies in purchasing the countenance and protection of the princes in whose dominions they were situated, and in enriching their own families. Such of them as made remittances to Rhodes, affected to regard them either as arbitrary alms, or as special donations. To crown the Grandmaster's distress, disputes broke out between the languages of Provence and Italy, and the wranglers contumaciously refused to submit their differences to his judgment. The spirit of Berenger was broken by this contempt of his jurisdiction; and, impressed with an idea that the Order required a man of greater capacity and vigour than himself to head it, he made the Pope a tender of his

resignation. But the Pontiff, who knew his worth, refused to countenance his abdication; and, to reduce the refractory commanders to subjection, he summoned them to account for their conduct before a general assembly at Avignon (1373). This assembly, which the Grandmaster was not required to attend by reason of his great age, first gave judgment between the Provençal and Italian Knights, who were reconciled rather by an amicable adjustment of their differences, than by a rigorous decision. It was subsequently enacted, pursuant to a memorial from Rhodes, that no knight should enjoy more than one grand commandery, or two small ones; and that all responsions should be remitted annually on pain of removal from the command. Several other regulations calculated to strengthen the Grandmaster's authority, were added to the statutes; but death prevented Berenger from benefiting by them. He lived, however, long enough to learn that they had received the Pope (Gregory the Eleventh's) approbation.

His successor was Robert de Julliac, Grand Prior of France, who was elected in absence (1374), being then resident at his priory, from which he instantly hastened to Avignon, to throw himself at the Pope's feet. His first act was to supersede all the refractory knights who held cis-marine commanderies. His next was taking upon himself and his Order the property and defence of the castle and lower town of Smyrna, which had devolved on the Pontiff as the virtual conquest of his legate, achieved by the confederated force which John de Briandra had led against it. It was with great reluctance, however, that the Grandmaster acceded to the latter arrangement. He argued, that the charge was not only

perilous, but burdensome in a pecuniary point of view, beyond the means of the Order. The Pope answered, that its peril ought to be a recommendation to the Knights of Rhodes, and that, as to the expense, he would assign an annual sum leviable on the tithes of Cyprus to defray it. On these grounds, he enjoined the Grandmaster and Council to throw a sufficient garrison into Smyrna, under the pain of excommunication; and with this injunction Robert de Julliac departed, to assume the reins in his insular dominion. At Rhodes, his martial port, his dignified urbanity, and his impartial administration of justice, restored peace and concord. It was resolved by the Council to obey the Pope's edict regarding Smyrna, though they considered it little other than sending so many knights to certain death; but the most ungracious part of their duty was removed, by the magnanimity with which a more than sufficient number volunteered to undertake the defence of the new appanage.

In 1375, the Grandmaster having intimated to the Pope, that the Turkish Emperor, Amurath the First, was about to assail the stronghold of the Order with a mighty armament, a reinforcement of five hundred knights, drafted from the European commanderies, and having each a squire or serving brother in attendance, arrived in the island. But the cloud that had gathered on the Infidel coast burst in another direction; and the knights had leisure to renew those bitter disputations which too often disunited them. Symptoms of revolt against the Grandmaster's authority simultaneously developed themselves in England, Portugal, and Castile. Robert d'Alri, Alvarez Gonsalvo, and Sancho de Sumassa, Grand Priors of these languages, being resident

at their priories, and upheld in their contumacy by their respective sovereigns, openly refused to remit any more responsions to the chief hospitium of the Order. The Prior of England defended his disobedience, on the ground that the Grandmaster had injured him, by conferring a commandery within his jurisdiction on a Scottish knight; and his sovereign, Edward the Third, who conceived himself affronted by the same act, not only gave him his support, but confiscated the revenues of all the commanderies in his dominions. A threat of Papal excommunication, however, brought the Prior back to his duty, and removed the sequestration. The Prior of Castile was intimidated by a similar menace; but the Prior of Portugal was proof against all the Pontiff's fulminations, and, though formally cited to repair to Avignon, in order to be stripped of the knightly dignity, four years elapsed before he returned to his obedience.

The Grandmaster Robert de Julliac died in 1376, having enjoyed the superiority little more than two years; and the Chapter chose Juan Fernandes de Heredia, Grand Prior of Castile, Arragon, and Saint Giles, in his stead. This was the same arrogant and ambitious knight, who, through the iniquitous partiality of Pope Innocent the Sixth, had obtained an obnoxious plurality of dignities; to the manifest injury of the whole Order. Policy, more than respect, and an indirect exercise of Papal influence, directed the Council in its choice of him as Grandmaster. He stood nearly as high in the favour of Gregory the Eleventh, who then occupied Saint Peter's chair, as he had done in that of Innocent; and the electors foresaw that his intimacy with the Pontiff, under whom he held several offices of authority, and

his knowledge of European diplomacy, would greatly advantage the Order. Descended of a noble Arragonian family, he was a man of a noble port, gifted with great powers of insinuation, a skilful negotiant, and a brave soldier, as he had repeatedly proved on the decks of the Rhodian gallees. But ambition and avarice stained his reputation, and long rendered him a sort of outlaw to his Order. During his voluntary exile at Avignon, he was employed by the Pope to mediate between Philip of Valois King of France, and Edward the Third of England, immediately prior to the memorable battle of Crecy (1346), in which he was personally engaged, as a French partisan. Philip's charger being killed under him in the battle, Heredia dismounted and supplied the unhorsed monarch with his own steed. He then headed a small body of infantry, which for some time longer kept its ground against the victorious English. At length the rout became general, and the Hospitaller, grievously wounded in four different places, was borne from the field. It is told of him, that having learned, while his wounds were yet green, that the English leaders reviled him as a false knight, and a violator of the laws of nations, for having, in total disregard of his character of ambassador, joined the battle, he was no sooner able to reseat himself in his saddle, than he sent a herald to the English camp, and challenged to a single combat, any warrior who felt disposed to maintain the calumny at the point of his lance. There were knights in abundance in the English ranks who would have been proud to meet him on his own terms; but their King forbade the duel, by declaring that the Hospitaller had notified to him before the armies joined, that he had the Pope's permission to fight against the prince who

should reject the pacific overtures which he was authorized to propose. Some historians describe Heredia as the negotiant who afterwards brought the two Kings to agree to a truce; and so highly was Pope Innocent pleased with his conduct on that occasion, that, on his return to Avignon, he made him governor of that city, and of the Comte Venaissin.

Heredia was at Avignon, when he received the news of his election to the Grandmastership; and, perceiving his credit at that court on the wane, he made immediate arrangements for retiring, without delay, to the honourable asylum which had opened to him. To render his advent at Rhodes as imposing as possible, and justify the choice of the Chapter, he equipped nine gallies at his own expense, in which he embarked a strong body of stipendiary troops, whom he enlisted in behalf of the Order. He was on the point of setting sail for his insular principality, when the Pope, whose mind was burdened with a mighty design connected with his own regality, expressed a wish that he would not depart until it was brought to fruition. This design was the restoration of the Papal court to the Roman capital. Ever since the pontificate of Clement the Fifth, the persecutor of the Templars, who was little other than the prisoner of Philip the Fair, the occupants of Saint Peter's chair had made Avignon their place of residence. In 1348, Clement the Sixth purchased the sovereignty of Avignon from the Sicilian crown; yet, notwithstanding it thus became an appanage of the church, many Catholic writers term the seventy years which the Pontiffs passed in France, the "Babylonish Captivity of the Holy See." Rome, in the interim, had been governed by a magistrate who took the title of Se-

nator, and twelve citizens called Bannerets, from the different banners which they displayed in their several districts.* The powers of these magnates were absolute; and they left the Pontiff only the titular dignity of sovereign. It was their design to establish a commonwealth on the ruins of the Papal supremacy, but the spirit of ancient Rome was extinct; and the mongrel race which had sprung up in her palaces, were incapable of daring the struggle which such a demonstration would have occasioned. They were Romans only in the name—the polluted scum of the barbarians who, in later times, had rolled deluge after deluge from the forests of the North, into the Italian plains. To further curtail the patrimony of Saint Peter, the Florentines invaded it, and displayed their banner in the very vicinage of the Eternal City; nor was it till Gregory fulminated the loudest thunders of the church against them, and rendered them proscribed in every port of Christendom, that they humbled themselves at his feet. The Pontiff was so exasperated against these invaders, that it required the intervention of Saint Catharine of Sienna, a nun famous in every corner of Italy for her piety and miracles, and other devout personages, to make him remove his ban. Saint Catharine presented herself before him, not only as the envoy of the Florentines, but of the Romans, who, sick of the petty tyrants who ruled them, and impoverished by the translation of the Papal court, were most anxious to allure the head of the church back to the Vatican. While Gregory yet hesitated, it was hinted to him, that the Romans were meditating the election of an Anti-pope. This intelli-

gence decided the question; and he forthwith left Avignon for Marseilles, to embark there on board the Grandmaster's galley, which he had detained to convey him to the Tiber.

The embarkation took place with great pomp; and the fleet stood out to sea, under the immediate command of the Grandmaster. In his suite went the Priors of Saint Giles, England and Rome, with many other knights-commanders of the Order. The Grandmaster, distinguished by his majestic mein, and the length and whiteness of his beard, stationed himself at the rudder of the Pope's galley, while his knights stood round him in deferential attendance. A tempest came on before the squadron had cleared the coast of Provence; but Heredia, who had acquired an intimate knowledge of the nautical art in the Rhodian galleys, steered his way safely through the Tuscan Sea to the port of Ostia, where the Pope debarked. His Holiness was received in his capital with shouts of joy; and the Grandmaster had the honour of replanting the standard of the church on its fame-hallowed walls. This done, he re-embarked with all his knights, and stood away for the seas of Greece. He was pursuing his course prosperously off the Morea, when a Venetian squadron hove in sight, on its way to recapture Patras, a town at the entrance of the Gulf of Lepanto, which the Turks had a short time before taken from the republic. The Venetian Admiral entreated the Grandmaster to join him in the enterprise, as the most acceptable service he could render to the Christian cause; and, hurried away by his love of martial adventure, Heredia, though prudence pointed towards Rhodes, embraced it with joy.

The town of Patras was carried by scalade at the

first onset ; but the castle being strongly garrisoned, and rendered almost impregnable by art, made a stout resistance. It was found necessary to invest it in a regular manner ; and, in the vigorous attacks that followed, many knights were slain. At last, the battering engines having breached the walls, the Grandmaster, impatient for the assault, sprung singly, sword in hand, to the top of the rampart. The first foeman who obstructed his progress was the Infidel commander ; and a fierce combat ensued between them. While his knights were yet clambering up the breach, Heredia slew his antagonist, and cut off his head. Victory followed ; and the whole garrison were sacrificed.

Had the Grandmaster remained satisfied with this achievement, he might have resumed his course to Rhodes in triumph ; but inordinate ambition, the great blemish in his character, combined with the laudations of the Venetian Admiral, stimulated him to persevere in the career of conquest on which he had so adventitiously entered. From Patras he advanced to Corinth ; but while engaged in a reconnoissance in the environs of that place, he unfortunately fell into an ambuscade, which made him captive, and cut his small escort to pieces. For a time, the Infidels regarded him as a humble knight ; but his rank becoming known to them through some deserters, they sent him, under a strong guard, to the castle of Corinth (1378).

This disaster filled the Christian armament with dismay. The Grand Priors of Saint Giles, England, and Rome, no sooner learned that their superior was in durance, than, with the Venetian Admiral's consent, they offered Patras for his ransom. The Turks rejected the offer, and proudly remarked, that,

in less time than the Christians had taken to reduce that city, they would win it back again. The knights, conceiving their renown would be indelibly stained if they left their Grandmaster in captivity, renewed their offer, with the addition of a very considerable sum of money; while the three Priors nobly proposed themselves as hostages till the whole should be liquidated. This proposition met with some favour; but when it was communicated to Heredia, he magnanimously opposed it, on the argument, that he was an old man, whom it was much better to leave to die in bondage, than to deprive the Order of three younger and more serviceable knights. In vain did the Hospitallers, who were intrusted with the negotiation, endeavour to gain his consent to the exchange. His resolution was inflexible; nor would he even agree that his ransom should at any time come out of the treasury of the Order. "If a ransom must be paid," said he, "my family have received wealth enough at my hands to give me this proof of their gratitude."

Three years elapsed before the captive knight was redeemed; and, during that period, he lingered in a close prison in the fastnesses of Albania. As he desired, he owed his redemption solely to his own family, which paid every ducat of his ransom.

CHAPTER XI.

Contumacy of the Cis-marine Commanders—Death and Character of Heredia—Succession of Philibert de Naillac—Expedition to Hungary—Battle of Nicopolis—Wars of Tamerlane—Expulsion of the Knights from Smyrna—Acquisition of the Castle of Saint Peter—Predatory Expedition to the Coasts of Syria and Palestine—Death of Philibert de Naillac—War in Cyprus—Repulse of the Egyptians from Rhodes—Fall of Negropont—D' Aubusson elected Grandmaster.

IN 1381, Heredia's chains were struck off; and, worn with the privations and indignities of a long imprisonment, he arrived at Rhodes, and assumed the supreme command. During his captivity, the affairs of the Order had been administered by Brother Bertrand de Flotte, who enacted several judicious regulations, calculated to circumscribe the powers of the European commanders. The Grandmaster soon found, that, though liberated from Turkish thrall, he was not destined to repose, for the remainder of his days, on a bed of roses. His patron, Gregory the Eleventh, had terminated his pontificate amid intrigues and tumults; while the ruffian populace of Rome had compelled the conclave of cardinals to nominate, at the dagger's point, an Italian prelate to the vacant dignity. This pontiff took the name of Urban the Sixth; but no sooner were the cardinals enabled to reach a place of secu-

riety, than they announced to Christendom that their votes had been compulsory, and proceeded to elect a new Pope, who was crowned as Clement the Seventh, and fixed his residence at Avignon, while Urban abode at Rome. The church being thus divided in its allegiance, the sanctified rivals proceeded, in virtue of their supremacy, to anathematize each other with all the virulence that usually characterized Papal denunciations. All the princes of Europe were more or less involved in the dispute; and, in these circumstances, it was impossible that an Order so constituted as that of Saint John, could escape the schismatical differences to which it gave rise. Through the instrumentality of the Grandmaster, the whole convent of Rhodes declared in favour of Clement; but all the knights in Italy and England, and several commanders in Germany, acknowledged Urban, who proclaimed the superiority of the Order forfeited; and, not being able to prevail on the Chapter to proceed to a new election, named Richard Carraccioli, Prior of Capua, Grandmaster, on his own authority. Thus, while two Pontiffs contested Saint Peter's Chair, two Grandmasters claimed the government of the Order of Saint John; but though Carraccioli continued, during his life, to enjoy the title of Grandmaster in Italy and England, he was never recognised as their legitimate superior by the great body of the knights; and when he died (1395), Boniface the Ninth, who had succeeded Urban in the pontificate, contented himself with affecting to regard the chief dignity as vacant; and, without prejudice to Heredia, merely nominated Boniface de Caramandre, his own kinsman, governor, with the title of Lieutenant.

Notwithstanding the many efforts made to enforce

punctual remittances from the European commanders, the Order continued to be annually defrauded of responsions to a great amount. The schism of which we have just spoken, was considered by many of the priors and commanders as a sufficient apology for their non-remissions; and in northern Europe, in particular, several of these officers scarcely deigned to maintain even the semblance of a correspondence with the council at Rhodes. This contumacy almost beggared the treasure-chest; and it was found necessary to contract loans on the security of the revenues of the island, to the utter dilapidation of that source of income. In these circumstances, the council prevailed on the Grandmaster to undertake a personal mission to Avignon, for the purpose of engaging the Pope once more in the correction of these abuses. At the same time, with a view to obviate all hazard of his forgetting the interests of the Order, as he had done on a former occasion, and fixing himself permanently at the papal court, they required him to take a solemn oath that he would be a faithful custodier of the public treasure, and that he would not exercise the power of filling up such dignities as became vacant during his absence. Time and adversity, two bitter counsellors, had taught the Grandmaster the vanity of all human supremacy. He was no longer the arrogant and ambitious knight, who, secure in the favour of the Head of the Christian church, had contemned the menaces of his exasperated brethren; but a gray-haired man, who had sunk the spirit of self-aggrandizement in a generous anxiety for the common weal, and who desired to efface, by the uprightness of his magisterial acts, the rebellious disposition which he had displayed

when he was but a subordinate functionary of the Order.

Peter de Culant, Marshal of the Order, was invested with the powers of Lieutenant prior to the Grandmaster's departure. This done, Heredia, accompanied by Bertrand de Flotte, Buisson, Prior of Rhodes, Eston de Slegleolts, and William de Fontenai, all knights of unblemished reputation, sailed for France. The Pope received him graciously, and pledged himself to look strictly after the interests of the Order; but the Grandmaster saw that the aspect of the times did not encourage the employment of harsh measures to reclaim the recusant commanders; and it was agreed that persuasion alone should be adopted. Several Chapters were held at Valencia, Avignon, and in the Castellany of Emposta in Spain, at all of which the Grandmaster presided, and, by his eloquence, prevailed on many of the defaulters to pay up their arrears, and in some instances to repair to Rhodes, to fulfil their term of service. Still these supplies were barely a tithe of the responsions that were exigible; and, to make up the defalcation, and place Rhodes in a condition capable of withstanding an attack which the Sultan of the Turks menaced, the Grandmaster sacrificed a great part of the vast estate which, in violation of the statutes, he had amassed in the days of his contumacy. These were among the last acts of Heredia's life. He died at Avignon in the month of March 1396, at a very advanced age, having governed the Order with great wisdom for nearly twenty years. His remains were carried to the church of Capsa, in Arragon, which he himself had founded, and which became afterwards the head of a bailiwick.

The character of Heredia is one of the most anomalous portraitures that occurs in the annals of the Order. While a subordinate member of the fraternity, he scouted its laws, and usurped its dignities; but no sooner was he placed at its head, than he stood forward a new man, and became its father and benefactor. Ambition, the crime of great minds, conjoined with a passionate love for two orphan-children whom he had left comparatively destitute in Spain, when he first became a soldier-monk, were the impulses that betrayed him into a breach of his knightly duties. The one prompted him to sacrifice principle to power—the other, to amass wealth, of which the constitution of his Order rendered him nominally disqualified to be the possessor. But when these dominant passions were propitiated—when the highest honours of his Order descended on him, and the objects of his paternal solicitude were advanced by his care to be as wealthy as by birth they were noble—the natural grandeur of his character shone out with a steady and dazzling lustre; and the sun of his renown, which had been so darkly clouded at its rising, set in a blaze of light.

Philibert de Naillac, Grand Prior of Aquitain, succeeded Heredia as Grandmaster. He was esteemed a knight of consummate prudence and valour; and the aspect of the times warned the Chapter, that no candidate who lacked either of these qualifications ought to be advanced to the supreme command. Turkey had swollen to a mighty empire, whose frontiers were the Euphrates and the Danube—the Steppes of Tartary and the Mediterranean Sea; and so terrible had Bajazet the First, its regnant Sultan, rendered himself, by his fierce energy and the rapidity of his movements, that the

epithet of *Ilderim*, or Lightning, was appended to his name. In the midst of this vast dominion, Constantinople stood solitary and disconsolate, with the Cross still displayed on its battlements; and the conqueror made it his boast, that, when he had ravaged Hungary, the frontiers of which he had repeatedly scathed, he would pass into Italy, plant his standard on the Capitol, and feed his war-horse with oats on Saint Peter's altar. This threat impelled the Pope to preach a new crusade; and, through his exertions, a powerful league was formed against the Ottoman ravager, the principal parties to which were, Charles the Sixth of France, Philip the Hardy of Burgundy, the Republic of Venice, and the Knights of Rhodes. Manuel Palæologus, the Greek Emperor, also affixed his name to this famous treaty; but, hemmed in on every side by the Infidels, he was scarcely able to send a single cohort into the field. France furnished the flower of the troops that marshalled for the war, and sent forth at their head no less than five princes of the blood-royal— together with the Sire de Coucy, one of the best captains of Christendom, her constable, her admiral, her marshal, and a thousand bannered knights.

In 1396, this crusade, which was destined for the special defence of Hungary, began its march. In its passage through Austria, it was joined by the Hospitaller, Frederic Count of Zollern, Grand Prior of Germany, at the head of the German knights. A strong squadron, composed of Greek, Venetian, and Rhodian galleys, under the command of Thomas Mocenigno, sailed at the same time into the Euxine, and took its station off the mouth of the Danube, where the Grandmaster of Saint John, and the chivalry of his Order, who were on board of it,

debarked, and proceeded to join the Hungarian prince. Sigismund, who knew that he could not find stauncher friends in adversity, received them with marked distinction. The Grandmaster was requested to remain constantly near his person; and he declared to the knights, that when the shock of battle came, he would place himself at their head.

Bajazet allowed the Christians to marshal unmolested in the Hungarian marshes. He anticipated that disunion or pestilence would ultimately stand his friend; and was only careful that the Christian leaders should remain ignorant of his motions, so that, when he burst upon them, he might, consonant to the cognomen in which he gloried, strike them like a lightning flash. The crusaders, deceived by this quiescence, boldly entered Bulgaria, and obtained several trivial advantages; which so inflated them, that the Hungarian monarch, seeing himself at the head of an hundred thousand men, sixty thousand of whom were cavalry, boasted that he would not only drive the Turks beyond the Hellespont, but that, if the sky should fail, his soldiers were numerous enough to uphold it on their lances.* In this spirit he invested Nicopolis, a strong town, situated on a hill on the right bank of the Danube, and defended by a numerous garrison, under the command of Dagamberg, one of Bajazet's most redoubted captains. This warrior soon taught the boasters, that, however rapidly they might over-run the open country, his janizaries were invincible in a walled fastness. Combats took place daily, and the Christian leaders beheld many of their bravest soldiers fall under the Turkish javelins. Still their fatal security in

* Bonfinius, *Decades Rerum Hungaricarum.*

their own prowess remained undiminished. The young chivalry of France, proud of their illustrious names, and persuaded that, with their spears, they would render their march to Constantinople a triumphal pageant, contemned discipline, and filled the camp with all manner of debauchery. In the midst of their dalliance and drunkenness, whilst the gayest and most thoughtless of them were revelling in the pleasures of a banquet, several soldiers, who had straggled to a distance from the camp, returned in great haste with intelligence, that Bajazet, whom they believed in Anatolia, was advancing with his whole army. The Marshal de Boucicault, a famous warrior, put so little faith in this intelligence, that he threatened to crop the ears of the mauraders who had brought it; but the appearance of the Turkish vanguard soon convinced him of its truth, and surprise and tumult prevailed in the Christian quarters.

The French leader, John Count of Nevers, eldest son of the Duke of Burgundy, no sooner beheld the Turkish squadrons emerge from the woods into the plain, than he gave his knights orders to mount, and advance to meet them; and the cavaliers, throwing down the wine-cup, hastily braced on their armour, and vaulted into the saddle. But the King of Hungary, accustomed to Turkish warfare, entreated the Count not to expend the valour of his knights on the militia who covered the plain, and whom the Sultan had placed in the van, as the refuse of his army, but reserve it for the shock of the regular cohorts, who would dash fresh into the battle when these devoted wretches were destroyed. It was the wont of the Hungarians, he added, to oppose to this Asiatic militia a force equally worthless; and he earnestly besought the French leader

and his knights to remain spectators of the conflict, until they could encounter enemies worthy of their renown. The Sire de Coucy, an illustrious soldier, and the Admiral John de Vienne, another veteran knight, strenuously supported this advice; but the Constable, Count D'Eu, affronted that he had not been first asked for his counsel, expressed himself strongly against it, protesting that they would be dishonoured forever, if the scum of Hungary were permitted to take precedence of the chivalry of France.* The junior knights hailed the Count's protestation with acclaim, and, hurried away by a false emulation, the Count of Nevers gave way to their clamour. No sooner did these headstrong and intemperate men receive his assent to their leading the onset, than, with a policy disgraceful to the Christian name, they massacred all their Turkish prisoners, on the pretence that they might embarrass them in the action.† This foul act consummated, they raised the war-cry of their country, and fiercely charged the van of the Turkish battle.

The Turks had thrown up a sort of palisade, formed of sharp stakes, in front of their position; and, to surmount this obstacle, the French cavaliers had to dismount and break their ranks. Some confusion ensued; but the moment they forced the barrier, they sprung back into their saddles, and, reforming their line, rode with lance-in-rest impetuously down on the Turkish rabble immediately opposed to them. The wretched slaves who composed it, either suffered themselves to be cut in pieces without resistance, or sought safety in flight. All their Emperor required of them was, to weary the hands

* Froissart.

† Hist. Anonyme de St Denys.

of their destroyers, who would afterwards be the more certain of falling under the scimitars of his chosen squadrons. The French knights, having scattered these poor peasants, next found themselves opposed to the janizaries, who sustained their charge with a valour nothing inferior to their own; but, after a long and obstinate conflict, the French lances pierced the thickest of the Turkish phalanxes. Confusion and dismay prevailed along the Infidel line; and the formidable janizaries, leaving, if we may credit history, ten thousand men on the field, * retired behind a powerful body of cavalry that advanced to their succour. The approach of this force excited no panic in the Christian ranks. The French knights felt secure of victory; and having extended their line, in order to obviate the hazard of being outflanked, every man-at-arms threw himself among the Turks, with that martial impetuosity and pride which has in all ages characterized the soldiery of France. The Hungarians took no share in the engagement. They remained at a distance, cautious admirers of bravery which they could not imitate; and other five thousand Turks were transfixed by the Gallic lances.

This triple triumph flushed the victors with conscious invincibility. Covered with glory, to use an expression which is naturalized in their country, they held it dishonourable to their prowess that a single fugitive should escape, and ardently demanded leave to pursue the routed Turks beyond a neighbouring eminence, over which they had directed their flight. The veterans, Enguerrand de Coucy and John de Vienne, entreated them to give their horses breath,

* Hist. Anonyme de St Denys.

and allow the Hungarians to follow up the victory; but the headstrong gallants were not to be restrained. Burying their spurs in the flanks of their panting chargers, they galloped forward in disorder to the brow of the hill, beyond which the Turkish cavalry had disappeared. There they beheld, not the remains of the host which they had discomfited, but a new battle-array sprung up, as if by magic, consisting of forty thousand horse, the flower of Bajazet's army—and, in its centre, the redoubted Sultan, encompassed by a forest of glittering spears. The French cavaliers comprehended in an instant the jeopardy of their situation. That irresistible ardour which had hitherto supported them, was subdued by the first glimpse of the Ottoman's vast reserve. They turned to fly, but a body of Turkish cavalry intercepted their retreat, and the cry of battle rose wilder than ever from the Ottoman ranks. Three thousand Frenchmen were taken prisoners, including the Count of Nevers, the Count de la Marche, the Prince of Bar, the Marshal Boucicault, and the Sire de Coucy. The rest were cut in pieces to a man, and among them fell John de Vienne, Admiral of France. That gray-haired warrior, seeing the day lost, made an effort to escape from the field; but suddenly bethinking himself, that it ill became his renown to survive such a slaughter, he turned his horse's head once more towards the enemy, and, followed by half a score of horsemen, whom his example had reanimated, pierced into the thickest of the enemy's squadrons in search of an honourable death. He lived to see all his companions hewn down at his side, and then, covered with wounds, fell dead on the same spot where they had perished.*

* Froissart.

Had the Hungarians imitated the valour of the French, this battle might have been gloriously won; notwithstanding the rash circumstances under which it was commenced; but these auxiliaries remained quietly in their camp, on the margin of the Danube, while it was fighting; for they held it madness to join in a conflict which had been begun in a manner adverse to the counsel of their King. Seeing the French totally routed, the Hungarian infantry fell back in dismay on their own cavalry; and the whole army was thrown into such disorder, that it was beaten almost at the first onset. Surrounded by a few of his Barons and the Knights of Rhodes, Sigismond kept his ground in the midst of his broken battalions, sufficiently long to see the greater part of the chivalrous band that had rallied near his person stretched dead on the plain. At length, having lost all chance of retrieving the fortune of the day, he galloped to the river side, and, with the Grandmaster of Saint John, threw himself into a provision-berge. A shower of Turkish arrows ruffled the stream, as they pushed off from the shore; but the current quickly swept them beyond bow-shot of their enemies. In this bark the two illustrious fugitives, after a voyage of many days, reached the mouth of the Danube, and were received on board the Christian fleet, which had remained stationary there from the time of the Grandmaster's debarkation. The gallees of the Order subsequently conveyed them to Rhodes, where, notwithstanding the diastrous circumstances under which they arrived, the King of Hungary was received with the distinction his birth and dignity demanded.

Bajazet having thus, by the celerity and secrecy of his march, and the order and evolutions of his

army on the day of battle, totally overthrown the Christian army, proceeded to take a bloody revenge for the massacre which the French knights had perpetrated on the eve of the engagement. The Count of Nevers, and twenty-four lords of distinction, including the Sire de Coucy, and the Marshal Boucicault, were reserved for ransom; but the remainder of the captives were brought before his throne, and, on their refusal to abjure their faith, were successively decapitated in his presence—a sacrifice which deluged France with tears. The Sire de Coucy and Count D'Eu died in prison; but the other princes and barons, after being long exposed as a grateful trophy to the Moslems of Europe and Asia, were ultimately ransomed for two hundred thousand ducats. It was stipulated in the treaty, that the French captives should bind themselves by oath, never again to bear arms against their conqueror; but Bajazet scornfully rejected the proffered pledge. “I despise,” said he to the heir of Burgundy, “thy oaths and thy arms. Thou art young, and mayest be ambitious of effacing the disgrace or misfortune of thy first field. Marshal thy troops, proclaim thy enterprise, and be assured, that thou canst not do Bajazet a greater favour than by giving him another opportunity of meeting thee in the shock of fight.”

In 1399, Sigismond of Hungary left Rhodes to return to his own dominions; and, in the same year, Thomas Palæologus, Despot of the Morea, and brother of the Greek Emperor, alarmed by the victories of Bajazet, sought an asylum in the same island, and, for a stipulated sum, sold his principality to the Order. The knights, however, found it impossible to turn this transference to advantage. The feud between the Greek and Latin churches

still blazed with unquenchable violence; and, with the exception of Corinth, every place in the Morea which the Despot had it in his power to cede, refused to recognise their government. In these circumstances, the agreement was declared void, and restitution made by the despot of the purchase-money which had been paid him.

Meantime Bajazet, whose very name made Christendom tremble, and whose army had shut up the Greek Emperor within the walls of Constantinople, the siege of which he pressed with vigour, was called upon to encounter a mightier foe than had yet been pitted against him. Timour, or Tamerlane, Khan of the Mogul Tartars, the greatest of the successors of Zengis, after having pushed his conquests eastward almost to the Yellow Sea, and southward to the Indian Ocean, proclaimed a new expedition of seven years into the western countries of Asia. A correspondence of complaints and menaces ensued between him and Bajazet; and, stung to the soul by the real or affected contempt of the barbarian, and the ravages which his *tomans* or myriads subsequently committed in Syria, the Turkish Sultan ultimately raised the siege of the Greek capital, and advanced into Anatolia, at the head of a mighty army, to chastise the conqueror of Hindostan. On the 24th of July 1402, the rival armies met on the plains of Angora; and, after one of the most memorable conflicts recorded in history, Bajazet was driven from the field, to become a captive, and end his life in chains.

This victory was followed by the subjugation of the whole of Asia Minor by the Tartar arms; and even the Rhodian garrison of Smyrna, at length beheld the banner of Tamerlane unfurled in defiance

within sight of their perilous station. This post was held by William de Mine, Grand Hospitaller of the Order; and was not only well garrisoned and provisioned, but every way prepared to make an obstinate defence. The Tartar leader besieged it in person; and, when he summoned it to surrender, qualified his message by a declaration, that he would rest satisfied with the conversion of the garrison to the Mohammedan faith, and the simple ceremony of planting his standard on the ramparts. This proposition was rejected with the indignation which it was calculated to excite in the breasts of men whose renown lay in their attachment to their faith, and their untarnished valour; and Timour, incensed at their openly expressed scorn, instantly commenced operations.

The citadel of Smyrna stood on a peninsula surrounded on three sides by the sea, and covered towards the land by a deep ditch and strong fortifications. The town rose like an amphitheatre on the slope of a neighbouring hill, facing the south-west; but the lower part alone was inhabited, the upper being in ruins. On the ridge stood a fort, which had all along been occupied by the Turks, between whom and the Christian knights an almost unintermitting warfare had been waged, from the time when John de Biandra first established himself in the post—a warfare so desperate, says the Persian biographer of Tamerlane,* that for seven years together, “streams of blood were seen flowing continually into the sea.” The arrival of Timour before the place was announced to the knights by the drums and atabals, and loud shouts of the Tartar ra-

* Sherefeddin.

vagers ; and the attack commenced with the besiegers casting earth and fascines into the ditch to fill it up, while their bowmen covered the operation by showers of arrows. On the first day, Timour displayed a white standard, indicative of his disposition to show clemency, in case of an immediate surrender. The second day, the standard was of the colour of blood, signifying that the lives of the Governor and his principal officers were forfeited. But the third day, a black banner floated over the Tartar's tent ; and the Christians knew, that not even their voluntary submission could save them from a violent death. The knights made frequent sallies, for the purpose of checking the advancement of the enemy's works ; but these were only so many displays of unavailing bravery. The Tartars next proceeded to undermine the walls ; and, in this perilous operation, whole phalanxes were crushed to death under the rocks and beams which the Christians hurled down on them. So brave a resistance induced Timour to attempt carrying the place by scalade ; and wooden towers were accordingly erected and planted close to the ramparts. The lowest floor of these machines was occupied by the machinists and miners ; the middle floor was on a level with the top of the wall, and contained a bridge which could be dropped down on it at pleasure ; while the highest floor accommodated a body of archers, who covered the scalade. The preparations being completed, Timour gave orders for a general assault. The attack lasted twenty-four hours ; and both parties performed prodigies of valour. The sky was darkened by hurtling arrows shot from bows and engines ; huge battering-rams shook the walls and towers ; and pots of burning naphta were dashed against the gates. The be-

sieged returned arrow for arrow. Enormous stones, thrown by engines, crushed the barbarians in pieces behind their bucklers; and Greek fire, scattered among them in abundance, eat into their very bones. While this turmoil prevailed, the rain fell in torrents; and it seemed as if a second deluge were about to overwhelm the earth. But neither the war of the elements, nor the perils of mortal strife, could appal the Tartarian chief. Wherever the shower of deadly missiles fell thickest, there was he constantly stationed, animating his veterans, by word and example, to deeds of desperate emprise. His miners having at length completed their excavations, fire was set to the fascines, and faggots sprinkled with naphtha which had been stuffed into them. The intense flame speedily consumed the props that upheld the bastions and curtains of the place, and a part of the fortifications fell with a tremendous crash, burying in its ruins several of the knights. A breach being thus effected, the Tartars, with wild yells, entered it sword in hand; and the cry of victory and of praise to God, in many barbarian tongues, mingled with the shriek of discomfiture and death. The inhabitants were indiscriminately butchered, and both the town and castle razed. A few knights, and a considerable number of soldiers, however, escaped by swimming to the small craft in the harbour. Two carracks, or large Rhodian vessels, which soon after entered the gulf with succours for the devoted garrison, could scarcely discover a vestige of the fortifications; and, while their crews were hesitating how to proceed, several Christian heads, thrown from engines by Timour's orders, fell on their decks. The mariners required no further information respecting the fate of the gallant men whom they came to relieve. Filled with

horror and alarm, they put about their helms and sailed away. Thus, in fourteen days did Timour reduce a fortress, which had been unsuccessfully blockaded by Bajazet for seven years.

Notwithstanding, this disaster followed so close on the fatal battle Nicopolis, the Grandmaster of Saint John was still universally regarded as the greatest Christian prince in the East. Never had the Order seen ranged under its banners a more numerous or braver array of knights. The convent boasted constantly of a thousand warriors. The Levant was covered with their gallies; and no corsair dared shake out his sails in the Lycian waters. The whole of the isles called the Sporades were appended to the possessions of the Order; and there were few Christian ports within the Pillars of Hercules which were not visited by the Rhodian merchant flag.

In 1405, while on his march to invade China, the redoubted Timour, who, like another Attila, had earned the terrible title of the Scourge of God, was stricken by death; and the dissensions which subsequently disunited his sons allowed the Knights of Rhodes to provide for the better security of their insular territory, by a conquest on the mainland in lieu of that which they had just lost. This was an old castle in the gulf of Ceramis, erected on the ruins of the ancient Halicarnassus, and about twelve miles from the island of Cos or Lango, which belonged to the Order. The Grandmaster commanded in person the armament despatched against it, and the Tartar garrison was surprised and ejected without difficulty. The fortalice being weak and dilapidated, the knights razed it, and built another on a salient rock overhanging the sea, which they strengthened by all the

appliances of art. On the land side, the walls were of a prodigious height and thickness, and so ingeniously protected by bulwarks and bastions, that seven gates required to be passed before the entrant could gain the centre of the works. The seaward ramparts were pierced with embrasures for cannon, which had sometime before been introduced into the East; and a deep ditch, filled by the sea, completely insulated the whole position. A flotilla of Rhodian brigantines and feluccas, acting in concert with the war-gallies of the Order, commanded the gulf; and the fortress, which was named the Castle of Saint Peter by the Christians, and Bidrou by the Turks, became in time a place of refuge for such Christian slaves as found means to effect their escape from Turkish or Tartarian bondage. All the soldiers who had escaped the massacre at Smyrna, were, as a recompense for their valour, assigned an asylum in this stronghold, to be maintained during life at the public expense; and twenty-three years afterwards, when an officer of the Order was intrusted with the jurisdiction of the place, these veterans were in some measure exempted from his authority.

The Grandmaster was next called upon to exert himself in behalf of Cyprus, which, in consequence of a breach between its governors and the republic of Genoa, was threatened with entire subjugation by that powerful state. The Genoese had, for a considerable time, held the town of Famagusta, which they had wrested by violence from the house of Lusignan, in reprisal for an outrage on several Genoese noblemen, perpetrated by the Cypriots in a popular tumult. The islanders having manifested an intention of recovering Famagusta, the State of Genoa despatch-

ed a powerful armament to its succour, commanded by their French governor the famous Boucicault—one of the warriors whose rash counsel had delivered the chivalry of France into the hands of Bajazet in the battle of Nicopolis. This expedition, which consisted of seven large ships and nine galleys, put into Rhodes on its passage to Famagusta. The knights received Boucicault with marked distinction; but at the same time, the Grandmaster esteemed it his duty to represent to the Marshal, in forcible terms, the injury he was likely to do to the interests of Christianity, by inflicting the calamities inseparable from war on an island which, next to Rhodes, was the strongest bulwark of the Cross in the Levant. He adjured the Genoese leader at least to procrastinate a voyage so calculated to facilitate Saracen conquest, and offered to repair to Cyprus in the character of a mediator between the two states. To this proposition the Marshal assented; and the Grandmaster set sail for Cyprus, while Boucicault, to beguile the time, and give employment to the fiery spirits on board his squadron, ran down at a venture to the Syrian city of Scanderoon, which place he carried by assault and plundered; and the Turkish Emir to whom it belonged was glad to buy it back by a treaty of alliance, in which he pledged himself to furnish the expedition with all necessary supplies, should a descent on Cyprus be found requisite. The mission of the Grandmaster, however, averted that event. In accordance with his counsel, the King of Cyprus acceded to the terms which the Genoese offered, and seventy thousand ducats, which the islanders were required to pay as an indemnity, were advanced from the treasury of Rhodes—the regal crown and many other precious articles being pledged for

its repayment. This done, the Grandmaster and the Genoese commander re-embarked, and, excited by the success which had attended the latter's descent on Scanderoon, bore away on a ravaging expedition to the Syrian shore.

The legions of Timour's successors still lingered on the coasts of Syria and Palestine ; and the Genoese and Rhodian leaders found Tripoli, the first place which they had attempted to surprise, garrisoned by fifteen thousand men, among whom were six hundred Tartarian horsemen, clothed in velvet and cloth of gold. * The Infidels drew up in battle-array on the beach, to oppose the landing of the Christian rovers ; but the latter were too firmly bent on warlike adventure, to be intimidated by the menacing front which they presented. The Marshal, and the Grandmaster of St John, attended by a great number of his knights, too impatient to meet the Moslems in close conflict, to wait the progress of the boats, flung themselves shoulder-deep into the sea, and, with their falchions bared, waded boldly to the land. The Christians mustered scarcely three thousand men ; but their onslaught was so furious, that the barbarians instantly gave way, and retired in disorder to a position covered by hedges and dykes, directly in front of the city, which was strongly fortified. Scarcely giving their soldiers time to recover breath, the Christian commanders renewed the charge. Dividing their little army into three bodies, they assailed the Moslems simultaneously in front and on both flanks, and, after a sanguinary conflict, drove them first into the gardens and orchards, and afterwards into the city itself. To have assaulted Tripoli, how-

* Memoirs of the Marechal de Boucicault.

ever, would have been madness. They had made the descent under an impression that they would find it defenceless, and, disappointed in this, they reembarked, and directed their prows to another quarter.

The fleet had scarcely lost sight of Tripoli on a southerly course, when a light bark was descried, with every sail set, standing out to sea; whereupon a swift-sailing galley was sent in pursuit of it, and brought its commander into the presence of the Christian Admirals. He proved to be a Venetian; and, on being threatened with the rack, confessed himself an emissary of his republic, who had been instructed to warn the whole coast from Scanderoon to Alexandria, that a Christian armament under redoubted leaders was at sea, and bent on hostile aggression. This intelligence he had just carried to Beirout (the ancient Berytus) a port famous for its commerce; and the inhabitants, filled with consternation, had retired with their most valuable effects into the interior of the country. The Christians expressed great indignation at his mission, and he narrowly escaped being thrown into the sea; but as they had resolved, prior to his capture, to land at Beirout, which he gave them to understand was indifferently fortified, they continued their voyage thither, and plundered it without opposition. From thence they sailed to Saide (the ancient Sidon), where, covered by showers of missiles thrown by engines from the ships, two hundred men-at-arms, and a small body of cross-bow-men, headed by the Marshal and Grandmaster, landed in the face a Mohammedan force little short of ten thousand men. Before this division could be supported by the troops that still remained on board the fleet, one of those sudden hurricanes which frequently visit the Syrian

sea, tossed the waves into mountains, and prevented all communication with the shore. By this event the Christian leaders were placed, for a time, in a most perilous situation; and had the Moslems been aware of the advantage which the elements had given them, the adventure would in all probability have terminated in the extermination of the whole band. But, intimidated by the bold front which the Christians presented, they barely ventured within bow-shot, and the storm subsiding as suddenly as it had risen, the knights and their followers re-embarked, and made sail for Jaffa. There they had a still narrower escape from destruction. The place, which was situated in a plain, covered on one side by a forest, and on the other by a mountain, was strongly garrisoned; but the Moslems, instead of showing themselves in force on the beach, allowed the Christians to make a reconnoissance unmolested. The troops that were landed for this purpose, persuaded that there was no force in the neighbourhood able to oppose them, re-embarked at nightfall, with the understanding that the whole army was to assail the place next day; but no sooner did the Moslems observe them crowding into their boats, than, fancying that they had discovered their ambuscade, and were retreating in a panic, they burst from their covert, and, with fierce shouts, poured down in myriads to the very brink of the sea. The Christians, saved by this precipitate conduct from the inevitable ruin which must have overtaken them had they landed on the morrow, answered their fierce gestures with a few bolts from their cross-bows; and, tired of an expedition which had been attended with so little success, they bade adieu to the Syrian coast—the Genoese steering for Famagusta, the Knights for Rhodes.

This expedition was followed, not by warlike reprisals on the part of the Moslems, but by offers of peace from the Sultan of Egypt, who held the chief dominion in Palestine. The knights were so potent at sea, that no bark bearing the Egyptian flag could venture into the Cypriot or Lycian waters; and, though exasperated beyond measure at their menaces, the sagacious Moslem held it the wiser course to deprecate their wrath. The knights, who were on the point of entering into a league against their nearer enemies the Turks, prudently acceded to the proposal. The negotiations terminated in a treaty which secured to them liberty to fence the Holy Sepulchre, a right to maintain six knights free of tribute in Jerusalem, the privilege of ransoming Christian slaves, at the price which their masters originally paid for them, and a free commercial intercourse with all the Egyptian ports. It was farther conditioned, that either party should be at liberty to renew the war, without stain on their faith, provided they made public proclamation three months before hand, of their intent to unfurl their banner.

In 1409, an attempt was made by the Christian world to terminate the schism which had so long divided the Roman Church. A general council was held at Pisa, which, in the strict spirit of justice, deposed both the Popes of Rome and Avignon, and nominated a third party to the pontificate. But this proceeding only raised up a third pretender to the papal chair; and it required the authority of another equally august council, held at Constance in 1414, to suppress this unholy rivalry, and bring the Catholic church, after forty years division, once more under a single head, namely, that of Otho Colonna, the de-

scendant of a long race of sages and heroes, who was enthroned (1417) by the title of Martin the Fifth.

The Grandmaster of Saint John was present at both these councils. At that of Pisa, which was the most illustrious ecclesiastical assembly that had ever been seen in the Christian world, he was attended by sixteen commanders; and in the interval between the two councils, his mediation was usefully exerted, both in France and England, in bringing about a reconcilment between the monarchs of these kingdoms. The annihilation of the schism in the Church, was a matter of infinite joy to the whole Order. The division had in a manner cut off several languages from the fraternity; and during its continuance, the treasury had been deprived of the dues arising from the Commanderies of England, Italy, Arragon, part of Germany, Bohemia, Hungary, and Northern Europe—the Knights of the Convent of Rhodes, of the East, and of France, Castile, Scotland, and part of Germany, alone acknowledging the Grandmaster's authority; while the seceders received as their superior a lieutenant nominated by the Italian Pope. This greatly dilapidated the finances of the Order; but the reunion which followed the election of Martin the Fifth, restored them to their former sufficiency; and the Grandmaster, before he returned to Rhodes, had the satisfaction of seeing all the refractory commanders humbly suing for permission to resume their allegiance, and pledging themselves to submit implicitly to his decrees. Covered with honours, and crowned with hairs that had become white as snow in council and in battle, he presented himself once more among his faithful Rhodians, after an absence of ten years; and his arrival was commemorated by a high festival through-

out the island. Before he died, he beheld nearly all the knights who had refused to recognise his title during the schism, meet in brotherly amity, to express their abhorrence of disunion, and to enact new defences for the constitution; and the ratification of the records of this Chapter by the Pope, was the signal for the good knight's departure to another world. It was in 1421, two years after his return, that he terminated his career; and a worthier governor than Philibert de Naillac, the Knights of Saint John never laid in the dust.

Anthony Fluvian, or de la Riviere, a Catalonian knight, succeeded De Naillac as Grandmaster. Scarcely had he assumed the supreme dignity, when the tocsin of war, which had been silent during the later years of his predecessor's administration, sounded simultaneously from the Anatolian and Egyptian coasts. Mohammed the First, the last of Bajazet's sons, with the assistance of the Greeks, had torn the sceptre of his father from the grasp of the children of Tamerlane, and delivered it, after a reign of eight years, safely into the hands of his son Amurath the Second, a prince whose conquests blotted from the page of Turkish history the triumphs of the Tartarian chief, and restored the Ottoman empire to its pristine splendour. Having rendered his name terrible, from the Caramanian to the Carpathian mountains, he proceeded to menace the Morea and the islands of the Archipelago. The Knights of Rhodes, anxious to interrupt the progress of his arms, were about to send a squadron into the Ægean sea, when they learned that the Emir of Scanderoon, who owed fealty to the Turkish Sultan, was in the Lycian waters with a considerable fleet. The destination of the gallies was consequently changed,

and they sailed in pursuit of the Corsair of Scanderoon, whom they suspected of a design to invade their island. While the two squadrons were roaming the seas in quest of each other, and availing themselves of every opportunity to make sanguinary descents on undefended points of their respective coasts, another battle-flag was unfurled in the Levant, namely, that of the Egyptian Sultan, the famous Alnazer-Aldaher, a Circassian, who, like all his Mameluke predecessors, had risen from slavery to a throne. Knowing that it was perilous to the sovereign of a fierce and seditious soldiery, like the Mamelukes, to leave them unemployed, he planned a war against Janus de Lusignan, King of Cyprus, and suddenly landed a considerable force in that island. The first resource of the Cypriot Prince was to claim the assistance of his ancient allies, the Knights of Rhodes; and though the Order was then at peace with the Egyptians, and always held it imprudent to engage both with them and the Turks at the same time, they could not permit their nearest Christian ally to be overwhelmed, without making an effort to save him. They first tried the effect of mediation; but the Sultan would listen to no terms short of the Cypriots becoming his tributaries; and to this their Prince would not accede, nor would the Grandmaster accord it his sanction. In these circumstances, an appeal to arms became inevitable, and succours were despatched from Rhodes to serve under the Cypriot standard. After a long and sanguinary, but indecisive warfare, the armies at length met in a regular battle, which ended disastrously for the Cross. The flower of the Cypriot lords, and several knights of Saint John fell on the field, and the King was captured and carried a prisoner to Alexandria.

This defeat did not intimidate the Grandmaster from sending further succours to Cyprus; and so bravely did they reanimate the natives, and maintain the contest, that the Egyptian general found his progress completely barred. In revenge, he laid waste the commandery which the Order of Saint John possessed in the island; and, at the same time, the Sultan, his master, projected carrying his arms to Rhodes itself. The fury of the war, however, did not prevent negotiations from being carried on for the liberation of the captive King, who was ultimately ransomed for twenty thousand gold florins, greater part of which was advanced from the treasury of Saint John.

The liberation of the Cypriot Prince led to a treaty of peace, which relieved the island of the Infidel marauders; and the Sultan, at the same time, renewed his predecessor's amicable intercourse with the knights. The Grandmaster, however, placed but small confidence in the Moslem's pacific professions. Secret intelligence had reached him from Alexandria, that the Sultan only waited till the Order should be lulled into security, to burst upon Rhodes with a mighty armament; and to guard against such a descent, instructions were forwarded to every Priory in Europe, to send each twenty-five knights to reinforce the principal hospitium. This summons brought to Rhodes even a greater number of knights than was demanded, all of whom arrived burning with courage and zeal. Military stores were also poured abundantly into the island; and the Grand Prior of France sent, of his own accord, a whole ship-load of arrow-heads and cross-bows, to replenish the armoury. These mighty preparations intimidated the Sultan, who held it prudent to suspend the depar-

ture of his fleet, under an impression that the treasury of Saint John would speedily be impoverished by the super-ordinary expenditure requisite to maintain the island in so impregnable a condition, and that the Grandmaster would eventually find it necessary to dispense with the additional troops which he had so promptly collected. In this hope, however, he was disappointed. Though the finances of the Order were greatly dilapidated, not only by these preparations, but by the inroads of the English into France, the devastations of the Hussites in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, and the war waged by the Teutonic knights in Poland, in all of which countries its possessions were subjected to partial spoliation, the Grandmaster was able to present the same formidable aspect to the Infidels during the whole of his reign. His latter days were spent in the exercise of those peaceful virtues, which contribute more to the happiness of mankind than the proudest military renown. He built a magnificent infirmary on the island, for the reception of sick and wounded knights, and endowed it at his own expense; and, at his death (1437), he bequeathed to the public treasury two hundred thousand ducats, the fruit of natural thrift and judicious retrenchments in the expenses of his high dignity.

John de Lastic succeeded Fluvian as Grandmaster. He was resident at his priory of Auvergne, at the date of his election; but, on being informed of it, instantly repaired to Rhodes. His arrival was most timely; for the spies which the Order maintained in Egypt, had given notice that the Sultan, Abou-said-Jacmac, in accordance with the schemes of his immediate predecessor, had resolved to make a descent on the island. Hitherto, the constant animo-

sities of the Saracens and Turks had been eminently serviceable to the Christians ; but the knights now learned, that the Ottoman Emperor was for once disposed to support the Egyptian prince, or at least would not oppose his enterprise, or cripple him, as was the Ottoman's wont, by devastating his frontier, while his arms were employed against the champions of Frangistan. The Grandmaster, sanctioned by the example of the head of the Christian church, who held it imprudent on the part of the Order to wage war with two puissant enemies at the same time, endeavoured, through the medium of an embassy to the court of Amurath the Second, to renew the truce which the knights had made with the predecessor of that prince ; but the Turk craftily declined entering into a new engagement, on the argument that the old treaty was sufficiently secure and binding. This answer was considered tantamount to a declaration, that the peace was not to be depended on. Two vessels, commanded by William de Lastic, nephew of the Grandmaster, and Seneschal of the Order, were despatched to make observations on the African coast ; and the intelligence which they brought back, warned the knights to prepare for an attack from the whole war-hordes of Egypt. It was only in times of tranquillity that the warriors of Saint John were prone to forget their knightly duties. Whenever the war-clarion of the Moslem was heard to sound, the jars that had disunited them in hours of inactivity, were instantly consigned to oblivion ; and they stood again on their ramparts, and on the decks of their war-gallies, that same indomitable band who had won imperishable renown in every corner of Palestine. Eight gallies, four ships with high decks, and several transports, hav-

ing a considerable body of troops on board, were promptly equipped for sea; while Rhodes and the dependent islets were placed in the most complete state of defence. The Egyptian Prince, on his part, fitted out a fleet of eighteen gallies, and numerous vessels of inferior bulk, on board of which he embarked a great number of well-armed soldiers. This expedition, after razing the castle, and devastating the island of Chateaurouge, a small dependency of the Order, situated within a league of the Lycian coast, appeared off Rhodes on the 25th of September 1440.

Stimulated by the example of the knights, the inhabitants of Rhodes took up arms to a man; and so imposing was the front they presented, that the Moslems were intimidated from venturing to disembark. While the latter lay indolently in front of the harbour, hesitating what course to pursue, the Marshal of Saint John, as Admiral of the fleet, ordered his gallies to stand out into the open sea and attack them. The Egyptians, who had not calculated on having to encounter so formidable a squadron, did not wait its approach, but ran into a creek, where they secured themselves, so as to keep the Christians at a distance, simply by the fire of their artillery—for cannon were employed on board both fleets. The day was passed in a comparatively harmless exchange of balls. The use of gunpowder was yet in its infancy in the Levant; and the smoke and thunder of the mysterious tubes, were far more terrible to the warrior than the hurtling arrow and flashing lance, with which his mailed ancestors had contended. He scorned still to flinch at the twang of the bowstring, or the gleam of the Damascus blade; but he shrunk with awe from the marvellous power,

which, at the distance of many arrow-flights, dashed him in pieces behind his buckler. Night separated the combatants; and the Marshal ran into port, fully determined to renew the attack with the first beam of the morning; but the Saracens, conceiving themselves in a perilous position, put to sea long before daybreak, and stood away for Lango, with an intent to surprise that island. Thither they were closely pursued by the Marshal, who, by dint of canvass and oars, completely outsailed them, and, under cover of the cannon of the castle of Lango, once more offered them battle. The combat, however, was again declined; and the Egyptian admiral, doubly foiled, made sail for a Turkish island, and took refuge in a commodious harbour, where he drew up his fleet in an impregnable line—the gallies being closely grappled to one another, with their prows towards the sea, and forming, as it were, one vast floating battery. A council of war was held on board the Christian fleet; and several knights, startled at the strong position of the Moslems, tried to dissuade the Marshal from hazarding an attack—alleging, that not only were the Infidels vastly superior in force, but that the gulf in which they were anchored was shoally and dangerous. But the Marshal, with the magnanimity of a Christian soldier, answered, that he would sooner die on his own deck than bear the reproach of having declined an offer of battle from a Saracen foe. To guard against the quicksands of the bay, he transferred his troops to the smaller craft in his fleet, and then at their head bore boldly down on the Egyptian line, covered by the fire of his gallies. The Moslems, standing firm on their decks, sustained the shock with great bravery, and upwards of seven hundred men fell in the conflict, which nevertheless

terminated at night-fall without a decisive result. Covered with the blood of his enemies, and scarred with five honourable wounds, the Marshal returned to his galley, and, bad weather coming on, stood back to port. His retreat allowed the Egyptians to escape out of the Lycian Sea. On their way back to the Nile they landed on Cyprus, and again laid waste the commandery which the knights possessed in that island.

The misadventures which befell this armament, did not deter the Egyptian chief from forming new projects for the subjugation of Rhodes. He endeavoured, by various petty artifices, to lull asleep the vigilance of the knights; and, by a piece of judicious policy, which secured to him the neutrality of the Venetians, he entered into a restricted treaty with the Order, which exempted from aggression Lango and Nizzara, two islands which it was the province of Fantin Quirini, a noble Venetian knight, to defend, and whose cause the Egyptians had reason to know the republic would not be slow to espouse, should his government be invaded. This treaty, which was hollow from the foundation, engendered hopes that a more extended truce would arise from it; but, nevertheless, the Grandmaster spared no effort to prepare for immediate hostilities. The fortifications of Rhodes were strengthened, the magazines filled with stores, and all the sovereigns of Europe were formally warned of the peril with which the bulwark of Christendom was menaced, and were at the same time implored to contribute to its preservation. But the zeal which, in former times, had whitened Asia with Christian bones, was extinguished, never to be rekindled. The Princes of the West, occupied with their own broils, and sufficiently potent in their

dominions, to have no interest in sending their rebellious nobles to a distant and sanguinary war, answered the call with futile expressions of regret; and when the war-flag of the Egyptians again gleamed on the horizon, the Rhodian knights braced on their mail with the conviction, that on their own faithful brands alone depended the issue of the battle.

The second descent of the Egyptians was made in the summer of 1444. Eighteen thousand invaders, including a strong body of Mamelukes, in which the pride of the army lay, landed at a defenceless point, and immediately invested the capital, while their fleet subjected the harbour to a close blockade. History has preserved no record of the feats of arms that followed, or of the number of the slain. The knights of those days knew better how to wield the falchion than the pen; for literary lore was then an ignoble attainment; and the spurred warrior was often necessitated to subscribe official documents with the simple impress of his gauntleted hand. The archives of the Order only preserve the barren facts, that the siege lasted forty days; that the Infidels beat down the walls with a vast battering train; that several assaults were made and repelled; and that, ultimately, the Egyptian general abandoned the enterprise in despair, and re-embarked, leaving the flower of his army dead on the glacis and in the ditches.

The news of this heroic defence filled Europe with admiration; and, though no regal head engaged to furnish the succours which were again implored, the fading spirit of chivalry was partially revived among the young nobles of Christendom, and aspirants for knightly honours crowded with generous emulation into the Order. To support the additional expense, it was judged imperative to increase the responsions

for five years—an enactment which, for a time, proved a fertile subject of dispute with the distant commanders, and nearly embroiled the Grandmaster in a serious quarrel with Nicholas the Fifth, the regnant Pope. To strengthen the hands of the Grandmaster, the council invested him with uncontrolled authority for three years ; and so beneficially did he exercise it, that, before the expiration of that period, he completely humbled the contumacious commanders, who all implicitly submitted to his jurisdiction.

In 1450, Amurath the Second, Emperor of the Turks, the latter part of whose reign had been disturbed by the patriotic struggles of John Castriot, or Scander-Beg, a famous Epirote chief, closed his victorious career, and was succeeded by his son Mohammed the Second, surnamed the Vanquisher—the Arabian historians vain-gloriously ascribing the conquest of two empires, twelve kingdoms, and two hundred cities to his invincible sword. His accession hurried to Adrianople ambassadors from various states ; and among others, an envoy from Rhodes appeared before the throne of this fierce and inexorable despot, soliciting a confirmation of the old alliance. The knight who was intrusted with the mission met with a courteous reception, and returned to his convent with the treaty renewed. The Ottoman prince conducted himself with similar consideration towards the ambassador of the Greek Emperor ; but at the very moment peace was on his lips, war was in his heart ; and he began secretly to prepare for the conquest of Constantinople. The Greeks, by their own indiscretion, afforded him the first pretext for a rupture ; and their consternation was extreme, when they beheld a formidable castle rise at his command, on the European side of the Bosphorus, within five miles of their isolated city. Constantine Pa-

læologus, the Greek Emperor, endeavoured, by persuasion; to avert the wrath of his implacable foe. He represented that, as the new fortification completely commanded the strait, its erection was a direct infraction of the treaty so recently renewed; but the Moslem imperiously replied, that the empire of Constantinople was measured by its walls, and that the next *giaour* who presumed to bring him a similar message, should be flayed alive. Had the Greek monarch been permitted to give way to his own magnanimous spirit, he would not have waited for a second insult from his enemy; but the arguments of his craven councillors prevailed, and he condescended yet a little longer to employ temporizing measures, though satisfied that they would ultimately prove of no avail. Insult was heaped on insult—the Greek villagers, goaded to madness, rose upon a body of the aggressors and slew them; and on the 6th of April 1453, Mohammed, at the head of two hundred and fifty thousand men, planted his standard before the gate of Saint Romanus, while the Propontis was covered to the horizon with his fleet.

Between seven and eight thousand soldiers, two thousand of whom were foreigners, but gallant men, under the command of John Justiniani, a noble Genoese, formed the scanty garrison that was opposed to this immense host. Constantinople was no longer inhabited by citizens animated with the ancient Grecian and Roman valour, but by a debased race composed of traffickers and ecclesiastics, who looked only to the preservation of their gold, and left their emperor to defend the city and his crown as he best might. After a siege of fifty-two days, during which, the handful of patriots who still remained true to their country, manned their shattered walls with honourable resolution, the Moslems made a final assault. The

Greek Emperor fell by an unknown hand in the tumult of the battle; and on the 29th of May, says Von Hammer, "the city of the seven names, seven hills, and seven towers, was taken from the seventh of the Palæologi, by the seventh Sultan of the Ottoman line." * A magnificent oriental plane, rooted in the faithless rampart, points out, at this day, the spot where the last of the Cæsars died.

Christendom, looking upon Constantinople as a doomed city, made no effort to procrastinate its fall. The atrocities that were perpetrated after its capture belong not to this narrative, and have been recorded by far more gifted pens. Before he had been six months in possession of the city of Constantine, the Vanquisher turned his eyes towards the only Christian fastness in the East, which now bade defiance to his arms; and the Rhodian knights received a peremptory summons, either to recognise his supremacy, and pay him a yearly tribute of two thousand ducats, or prepare to receive him as a conqueror within their walls. The knights proudly answered, that their predecessors had won their insular sovereignty by their valour and their blood, and that they would, to a man, maintain their liberty and independence. That no exertion calculated to place them in a condition to redeem this pledge might be neglected, application was again made to the Princes of the West for succours; and the commander, D'Aubusson, was deputed to plead their cause with Charles the Seventh of France, who, in consequence, made large pecuniary donations to the Order.

* The seven names referred to are, Byzantium, Antonina, Roma Nova, Constantinople, Farruk, (in Arabic, the Earth-divider), Islamboul, (the Fulness of Faith), and Ummeddünije, (or Mother of the World).

It was at this juncture that the Grandmaster, John de Lastic, died, after having governed the Order with great prudence and honour for seventeen eventful years. James or Jobert de Milly, Grand Prior of Auvergne, was nominated his successor; and in compliance with the entreaties of the Chapter, he lost no time in quitting his priory, and repairing to Rhodes. He arrived just in time to repel a squadron of thirty Turkish gallies, which Mohammed, who inherited all the indomitable pride and implacability of his race, had despatched to avenge him of the knights, for their bold defiance of his menace. This fleet did some injury to the smaller dependencies of the Order; but the Grandmaster, taking advantage of the Sultan's absence on his northern frontier, where Hunniades, a renowned Hungarian champion, gave him ample employment, retaliated; by a similar descent on the Ottoman coast. Roused to fury by this audacious proceeding, Mohammed equipped a mighty fleet, on board of which he embarked eighteen thousand soldiers, for the special purpose of laying waste the whole principality of Rhodes. This armament, notwithstanding the vigilance and stout resistance of the knights, partially devastated their smaller dependencies, and even a district of Rhodes itself. The invaders, with their usual wantonness, cut down the fruit-trees, uprooted the vines, and carried the flower of the population into captivity; and so utterly were the lesser islands depopulated, that John de Chateaufneuf resigned the government of them as an unprofitable office. Immediate steps were taken to restore them to prosperity; and the number of knights appointed for their defence was greatly augmented.

Meanwhile, domestic troubles had broken out in Cyprus, which again interrupted the pacific understanding that subsisted between the Order and the Sul-

tan of Egypt, and also embroiled it with the Venetian republic—an unforgiving and puissant foe. The legitimate line of the house of Lusignan had centered in a female, a princess of great beauty, named Charlotte, who had married Louis of Savoy, and whom the machinations of a base-born brother drove to seek an asylum at Rhodes. James de Lusignan, the bastard prince, having stirred up both Mohammed the Second and the Sultan of Egypt, to support his claims, entered the island at the head of a powerful Egyptian force, and reduced every place of note, save the Genoese city of Famagusta, and the castle of Colos, a strong fortress which belonged to the Knights of Rhodes. The knights filled with sympathy and admiration for the expatriated Queen, whose misfortunes added dignity, in their estimation, to her illustrious descent, were eager to declare themselves her partisans, and, in particular, the commander D'Aubusson was devoted to her cause. But the times were perilous; and while they yet hesitated how to decide, the Sultan of Egypt, affecting to take umbrage at the protection they had vouchsafed to the fugitive princess, seized a knight, who had been sent to Alexandria for the purpose of negotiation, and threw him into durance. In reprisal, the Grandmaster, with more justice than policy, arrested two Venetian gallies laden with Saracen merchandise, and degraded such Infidels as they found on board of them to the situation of galley-slaves. To touch the proud Queen of the Adriatic in her commercial relations, was to rouse her bitterest vengeance. A Venetian armament shortly afterwards made a descent on Rhodes, rivalling the barbarians in cruelty and devastation; and, not satisfied with this outrage, another fleet subsequently blockaded the port, and demanded restitution of the Saracen prison-

ers and merchandise, in the most imperious terms. The junior knights were for answering this arrogant summons with their cannon; but the elders of the Order wisely deprecated a sanguinary dispute with so potent a Christian state. The Saracens and their property were restored, and the further devastations which the Venetians menaced were happily averted. The Grandmaster dealt in an equally mild manner with a body of domestic malecontents, who, headed by the procurators of the languages of Spain, Italy, England and Germany, protested, in a general Chapter, against the languages of France monopolizing so many of the principal dignities of the Order. The French knights, with some justice, maintained that the Order had originated with their ancestors, and that it was by France that it had all along been chiefly supported. The final settlement of this feud was reserved for the grandmastership of Peter Raymond Zacosta, a Castilian knight, who succeeded James de Milly in 1461. It was effected by the addition of an eighth language to the Order—that of Castile, Portugal and Leon, to which was annexed the dignity of Grand Chancellor. *

* The Order, as has been stated, was divided into the languages of Provence, Auvergne, France, Italy, Arragon, England, Germany, and Castile, to each of which a particular dignity was annexed. The Grand Commander, who was president of the public treasury, and director of the magazines, arsenal and artillery, was taken from the language of Provence; the Marshal, who took precedence at sea, from that of Auvergne; the Grand Hospitaller, from that of France; the Admiral, from that of Italy; the Grand Conservator, from that of Arragon; the Turcopolier, or general of the horse and marine guards, from that of England; the Grand Bailiff, from that of Germany; and the Chancellor from that of Castile. On the suppression of the Order in the British isles, the dignity of Turcopolier (a Levantine word, signifying a light-horseman, or dragoon) was afterwards conferred on the Grand-

During the grandmastership of De Milly, the statutes of the Order enjoining abstinence, which were exceedingly rigorous, were, with the special approbation of Pope Pius the Second, made much less austere. Hitherto, in the strict spirit of discipline, the knights were forbidden to drink after supper, either in Advent or Lent, or to speak at table or in bed, or to use light in their dormitories. The change in the manners and opinions of society called for the partial abandonment of these ascetic rules; and their modification was accordingly recommended and confirmed.

While the troubles in Cyprus were at their height, the Grandmaster de Milly entreated the Emperor Mohammed to receive an ambassador from the Order with pacific proposals; but the Ottoman refused to listen to the application at the time; and it was not till after the election of Zacosta that he requested the presence of a Rhodian envoy at his court. The knights, aware that Mohammed was collecting a mighty armament for sea, received his advances with suspicion; nevertheless, they held it advisable to show no want of confidence in his amity; and a knight-commander, duly accredited, was despatched to Constantinople, with instructions to spare no pains to ascertain the Emperor's designs. Mohammed, whose mind was firmly bent on one object, and who was anxious to secure his coasts from devastation for a time, signed, without demur, a truce for two years; but all the art of the ambassador, and two Greeks to boot, who acted as his col-

master's seneschal. It was expressly required, that the Chancellor, who had to subscribe all official papers, should be able to read and write. All these dignitaries, who took rank according as they are here named, enjoyed extensive patronage in the several departments under their superintendence. — Vertot, *Dis. on Gov. of Malta*.

leagues, failed to penetrate his warlike project. The storm ultimately burst on the imperial city of Trebizond, which had remained under the sovereignty of a branch of the Greek house of Comneni, ever since the subversion of Constantinople by the Latin crusaders in the beginning of the thirteenth century. David Comnenus, the regnant monarch, after sustaining a siege of thirty days, consented to a capitulation, and was afterwards, with his eight sons, carried to Constantinople in chains. The conqueror gave him a choice of apostasy or death; and the heroic Greek, with seven of his offspring, nobly chose the martyr's crown.

Notwithstanding the amicable treaty which existed between Mohammed and the Knights of Rhodes, his subjects did not scruple, during his absence on this expedition, to make occasional descents on that island and its dependencies. It is more than probable, that the Turkish monarch, who had secretly resolved to take the earliest opportunity of exterminating the knights, did not discourage these piracies; but he manifested the utmost indignation when the Rhodians, naturally enough, made reprisals on the Turkish coast, and immediately on his return from the conquest of Trebizond, prepared to take a bloody revenge. In order to facilitate the reduction of Rhodes, he led in person an armament against the Greek island of Mitylene, on the pretext that its prince harboured the Rhodian galleys. The Grand-master, on learning the perilous situation of his ally, sent a strong body of knights to support him; and, with the assistance of several Genoese and Catalan privateers, they made a gallant and protracted resistance. Mohammed exposed himself to the greatest danger in this petty warfare—for cowardice was not the crime of his race. Baffled in every assault on the

town of Mitylene, he returned to his capital, leaving his vizier to prosecute the siege. That officer, finding that the valour of his soldiers did not advance him a single step nearer victory, had recourse to corruption; and Lucio Gantilusio, cousin of the reigning prince, dazzled by the specious promises of the Infidel, who assured him that Mohammed, in gratitude for so signal a service, would advance him to the sovereignty of the island, basely threw open the gate which he was appointed to defend. This decided the fate of the place. The Turks poured into it like an unstemnable torrent; and the Greeks, leaving the Rhodian knights to perish at their posts, either fled or surrendered. Mohammed, upon some futile pretence, carried the Greek princes—the betrayed and the betrayer—to Constantinople, where, like the Comneni of Trebizond, and in direct violation of the treaty of surrender, they were required to apostatize or suffer death. They chose the baser alternative; but even the craven abjuration of their faith did not save them from a doom of blood. It was Mohammed's policy to spare no man whose rights he had usurped; and, on a loose assumption that the captives were endeavouring to elude his vigilance and escape, they were decapitated, while the Genoese and Catalans, who had been taken in their service, were sawed alive and their limbs left unburied, that the houseless dogs of the capital might devour them.

These events sufficiently warned the Grandmaster of the blood-thirsty and merciless nature of the adversary with whom he foresaw the Order would soon have singly to grapple; and he held it his duty to strengthen the island without loss of time, with all the succours whom his mandate could draw from the West. The imperative terms of his call roused the contumacy of several Italian and Arragonian commanders, who,

with the countenance of their respective sovereigns, appealed to the Pope, Paul the Second. That Pontiff decided that a general chapter should meet at Rome, whither he cited the Grandmaster to give attendance. Though the great age of this venerable knight, and the perils that threatened his principality, might have well excused his undertaking the voyage, Zaccosta was too temperate and sagacious a man, to dispute the papal edict. He promptly repaired to Rome, and, by his firm deportment, and disinterested decisions, won the Pontiff's favour, and covered his opponents with disgrace. He was preparing to return to Rhodes in 1467 * when a pleurisy terminated his life. The Pope honoured him with a grave in Saint Peter's church, and the title of "*Excellentissimus*;" and his piety, his charity, and his capacity for government, were gratefully commemorated in the epitaph which the Chapter inscribed on his tomb.

A contested election followed the death of Zaccosta. The candidates were, Raymond Ricard, Grand Prior of Saint Giles, and John Baptista Ursini, Prior of Rome, a knight of an illustrious Italian family, who carried the election only by a single voice—a preference which he owed more to the locality of the Chapter than to his superior merit. He lost no time in assuming the duties of his office; and, enforced by the special injunction of the Holy See, his summons brought to Rhodes the bravest and most valiant knights of the several languages. Among these was Peter d'Aubusson, one of the most redoubted commanders of the Order, who, being an expert engineer, and intimately conversant with the most approved modes of fortification, was named surveyor of the island, and greatly extended and strengthened its

* Vertot. Boisgelin says 1464.

defences. Mohammed, however, was not so fully prepared to assail them as they apprehended. Various troubles induced him to postpone the enterprise; but in order to harass the Rhodians, his corsairs ever and anon ran down into the Lycian waters, and made partial inroads into the island, spreading death and ruin wherever they landed. On these occasions, the helpless part of the population took refuge with their flocks and property in the fortalices sprinkled throughout the principality. The knights, on the contrary, took horse, and boldly attacked the ravagers in the open country; and rarely did the Infidels return to their ships without leaving the corpses of many of their bravest warriors to fertilize the soil.

In 1470, it became a matter of certainty that the Turkish monarch was again fitting out an immense armament. The Venetians, apprehending that it was destined against the island of Negropont (the ancient Eubœa), which was under their dominion, entreated the Rhodians to join them in a defensive alliance; but the knights, jealous of their independence, which they had reason to infer the grasping Lords of the Adriatic wished to curtail, declined the invitation, though, when Mohammed's fleet actually appeared off Negropont, they instantly despatched a squadron, commanded by the Chevalier de Cardonne and the commander d'Aubusson, to give the republicans succour. Mohammed, in addition to a vast naval force, employed in this enterprise an army of upwards an hundred thousand men. Negropont, being separated from the continent of Livadia only by a narrow channel, called the Strait of Euripus, which was crossed by a bridge communicating directly with the principal city, the Sultan was able to assail it almost from the mainland. The bridge, indeed, was strongly defended by a great tower built

in the stream; but he expertly threw his legions into the island, by means of a bridge of boats, and then drew a close leaguer round the place. John Bondumiero and Louis Calbo, both Venetians of noble descent, were the captains on whom the defence of the city devolved. Paul Erizzo, another illustrious officer, whose period of service had just expired, and who was on the eve of returning to his native country with his daughter, a young damsel of great beauty, nobly sacrificed his paternal anxieties to the interests of his country, and procrastinated his departure, that his compatriots might have the advantage of his counsel and his sword. In their first assaults the Turks were repulsed with great slaughter; but a traitor, Thomas of Liburnca, chief cannoneer, having pointed out to them an old and ruinous part of the ramparts, for which act of treachery he lost his life, their artillery speedily effected a vast breach. In their extremity, the besieged, who saw their merciless foes ready to fling themselves headlong into the city, sent a special messenger to Canalis, their admiral in the *Ægean*, imploring him to hasten to their relief. Supported by the Rhodian squadron, the admiral bore down into the channel, and, as wind and tide were in his favour, it was recommended by a council of war, that the combined fleet should at once attack the bridge across the *Euripus*, break it down with their cannon, and shut the Turks up in the island. The besieged beheld from their battlements the approach of the flags of Saint Mark and Saint John, and already looked upon their perils as ended;—even Mohammed himself was startled at the prospect of finding the island a prison, and made preparations for flight; when suddenly, contrary to the urgent entreaties of his captains, and especially of the knights De Cardonne and D'Au-

busson, the Venetian admiral, trembling, it is said, for the safety of his only son, who was on board his galley, ordered his helm to be put about, and abandoned the city to its fate.

To the defenders of Negropont this craven act was the sign of doom. Next day, the thirtieth of the siege, Mohammed gave orders for a general assault; and his turbanned slaves poured in thousands into the breach. A horrible slaughter ensued. The ditches were choked with dead, and twice the assailants, after having won the rampart, were beaten back at the point of the lance. At the end of twenty-four hours, unbroken by a respite from slaughter, the besieged gave way, and the Moslems entered the breach over the bodies of Bondumiero, Calbo, and the bravest of their band. The barbarities that were inflicted on the defenceless population fill so red a page, even in the bloody annals of Moslem warfare, that humanity shrinks from transcribing them. Erizzo still survived; and, under his command, a devoted remnant slowly retreated into the centre of the city, contesting every inch of ground, and throwing up barricades in every street. Driven at length into the castle, he maintained it for some time longer with great bravery; but provisions and ammunition failing, he was at last reduced to agree to a capitulation. Aware of the sanguinary nature of Mohammed, he required of him a solemn pledge that his life should be spared; and the Sultan swore by his own head, that not a hair of the Venetian's should be injured. But no sooner was Erizzo in his power, than he ordered him to be sawed asunder; scoffingly boasting that he had nevertheless kept his oath, inasmuch as, though he had sworn to spare the *head*, he was under no bond to spare the *sides*, of his enemy.

This gallant Venetian had, as has been already

mentioned, a daughter, a lady of surpassing beauty, who was shut up with him during this calamitous siege. When he heard his own doom pronounced, he entreated that he might see her put to death before he himself was led to slaughter—for, in such circumstances, he considered the grave her only refuge;—but his captors sneered at his paternal anxiety, and laughingly told him, that she was reserved for the harem of their prince. Mohammed was indeed greatly transported with her charms; and the beautiful Anne Erizzo might have shared both his heart and throne, had her soul not revolted at the barbarian who had shed her father's blood. He tried to win her, by pouring the riches of the East at her feet; but she disdainfully spurned both his gifts and his persuasions. Filled with fury at finding entreaties and menaces alike ineffectual, his love changed to hate; and, in a paroxysm of rage, he suddenly drew his scimitar, and struck off her head; thus giving her all that her disconsolate heart desired—a virgin grave.

The co-operation of the Rhodian with the Venetian squadron, was an unpardonable crime, in the estimation of the Turkish monarch; and he declared eternal enmity against the knights—swearing, that, in the coming war, the Grandmaster should perish by his hand, and that every knight who was made prisoner should be immolated at the shrine of vengeance. This menace was treated with scorn by the knights, who, in concert with the Venetian squadron under Mocenigo, who had superseded the infamous Canalis, soon after attacked Satalia, a town on the coast of Pamphylia, where they sustained a repulse, with the loss of their admiral and several other brave officers. During the assault, a Christian woman, a slave, rushed to the walls, and en-

couraged the Christians to persevere, by proclaiming the weakness of the place. When she heard the signal of retreat sounded, she cast herself headlong from the rampart, and was dashed to pieces in the ditch.

The fall of Negropont excited great alarm among the Princes of the West; and several Christian states, including the Venetian and Florentine republics, and the Knights of Saint John, subsequently entered into a league against the common enemy, to which the Shah of Persia, though a Mohammedan, was invited to become a party. The Persian monarch, who had great reason to tremble at the puissance of his Turkish brother, readily acceded to the league, and sent a special ambassador to Venice, to entreat his Christian allies to provide him with cannon-founders and gunners, as artillery was the only thing he required to place him on a level with Mohammed. This envoy, who was attended by a splendid retinue, touched at Rhodes, and was received with great distinction by the Grandmaster and his knights. After being entertained with great magnificence, he was escorted to Venice by the Rhodian galleys, and, on his return to his native country, carried along with him a hundred officers of artillery, and several excellent founders and gunsmiths, who introduced the use of fire-arms into the Persian army. This movement involved the Shah in a war with Mohammed, which suspended for several years the enterprise contemplated by the latter against Rhodes.

In this interval, the Grandmaster Ursini died (1476). He had long been in a superannuated condition; and the administration had virtually devolved on Peter d'Aubusson, Grand Prior of Auvergne, a knight of great capacity, both as a states-

man and a warrior, who was unanimously chosen his successor. Under his inspection great additions had been made to the defences of the city; and so persuaded were the knights and the people of the propriety of his election, that it was celebrated by public rejoicings throughout the island. His name was synonymous with victory; and the vigour with which he applied himself to adjust the diplomatic relations of the Order, showed that he was capable of superintending with equal address the most gigantic and the most insignificant details. The Venetians, by a course of mercenary policy, had obtained the shadow of a claim to the sovereignty of Cyprus, to the prejudice of Charlotte de Lusignan, its exiled Queen; and an adherent of that unfortunate Princess having found an asylum at Rhodes, the republic arrogantly called upon the Grandmaster to surrender the fugitive. The Grandmaster, had he given way to the emotions of his heart, which had in former days been deeply devoted to the expatriated Princess, would have flung an answer of defiance in the envoy's teeth; but he remembered that the interests of an illustrious Order were confided to his care; and therefore contented himself with stating in reply, that Rhodes was a free and independent country; that it neither harboured seditious persons nor rebels; but that those unfortunates who were driven to seek shelter in it were kindly entertained, and that, as such, the Cypriot chief should be protected. The Venetians, with all their pride, let this bold answer pass.

Under D'Aubusson's government, the system of espionage, which the Order had been under the necessity of maintaining in the territories of their enemies, was brought to such perfection, that spies were kept in pay within the very walls of Mo-

ammed's seraglio. Through this channel, the Grandmaster first obtained notice of the Venetians having negotiated a treaty of peace with the Porte, independent of the other parties to the maritime league; and also, that the Sultan, taking advantage of a partial respite on his Persian and Hungarian frontiers, was at length positively marshalling an armament for the conquest of Rhodes. That island was already as impregnable as art could make it; the whole coast bristled with towers and bastions; and it only remained for the Grandmaster to replenish his magazines, and summons the whole chivalry of the Order to its defence. The mandate which he despatched to the European commanders, was couched in such noble language, as roused the zeal of the knights to a pitch it had scarcely attained since their expulsion from Palestine. They crowded from all the countries of Christendom into the island; and to give farther support to the Order, Pope Sixtus the Fourth, at the instigation of the French King, Louis the Eleventh, granted a jubilee to all pious sinners who should render them pecuniary assistance—an edict which wonderfully recruited the treasury. Many secular knights of France and Italy also offered their services as volunteers; among whom was Anthony d'Aubusson, Viscount de Monteil, the Grandmaster's elder brother, and many other military officers, who had served with credit in the European wars. Mohammed, afraid that the freshly awakened ardour of Christendom would shield his victims from his clutch, condescended to temporize yet a little, in hopes of lulling asleep the vigilance of the Order. But in D'Aubusson he had a politician, profound and crafty as himself, to deal with. That gifted captain readily consented to carry on a hollow

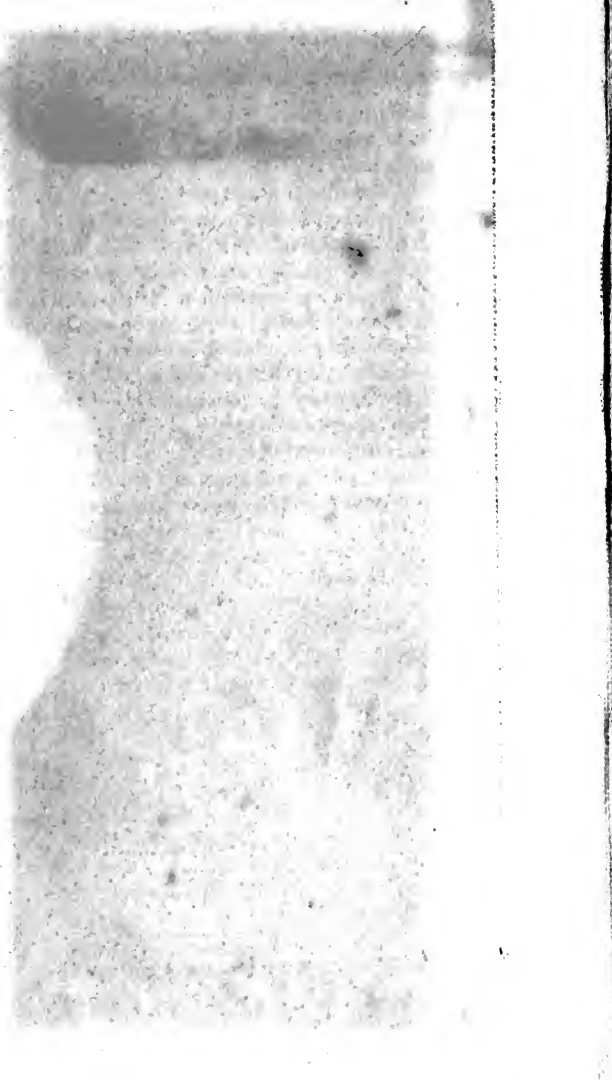
negotiation; for, by procrastinating the descent of the Infidels, he was enabled to conclude a firm truce with the Sultan of Egypt and the Dey of Tunis, and also gained time for the arrival of reinforcements from the more distant commanderies. On the 28th of October 1479, the knights, in full assembly, after a warlike oration from the Grandmaster, renewed their oath to shed the last drop of their blood in defence of the Cross. At the same time, the Chapter, as a proof of their implicit reliance on the Grandmaster's capacity, invested him with absolute authority, until the arrival of less perilous days. This honour, which, with one exception, had never been conferred on any former Grandmaster, he at first declined; but the entreaties of his knights ultimately subdued what was, in all probability, only an affected reluctance.

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LETTER D'AMUSSION
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