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THE KNIGHTS OF MALTA.

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ACHIEVEMENTS

OF THE

KNIGHTS OF MALTA.

By ALEXANDER SUTHERLAND, Esq.,

AUTHOR OF "TALES OF A PILGRIM," ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

UNIVERSITY OF

PHILADELPHIA:
CAREY AND HART.
1846.

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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 Hospitallers of Saint John of Jerusalem—for such was the original title of the Institution,

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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

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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.

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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 vicissitudes 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, every where victorious, had been interrupted in their flight only by the sands of Mauritania, the Steppes of Tartary, and the waves of the Deucaledonian 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

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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 paralysed, 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

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to be of the progeny of Abraham. His parents, who were idolaters 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 subtile 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. Idolaters, 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 ecstacies, 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 nätural 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

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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 engraft 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 Mohammedan 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

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their graves."* Omar and Othman gave their suffrages 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 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

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

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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 insured 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 disunited 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 Monstaserbillah, 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*

* 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*, vol. i. p. 347.

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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 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, reverenced 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 Jerusalém, 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

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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 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

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

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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 subtile, 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 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 Irishmen's 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 impulse; 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,

* Knolles.
† "Deus vult! Deus vult!" Robertus Monachus.
‡ Fuller's Hist. of the Holy War, B. i. c. 13.

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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 his oxen like horses, and, placing his whole family in a wagon, journeyed 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

* Du Cange. Note on the Alexiad.

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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 Bohemond, 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

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

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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 inopportunely 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 of 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 from the westward on his startled capital. Suspicious that they might be tempted to dispossess 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

* 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.*

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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 immovable 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 wards, 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 visiters, 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

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

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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, formed 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

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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 croises 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 accom-

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panied 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, Kalif 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 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.

* Renaudot. Hist. Patriarch. Alexandrin. † Maundrell's Journey.

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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 valleys 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 reck, 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 Kalif; 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 St. John—a pious and benevolent Frenchman, who had long devoted himself to the service of the pilgrims, and whom the Moslems themselves reverenced 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

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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 protomartyr died. Godfrey and Tancred erected their standards on the first swell of Mount Calvary—and Raymond of Toulouse occupied a position to 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 movable 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 Chronicler,‡ "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

* Knolles, vol. i. p. 15. † The enchanted grove of Tasso.
‡ The Monk Robert. Vide Chateaubriand's Travels in Palestine.
§ These warriors are designated "The Brothers Rudolph and Engelbert," by other writers.

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walls, and ran down into the city, whither the soldiers of Christ with loud shouts pursued them." At three in the 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 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.

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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 Kalif, 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 charitable duties. Among those who took the habit of the fraternity, were Raymond du Puis, and Dudon de Comps, gentlemen of Dauphiny—Gastus of Berdiez, 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

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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 tithes, 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 achievement 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

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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

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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 succeeded 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 princedom, 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 throbbed 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 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

* Vertot. Boisgelin says 1120.

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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 cowled 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;

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but it was not required of the priests, or of the serving-brothers, to produce proofs of gentilitial descent. The latter, however, enjoyed many honourable privileges in common with the knights; and, when their utility became better known, a certain number of commanderies 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 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

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

† 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.

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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 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 intromissions 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

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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 Kalif 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 unsuspicious 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

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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.

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

* Ducange sur Joinville. † Gibbon.

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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 St. John had suggested a new institution for kindred purposes. About the year 1119,† Hugh de Payens, Geoffrey de St. 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 knighthood, 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 St. John, they should constitute themselves a military

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

† Vertot.—In the MSS. of Father Hay, preserved in the Advocates' Library, the date of the Templar's 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.

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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 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 St. 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 daughter of the house of St. 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

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

‡ 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 titulary saint.

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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 secretly 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 seized 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 coheiress of Jerusalem, that ambitious woman exerted all her ingenuity to disposses 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,

* Fuller.

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he advanced on Antioch by forced marches. The Counts of Tripoli and Edessa, both of whom 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 Acquitain—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, eluded all 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

* Fuller, b. ii. ch. xx.

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of the desert, and entrusted 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 St. 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

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he lived," says Fuller, "he hath a good one now he is dead; and his vertues are famous to posteritie." He left two sons behind him—Baldwin, a boy of thirteen, and Almeric, 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 Noureddin, 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

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new crusade; and the Bishop of Zabulon was despatched to Europe with instructions to spare no effort to reawaken 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 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 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

* Vitri.

† 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.

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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 emprise. 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 this crusade, nearly two hundred thousand men perished. Several of the most illustrious

* William, Archbishop of Tyre.

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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, Noureddin, 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, bloodthirsty 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. Noureddin, 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

* Archbishop of Tyre.

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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.*

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 raised 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 un-

* Archbishop of Tyre.

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injured, 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 beleagured 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,

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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 Christian 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 Noureddin, 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

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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 Thierri, 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 babarians, composed of their worst troops, instantly gave way. Behind this line, however, on which the Infidel leaders placed no reliance, and which was specially 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. Scarred 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.

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CHAPTER III.

Invasion of Egypt—Conquest of Belbeis—Unsuccessful issue of the War—Saladin—Apostacy 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, Noureddin, 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 accordance 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 fron-

* Brompton and Roger Hoveden called 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.*"

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

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tier. 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 Dhargam, 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 Kalifs were mere nonentities—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 Noureddin, whom Shawer, 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, Noureddin's general, defeated and slew Dhargam in battle, and Shawer 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

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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 Noureddin, 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 effecting 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 Sailly, 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

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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 positiveness, 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 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

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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 fire-balls, 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. Imitating 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 Noureddin, 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 Noureddin'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. Amau-

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ry'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 Turkoman, 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

* William of Tyre.

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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 jeopardy, 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 Cario, which the Turkoman entered triumphantly at the head of his troops, when the Kalif, grateful for his services, and not sorry to get rid of his former vizier, declared him Sultan in Shawer'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 Noureddin'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. Noureddin, though jealous of the ambitious temper of Saladin, confirmed him in these dignities; and soon afterwards, (1171,) the death of the Egyptian Kalif, 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 Kalif of Bagdad, who had long contested with the Fatimite princes the heirdom of their prophet, and with an honourable policy recognised the supremacy of Noureddin 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

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came to maturity. Having connected himself by marriage with the family of Noureddin, he made war on that prince's son; and in a short time Damascus, Aleppo, and the 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 col-

* Vertot.

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league 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 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 apostacy 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 Hassin 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

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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 bloodthirsty race, and spared no efforts to effect their subjugation. The Assassin, 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

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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

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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 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 rampart 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

* Coggeshall.

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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 council, 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 unknightly 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 reconcilement 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 connexion, 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

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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,

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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 entrusted 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 contemn 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 Hospitallers and Templars his colleagues, in the expectation, that the wisdom and amenity of these two experienced knights would prevent

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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 Arnauld 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 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 imme-

* Hist. Philip Aug.

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diately 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 reconcilement.

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 money 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, Ridefort, 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

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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 grandees 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 reconcilement. Imprecating ruin on the heads of Lusignan and his queen, and ready to cast away even honour and

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

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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 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 Grand-masters 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 consternation 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,

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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 Grandmaster 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,

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totally ignorant of war, and took the field, determined to stake the fate of his kingdom on a single battle.*

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 unsuspicious 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, 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

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

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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 control; 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 scab-

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bard, 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; 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 undespoiled,

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

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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.*

* Continuation of William of Tyre.

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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 Patriarchal Church, which had originally been a magnificent mosque, built by the Kalif 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.

CHAPTER IV.

Siege of Tyre—Death of the Count of Tripoli—The Third Crusade—Siege of Acre—Expedition of the Emperor Frederic 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 convoy 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 Lu-

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signan 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 seashore, 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 preserving 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 bowman 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

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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 Grandmaster 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 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.

* Vertot.

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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 apostacy to his God.*

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

* 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.

† Hoveden.

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banner for the deliverance of 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 Vezelai, 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.

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 con-

* Hoveden.

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jectured, 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 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 battle-axes, 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 battle. 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, re-

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turned 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 claimed 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 titulary 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.

* Hoveden.

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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 St. 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 St. 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 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

* James de Vitri.

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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."

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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 some time 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, 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.

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

† 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.*

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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 enthusiam 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 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 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

* Boisgelin. † Joinville. ‡ Vinesauf.

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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, 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

* Vinesauf.

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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 list of European chivalry, the memory of a warrior hallowed by more illustrious deeds.*

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

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

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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 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 already 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

* 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.

† Con. William of Tyre.

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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.

Brother Alphonso of Portugal succeeded De Duisson 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 rigid 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

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

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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 numbers 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

* Abulfeda.

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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 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 escalcade. This affair led to a sort of systematic warfare between the Orders; and the rival knights rarely encountered each other, without displaying their partisanship in regular combats. 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 Hospitallers 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

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

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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, 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 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

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

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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; 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

* Ducange sur Villehardouin.

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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 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,

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

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nor the courage to repel it when it closed around. Despair took possession of him when he beheld the war-galleys 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 escalcade; 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

* Gibbon.

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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 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,* nicknamed 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 bedchamber 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

* Ducange sur Villehardouin.

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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 returned 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 Constantinople. That

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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 expedition, 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

* Villehardouin.

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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

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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

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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 the 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 Brundusium 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

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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 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

* Vertot.

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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 Grand-masters 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 directed, suddenly abandoned a design which he entertained of be-

* Mills, vol. i. p. 335.

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sieging 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 Hospitallers, 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 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

* James de Vitri.

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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, 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

* Annals of Waverley in Gale.

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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.

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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 regnant 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

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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 Italtan 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 newborn 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

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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 departure, 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 mean time, 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 advan-

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tage 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'Acre, 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

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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 discrowned 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 Chistians 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 cowled 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

* Matt. Paris.

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aware of his danger before the treasonable letter reached him; but policy withheld him from seeking immediate revenge. The military Orders 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

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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 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

* Gibbon.

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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 gray 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, Michæl 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 Massoura—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 Texis 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

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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 reconcilement, 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 depots 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

* Matt. Paris.

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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.*

During the Grandmastership of Bertrand de Texis, 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 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

* The Hospital and Chapel of Saint John of Jerusalem, 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."

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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 nearly 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 Texis; 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

* 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.

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ruinous disputes, the Hospitallers and Templars were, as usual, deeply implicated. Had not the Sultans of Egypt and Damascus been at variance, and equally solicitous 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 embarkation, 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

* Dugdale's Baronage.

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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 Navarre, 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 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 Fre-

* Matt. Paris. † Vertot.

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deric'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 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

* Matt. Paris.

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nor sex were spared in the horrible massacre with which they celebrated their victory. To deceive the fugitives who had quitted the city, they replanted 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 ruines, 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 co-operate 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, 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 barba-

* Matt. Paris. † Fuller, b. iv. c. 9, p. 184.

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rians 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 Chateauneuf, a rigid observer 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 Christendom the knights were still in force; and at this very period, when their

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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 uncoffined 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 restored to him; and no sooner did he announce his resolution of bearing the Oriflamme 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

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

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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 Emperor—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 Mussulman 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 authority 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,*

* *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

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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 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,

gilded, and the colour of the materials of the standard red; from which circumstances it received its name.—*Du Cange.*

* Fuller.

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and drink it as a sacred libation;* but either the answer which the Egyptian prince is reported to 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

* Joinville. † Camden.

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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, 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. 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

* 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.

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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 Bedoueen 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 stratagem, 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

* Matt. Paris.

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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?"

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 council of so experienced a soldier as De Sonnac was entitled to obtain. But the Count answered him slightingly, 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 passion, 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

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

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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 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 Severey, 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 the river. This shocking disorder shrivelled

* Hakluyt, vol. ii. † Matt. Paris. Joinville. ‡ Savary's Letters on Egypt.

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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 the arrogance of the legate Pelagius had delivered into the hands of the Infidels in the same pestilential marches. 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).

* Savary, Lettres sur l'Egypte. † About 16,000*l.*

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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.*

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 might be slain, another would instantly rise up in his room; and that no advantage, therefore, could result from his immolation. The King, disdaining to treat with such barbarians, referred them to the Grandmasters; whereupon the Hospitaller, William de Chateauneuf, 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.

* Macrizi, Hist. of the Dynasties of Egypt. † Joinville.

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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 Bendoodar—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 Grandmasters 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

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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-eminence. The Knights never forgot that the wayworn palmer was dependent 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 (*clamydes 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

* Matt. Paris, 846.
† Boisgelin. Chron. of Malta.
‡ Sebastian Paoli.
§ Boisgelin.

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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 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 riveted 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 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.

* Vertot.

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

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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 apostacy, that they one and all unanimously refused to renounce their creed. Bendocdar, 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 Bendocdar'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 operations 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, Bendocdar 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.

In the spring of 1271, Prince Edward of England, afterwards

* De Guignes.

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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 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.

* Chron. of Mailros, i. 241.

† 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, whilest 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."

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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, 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

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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 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 corses, 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

* Chateaubriand. † William of Nangis. Annals of Saint Louis.

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the Hardy, his son and successor, gave the signal of retreat; and the miserable remnant bade adieu for ever to the inhospitable shore.*

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, 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

* The body of the royal martyr was carried to France, and, 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 shipboard on his last expedition, was consecrated to his memory.

† Hist. Holy War, b. iv. p. 217.

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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 Mohammedan traders, Keladun, Bendocdar's successor, declared 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 appertained, 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, pretending to be dismayed at their superiornumbers, retreated on their ambush, hard pressed by the confident foe. But at the moment the Saracens thought themselves secure of victory, the hidden band suddenly 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 leisure to take vengeance for this second defeat. At the end of that time, he invested Margat with a formidable army, and, though it was defended by a brave and numerous garrison, attempted to carry it by scalade. 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

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trenches, and to raise battering engines against the walls. The knights strove gallantly to effect his dislodgment. 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 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

* 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.

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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 exhibiting 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 Logue 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,

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

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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 nightfall 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 clangour 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

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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 corses 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, they 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

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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 cruelest, 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.

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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 Cyprus 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.

* 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.*

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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

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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

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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 Jourdaine 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 repass 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-galleys, 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 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

* Vertot. † Mill's Hist. of the Crusades, note, vol. ii. p. 282.

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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, Grandmaster 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

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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, 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.

* Vertot. Proof IV.

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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

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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 Brundusium 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 Brundusium 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

* Savary, Lettres sur l'Egypte.

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course of time, to a few piratical galleys, the property chiefly of Saracen merchants, whom the native 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 successless 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 supported 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

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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 befell 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

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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 beleagured 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.§

* 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

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

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.

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

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

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

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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 slightingly, 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 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.†

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

† 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.

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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 horrible 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. 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 Grandmaster 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

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 Germains, 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.*

* Raynourd.—*Monumens Historique Ralatifs à la Condamnation des Chevaliers du Temple et l'Abolition de leur Ordre.*

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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 combated, 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, entreated, 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 the 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

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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 accorded 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 Perale, Grand Prior of France, and the Grand Prior of Acquitain. 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 Acquitain, 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,

* Vertot.

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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. 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

* Villani, lib. 8, c. 92. † Mill's Hist. of Crusades, vol. ii. p. 323. ‡ Mezeray.

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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 included 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

* 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.

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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-galleys, 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 for ever; 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'Ordre du Temple. Paris, 1817.

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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 visiter, reformer, administrator, and comptroller in ordinary, 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 trusts; 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

* Dupuy, p. 184. † Ib. p. 59.

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Sicily, Charles the Second retained the immovable property as long as he lived, and, like his royal kinsman of France, made a division of the movables 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 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 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

* Nostradamus, Histoire de Provence, an 1307. † Vertot.
‡ Stow's London, B. 3, p. 271.

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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-galleys 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 control, 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 Grand-

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master; 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

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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-galleys 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

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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-galleys 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,

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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

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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.‡

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 galleys to act in concert with this fleet.

The Grandmaster, though indignant that his detractors had obtained credence at the court of Avignon, lost no time in obeying

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

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the papal mandate. Rich garments and wines were expressly forbidden; the knights were restricted to one dish a day; six galleys were promptly equipped for sea; and, lastly, the pontiff was formally invited to suggest such retrenchments 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 Gingarria, it was joined by the Rhodian galleys. 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. Gingarria'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 stratagem, 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

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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

* Vertot.

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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 signalizing 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 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

* Boisgelin, Chron. Malta.

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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 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

* Bosio.

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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 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-galleys, 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

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

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out, it would place him under 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 effected, 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,

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nominated him, in the breach of the privileges of the Order, Grand Prior of the Priories 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-galleys, 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

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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.

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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

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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,

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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 galleys. 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 forbad 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 galleys 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

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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 Senator, 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 intelligence 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.

* Glossaire de Ducange.

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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 mien, 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 reached 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 reconnoisance in the environs of that place, he unfortunately fell into an ambuscade, which made him captive, and cut his small escort to

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pieces. For a time, the Infidels regarded him as an 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

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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 security, 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

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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

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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 Acquitain, 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,

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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. Sigismond, 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 fall, 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 overrun 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 their own prowess remained undiminished. The young chivalry of

* Bonfinius, Decades Rerum Hungaricarum.

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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, while 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 marauders 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, the 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 for ever, 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

* Froissart. † Hist. Anonyme de St. Denys.

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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 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, 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.

* Hist. Anonyme de St. Denys.]

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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.*

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-barge. 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

* Froissart.

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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 galleys of the Order subsequently conveyed them to Rhodes, where, notwithstanding the disastrous 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

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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 southwest; 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,

* Sherefeddin.

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"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 ravagers; 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 naphtha were dashed against the gates. The besieged 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,

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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 of 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 galleys; 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

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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 some time 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-galleys 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 despatched 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

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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 Saint 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, however, would have been madness. They had made the descent under an impression that they would find it defenceless, and, disappointed in this, they re-embarked, 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

* Memoirs of Marechal de Boucicault.

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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 crossbow-men, headed by the Marshal and Grandmaster, landed in the face of 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 reconnoisance 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

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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 beforehand, 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 descendant 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 reconcilement 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 continu-

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ance, 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 throughout 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 galleys was consequently changed, and they sailed in pursuit of the Corsair of Scanderoon, whom they suspected of a design to invade their island.

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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

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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 departure of his fleet, under an impression that the treasury of Saint John would speedily be impoverished by the superordinary 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, Abousaid-Jacmac, in accordance with the schemes of his immediate predecessor, had resolved to make a descent on the island. Hitherto, the constant animosities 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

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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-galleys, that same indomitable band who had won imperishable renown in every corner of Palestine. Eight galleys, four ships with high decks, and several transports, having 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 galleys, 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 debark. 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 galleys 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 war-

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rior 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 galleys 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 galleys. 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 nightfall 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

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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 in-

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crease 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 vaingloriously 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 Palæologus, 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

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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).

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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 galleys, 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 Chateauneuf 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 Sultan 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

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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 galleys 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 prisoners 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 Grandmaster'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.*

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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 colleagues, 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 apostacy 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

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Rhodes, he led in person an armament against the Greek island of Mitylene, on the pretext that its prince harboured the Rhodian galleys. The Grandmaster, 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 unstemmable 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 bloodthirsty 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, Zacosta was too temperate and sagacious a man, to dispute the papal edict. He

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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 Zacosta. 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 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

* Vertot. Boisgelin says 1464.

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republicans succour. Mohammed, in addition to a vast naval force, employed in this enterprise an army of upwards a 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'Aubusson, 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 be-

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sieged 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 Mocenigno, who had superseded the infamous Canalis, soon after attacked Satalia, a town on the coast of Pamphylia, where they sus-

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tained 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 encouraged 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 firearms 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 statesman 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.

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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 Mohammed'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 summon 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

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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.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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ACHIEVEMENTS

OF THE

KNIGHTS OF MALTA.

By ALEXANDER SUTHERLAND, Esq.,

AUTHOR OF "TALES OF A PILGRIM," ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

PHILADELPHIA:
CAREY AND HART.
1846.

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C. SHERMAN, PRINTER,
19 St. James Street.

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THE

ACHIEVEMENTS

OF

THE KNIGHTS OF MALTA.

CHAPTER I.

A Turkish armament despatched against Rhodes—Description of the city—Debarkation of the Turks—The city besieged—The Tower of Saint Nicholas assaulted—Death of Ibrahim Bey—Execution of Frapan—Insubordination among the Knights—Final repulse of the Turks—Arrival of Prince Zizim at Rhodes—His dishonourable treatment and death—Death of D'Aubusson—Grandmasterships of D'Amboise, Blanchefort, and Caretto.

The Turkish Emperor at last grew tired of deceit, and boldly proclaimed his intention of carrying fire and sword into Rhodes. This was a signal to the Grandmaster to order the houses and orchards that adorned the environs of the city to be demolished, lest they should shelter the enemy from the fire of his cannon; and the Rhodians beheld with patriotic resignation, their gay villas and delicious gardens vanish away before the pioneer's mattock and spade. At the same time, all the standing corn in the country was cut down, that no forage might remain for the Turkish cavalry, while the peasantry of the island were assigned places of refuge to which they were instructed to retreat on the enemy's debarkation.

The Pasha to whom Mohammed intrusted the command of the expedition, was Mischa Palæologus, a Greek renegade, and near kinsman of the last Christian Emperor of Constantinople. This leader, by his talents, and his hatred of the followers of the faith which he had abandoned, had secured the unlimited confidence of his new sovereign. In a reconnoitring expedition, which he made to Rhodes immediately previous to the sailing of the grand armament, he carried with him three notorious renegades, all men of ability, who

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had furnished him with minute plans of the city, and who aided him with their counsel. These were, Anthony Meligalle, a Rhodian of noble birth, who had once worn the cross of the Order,* but had been expelled for his flagitious debaucheries; Demetrius Sophian, a Greek skilful in negotiation, and believed to deal in the occult sciences; and George Frapan, a German engineer, famed for his geometrical knowledge. Meligalle did not live to see the result of his perfidy. On the voyage he was smitten with a loathsome disease; his flesh dropped off his bones; and the Turks, seeing him a mass of rottenness, flung him alive into the sea. The information Palæologus acquired by this reconnoisance, satisfied him that the knights were duly prepared for an attack, and only to be subdued by invincible patience and bravery. A detachment which he sent into the interior of the island was intercepted and nearly destroyed; and a descent he subsequently made on the island of Tilo, had an equally disastrous termination, though he battered the castle incessantly for eight days, and sacrificed the bravest of his men in an endeavour to carry it.

In the end of April, 1480, the grand armament entered the Lycian waters; and the Rhodian sentinel stationed on the summit of Mount Saint Stephen, a hill two miles from the city, notified by signal that the Crescent was in sight. The fleet amounted to an hundred and sixty high-decked vessels, independent of small craft; and the land forces exceeded eighty thousand men. It rendezvoused at Phisco, in Lycia, and on the 23d of May finally anchored on the Rhodian coast.

The city of Rhodes is situated on the sea-shore, at the base of a gently sloping hill, and was, at the time the Turks sat down before it, encompassed by a double wall, fortified by thirteen towers and five bastions of great strength and beauty. It possessed two ports of surpassing commodiousness, secured by almost impregnable defences. These defences were the three great towers of Saint John, Saint Michael, and Saint Nicholas, all erected at the extremity of moles, the first and last of which jutted far into the sea, while that of Saint Michael closed the inner port. On the rocks which confined the inner harbour, tradition describes the famous Colossus to have stood.† Two small gulfs flanked the harbour, one of which,

* Knolles, vol. i. p. 291.

† The city of Rhodes was famous of old for a colossal statue of the Sun, which was cast in brass by Chares of the city of Lindus, who learnt his art under the famous Lysippus; it was seventy cubits high, and the stride was fifty fathoms wide. This statue was thrown down by an earthquake; and the brass of it, which was carried by a Jew to Alexandria (932 years after its erection,) is said to have loaded nine hundred camels.—*Pococke's Des. of the East*, vol. ii. p. 237.

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termed the Port of the Galleys, was completely shut up by the tower of Saint Nicholas. This tower, which occupied the extremity of a magnificent mole that ran out three hundred paces into the bay, had been built during the grandmastership of Zacosta, and was regarded as the bulwark of the place.* It contained a church, which was of much greater antiquity, within the walls. The city was divided into the Higher and Lower Towns. In the former stood the Grandmaster's palace, in itself a citadel; the inns of the languages of the Order; and a great number of churches, among which that of Saint John conspicuously displayed its magnificent fane. In the Lower Town dwelt all the secular persons, craftsmen, and mariners; and in this division the population was of course more dense, and the buildings less splendid. It was a city, in short, to use the words of a writer describing its ancient splendour, which might be, at the same time, fortified against the attacks of war, and ornamented as a palace.†

The Turkish forces disembarked with all the pomp and circumstance of a triumphal pageant. The fleet covered the whole circumjacent sea, and the troops were rowed to land, to the sound of tabrets and trumpets, under cover of an incessant cannonade, which the artillery of the forts briskly returned. The knights, at the head of sixteen thousand well-disciplined soldiers, partly stipendiaries from France, England, Spain, Italy, and Germany, and partly native militia, many of whom were Jews,‡ met them fearlessly on the beach, and even flung themselves, sword in hand, into the sea, to oppose their landing. The waves were dyed with blood; but the numerical superiority of the Turks was irresistible on the open strand. Descents were made simultaneously at various points; and the Rhodians, seeing the whole shore swarming with turbaned combatants, reluctantly retired within their ramparts, while the Moslems strongly intrenched themselves on Saint Stephen's Mount. Having landed their artillery, several parties made reconnoisances under the very cannon of the ramparts, but were driven back, with slaughter, to the camp. In a vigorous sortie for this purpose, commanded by the Viscount de Montiel, Demetrius Sophian, the Greek renegade, was slain. A cannon-ball having killed his horse, he was dashed to the ground; and, being encumbered by his armour, the Rhodian cavalry galloped over him, and trampled him to death. In the same sally, a body of Turkish Spahis surrounded the Chevalier de Murat, who had dismounted to strip Sophian's body, and cut off his head.§

A narrow scrutiny of the defences of the city having impressed

* Knolles. † Strabo, lib. 14. ‡ Aristides in Rhodiaca. § Knolles.

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Palæologus with an idea that it was barely pregnable by the usual arts of war, he resorted to corruption, to secure himself a coadjutor within the walls. George Frapan, or, as he was familiarly termed, "Master George," the German engineer—the only survivor of the three renegades who had sailed with the Pasha from the Hellespont—having superintended the erection of several batteries, and given counsel as to the best mode of carrying on the siege, bethought himself of the desperate expedient of entering the city under false pretences, and performing the base duties of a spy. The Pasha readily assented to the project; and Frapan accordingly presented himself at one of the gates as a deserter from the Turkish camp, and implored protection. The Grandmaster being made acquainted with the circumstance, ordered him to be admitted, and brought directly into his presence. He was publicly interrogated before the council; and being a man of a noble port and subtle eloquence, several of the knights were inclined to give him credit for sincerity, when he declared, that his heart was torn by remorse for having, for the sake of base lucre, joined the Infidel standard, and that he aspired to suffer all the torments that barbarian ingenuity could devise, should the city be taken, rather than point another cannon against its sacred walls. But the Grandmaster was not to be won upon by the mere speciousness of a handsome exterior and a fluent tongue. He commended the penitent, with a confidential air, for the remorse he manifested, and affected to pay great deference to his advice; but, privately, he regarded him as a worthless apostate, who, for the sake of gain, was capable of violating the most solemn engagements. In this opinion he was confirmed, by the apparent eagerness of the besiegers to malign the German, which they attempted to do by shooting bullets fixed to arrows into the town, containing the words, "Beware of Master George!" It occurred to D'Aubusson, that the enemy calculated on these warnings being received as proofs favourable to the deserter, and likely to recommend him to the confidence of the knights; and, to guard against all hazard from treachery, and at the same time to turn to good account the great knowledge of the military art which Frapan possessed, six soldiers were appointed to watch his motions with unceasing vigilance, while several officers of artillery were instructed to note every remark that fell from him, likely to be useful in the defence of the place.

Meanwhile, the Pasha had commenced battering the Tower of Saint Nicholas with his heaviest cannon. The seaward rampart bore the iron shower uninjured, but the landward wall was soon shattered into a mountain of rubbish, into which the balls sank as if it had been a bank of sand. The Grandmaster, regarding this tower as the key

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of the city, reinforced the gallant band that defended it with the flower of the Order, headed by the commander Caretto, an Italian knight of tried valour; and eventually threw himself into it, along with his brother, the Lord de Monteil. On the 9th of June, two hours before daybreak, the Pasha, aware of the dilapidated state of the landward wall, ordered his troops to advance to the assault. A flotilla of small vessels landed the assailants on the mole, and, lighted by the blaze of the Rhodian cannon, which suddenly opened upon them with murderous precision, they rushed with terrible shouts towards the breach. The pile of rubbish was so steep as to require ladders to surmount it; but the fanaticism of the Turks was roused; and, man after man, they sprung, scimitar in hand, into the deadly gap, to be hurled the next moment, blackened and mangled corpses, into the ditch. In the most perilous part of the breach stood the Grandmaster, exercising the vigilance of a general, and at the same time fighting like a common man-at-arms. In the heat of the combat, a piece of stone, splintered from the rampart by a cannon-ball, struck off his helmet, on which, with the self-possession of a hero, he coolly borrowed the steel cap of the nearest soldier. The commander Caretto, in the name of his brethren, implored him to take more care of his person, as on his life depended the security of the city; but he answered, by claiming the post of danger as his right, and by hinting, that the Order need never despair while it had the power of nominating so brave a knight as Caretto as his successor. Galled by musketry, crushed to pieces beneath huge rocks and beams, and burned to the marrow by blazing naphtha and boiling oil, the storm-bands vanished rank after rank—and still new assailants clambered into the breach. Those who could not reach the foot of the wall, stationed themselves at a short distance; and while some, lighted by the flashing of the artillery, singled out the Christian knights, with their muskets and cross-bows, others threw cramp-irons fastened to cords upon the ramparts, and dragged those soldiers whom they chanced to hook headlong to the ground. In the midst of this terrible combat, several Rhodian fire-ships which lay moored, ready to drop, on a preconcerted signal, into the midst of the Turkish flotilla, were set adrift, and in a short space the Pasha beheld his galleys in flames. The sight of this conflagration revived the courage of the besieged. The cannon of the city discharged an incessant shower of balls on the hostile barks, while the musketeers stationed in the Tower of Saint Nicholas, shot down every turbaned warrior that gained the breach. Disheartened at length by the fall of their bravest leaders, the Moslems abandoned the assault, and, to escape the murderous fire that swept the mole, flung themselves into the sea. Only a small

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part escaped. The rest were either drowned in their precipitate flight, or struck down by the Christian artillery on the beach.

Foiled in this enterprise, the Pasha altered his plan of attack. Simultaneous assaults were next made against the city itself; one on the quarter of the Jews; the other on the post of the Italian knights. The latter was merely a feint; but the Jews' wall, though it was twenty-eight feet thick, speedily crumbled into ruin under a furious cannonade. The basilisks and great cannon pulverized the stones to powder; and so tremendous was their roar, that it echoed westward to Lango, and eastward to Chateau-Rouge, a hundred miles over the sea. Enormous stones were thrown into the city, and penetrated the houses to their foundations, scattering death and desolation in their wake. As the women and children were greatly terrified by these projectiles, the Grandmaster prepared a retreat for them, in the quarter farthest from the Turkish batteries. This he accomplished, by roofing a vacant space between the wall and the houses with huge beams, laid tier over tier, from which the stones discharged by the enemy's mortars rebounded without harm. To pay the Pasha in his own coin, an immense wooden machine was constructed, which threw blocks of stone of a prodigious size into the Turkish lines. Whole ranks were crushed by these enormous balls, which frequently pierced so deeply into the earth, as to smother the Turkish miners in their chambers. This engine the knights jocularly named "The Tribute,"—the rocks it projected being the only kind of tribute which the Sultan was taught to expect from them.

The Grandmaster, who had hurried from the Tower of Saint Nicholas to the immediate scene of action, seeing a practicable breach effected in the Jews' wall, ordered several of the houses nearest it to be pulled down, and a broad and deep ditch dug in place of them, behind which he raised a new fence of brick, sustained by a thick rampart. All the inhabitants, without distinction, assisted in this work. Domestic feuds were forgotten—the Greek and Latin toiled cheerfully in the same trench, and the Jewish matron assisted to carry bricks and mortar, side by side, with the Christian nun. The Grandmaster himself, and the most illustrious and most venerable of his commanders, laboured like common pioneers; and the new defences were completed with marvellous expedition.

The Pasha was not long in learning that a new barrier had risen to defeat his assault; and, exasperated at the obstinate defence of the knights, he is said to have attempted to take off their illustrious chief by assassination. The instruments he employed in this atrocious design were two deserters—the one an Epirote, the other a Dalmatian—who had renounced the Cross, and were known to be

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capable of perpetrating any deed of blood. These ruffians, who had abandoned their colours during a sortie, presented themselves before the walls, as Christians who had just made their escape from Moslem thrall, and were received back into the city as friends. The conspiracy was detected by the Grandmaster's secretary, to whom the Albanian incautiously unbosomed himself, under an impression that the secretary was discontented with his Prince, and would readily concur in any plan for his destruction. The assassin exhibited letters bearing the Pasha's seal, insuring immense wealth and the highest dignities to whoever should deliver the Sultan of his enemy; but the secretary, though a dissatisfied and suspected man, had the fidelity to reject the infamous proposition, which he instantly divulged to his master. The Albanian was arrested, and, when on the rack, discovered his accomplice. They were both sentenced to die, but were torn to pieces by the enraged populace, before they reached the place of execution.*

About the time these two apostates suffered, the Pasha, without suspending his demonstrations against the Jews' quarter, renewed his attack on the Tower of Saint Nicholas. A bridge, framed of planks and cables, was constructed of a sufficient length to reach across the narrow haven that separated the grand mole from that part of the mainland where the Moslems were encamped; and, in the night, a Turkish engineer carried out an anchor to the very base of the tower, where he dropped it among the rocks, with a strong cable made fast to it, by means of which he relied on fixing the head of the floating point in a favourable position. An English sailor, named Gervaise Rogers, who chanced to be loitering near the spot, and had the sagacity to conceal his proximity, no sooner saw the Turk retire, than, with the characteristic intrepidity of his profession and nation, he plunged into the water and cut the cable, which he coiled up on the strand. The bridge being thus cast loose, was beaten to pieces by the violence of the sea; and the Englishman carried the anchor as a trophy to the Grandmaster, by whom he was honourably rewarded. The Pasha, foiled in this expedient, resolved to tow a new bridge, framed on small boats and lighters, across the haven. In silence and darkness, the head of this bridge was made fast to the mole; and at three o'clock in the morning, the Turkish soldiery began to file over it to the base of the tower, while a flotilla of light vessels landed a body of chosen troops to co-operate on the seaward side. Palæologus in person,

* Vertot. Knolles says, "Janus the Dalmatian lost his head, and Pythius the Epirote was shamefully hanged."

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accompanied by the general of the Turkish galleys, the commander of the levies of Anatolia, and Ibrahim Bey, who had married a princess of the Ottoman line—all valiant and redoubted leaders—headed the attack. So silently was the passage of the haven accomplished, that the Turks flattered themselves that the Christians were totally unsuspicious of their project. But the vigilance of D'Aubusson never slept. Anticipating a second assault, he had duly reinforced the brave band that garrisoned the tower; and while the Turks were clambering upon the mole, an intrepid body of musketeers lined the walls, with their matches burning, and every cannon that could be brought to bear on the point of debarkation charged to the mouth with the hail of death. The smothered clank of the Moslems' arms, as they sprung, file after file, on the mole, was the signal for the cannoneers to stand to their guns. In an instant, the profound darkness which prevailed gave place to an intolerable blaze of light; and two tremendous discharges swept down hundreds of the Turkish host. To escape this furious fire, the Pasha ordered his troops to advance to the breach, and the broken wall was instantly crowded with assailants. A sanguinary conflict followed. Both parties fought with the desperation of men who had sworn to conquer or die; and while this struggle took place on the shore, the work of death raged equally fierce on the water. The Rhodian fireships, promptly unmoored, grappled with the Turkish galleys that battered the tower, and enveloped them in flames. Never, in all their wars, had the soldiers of Saint John seen so terrible a fight. Amid the thunder of cannon, the flashing of musketry, grenades, and pots of burning naphtha, mingled with that horrible accompaniment of battle, the groans of the maimed and dying, Ibrahim Bey, the hero of the Turkish bands, found himself alone on the summit of the ruined wall. The last of his soldiers had fallen by his side, and their corpses lay strewn round him like a rampart; yet, though gashed with hideous wounds, he slew several knights with his own hand before he resigned his life. In the act of discharging a fatal blow on a Christian soldier who had just pierced him with his sword, he fell dead on his adversary's body.

The dawn showed the Turkish commander that his enterprise was desperate. The sea was covered with corpses, turbans, and bows and arrows; and here and there the blackened hulk of a galley lay smoking on the waves. The Christian cannoneers, perceiving the fragile bridge that spanned the haven thronged with Turkish succours hurrying fresh to the battle, pointed their guns at it, and blew it to pieces. This circumstance completed the Pasha's despair. Despite the prayers and menaces of their commanders, his troops

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recoiled from the corse-strewn breach, and fled to the light barks that had ferried part of them to the mole. They were hotly pursued by the besieged, and many of them slain in the flight. Anthony Fradin, a Franciscan friar, who had greatly animated the Christians by his exhortations, was foremost in the pursuit, following the fugitives shoulder-deep into the sea, and, with his own hand, striking off more than one turbaned head. Twenty-five hundred Turks fell in this battle. The loss of the Rhodians was also great; and twelve knights were numbered among the slain.

For three successive days after this disaster the Turkish commander remained inactive in his camp. The spirit of his troops was subdued, but the dread of his sovereign's wrath stimulated him to new enterprises, and the posts of Italy and the Jews were again battered. Batteries were also raised against several other points, and between three and four thousand cannon-balls shook the walls in a general cannonade. Breaches gaped on every side: the lower town, particularly the Jews' quarter, was reduced almost to a heap of ruins. In his extremity, the Grandmaster bethought himself of Frapan the German engineer, and, after showing him the ruined works, demanded his counsel. The German recommended some additional batteries to be constructed, and volunteered to superintend the cannon planted on them. It is averred that, by this means, he instructed the Pasha as to the weakest points of the city, and that his cannon were invariably pointed wide of the Ottoman lines. Be this as it may, he became an object of suspicion, and was dragged before a council of war to give an account of his proceedings. His judges, detecting some incoherence in his answers, ordered him, according to the barbarous usage of the times, to be exposed to the torture; and excess of pain wrung from him an admission that he had concerted with the Turkish general to betray the place. He was declared a traitor on his own confession; and the Grandmaster himself pronounced the sentence that consigned him to an ignominious death.

The guilt of this man is described by the historians of the siege as incontrovertible; but the evidence recorded against him is, to say the least of it, of a most unsatisfactory complexion. They state, that he pronounced the situation of the city desperate; that he recommended the Rhodians to change the position of their batteries; that they did so, and that the Pasha, in consequence, changed the direction of his fire; that the cannon which he had charge of shot wide of their mark, and that he faltered in presence of the council, when called upon to rebut these accusations. There is not one of them but might, in a time of such excitement, have been success-

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fully preferred against an innocent man; and this opinion is supported by an historian of note,* who expressly says, that the Turkish general had begun to distrust Frapan, who, aware that the life of a suspected servant is valueless in the estimation of a Turk, instantly threw himself on the generosity of the Grandmaster, and divulged the whole secrets of the Ottoman camp. His confession while under the torture is dust in the balance. Many are the innocent men who have sought a respite from inquisitorial torment in a dishonoured grave.

The declaration of Frapan that the city was indefensible, a declaration which may have rendered his death a measure of policy, in order that the Rhodians might regard it as the false council of a traitor, spread consternation among the populace, and even subdued the courage of the Spanish and Italian knights. These cravens, filled with despondency, held secret meetings, at which they ascribed the Grandmaster's obstinate resistance to a love of temporal power, and argued that he was called upon to agree to an honourable capitulation. D'Aubusson, when made acquainted with these mutinous demonstrations, summoned the culprits to his presence, and, after reproaching them sharply for their pusillanimity and insubordination, told them, that he did not despair of being able to defend the city against the whole power of the Turks, without the assistance of such cowards, and that they were at liberty to quit the island, which was not so closely blockaded as to obviate every possibility of escape; but that, if they thought better of the matter, and chose to remain, the first man who spoke of capitulation should be treated as a traitor. This firm course of procedure quelled the mutiny. The knights who had engaged in it, filled with shame and sorrow, and scorning to save their lives by a flight which would have dishonoured them for ever, entreated to be allowed to return to their duty, and afterwards deported themselves with great valour. The only punishment which the Grandmaster inflicted on them was, specially excluding them from every post of trust.

The Turkish general having filled up the ditch that skirted the Jews' wall, so that a troop of horse might charge across it, and beaten down every barrier that obstructed his entrance, solicited a parley, which was held by deputies next day at the breach. The Turkish deputy condescended to compliment the knights on their gallant defence, and entreated them to avert the calamities inseparable from a successful assault. But Anthony Gaultier, Castellan of Rhodes, who acted as the Grandmaster's representative, replied,

* Knolles.

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that the Pasha was deceived as to their situation—that every knight was prepared to die at his post—and that their enemies would find the breasts of Christian men, who had surmounted the fear of death, stronger than walls or bastions.

With this answer the Turkish envoy returned to his chief. The Pasha, humbled in his own eyes at having offered any terms, swore to immolate every living being within the walls. By his orders a great number of sharp stakes were prepared for impaling the knights; and to stimulate his soldiers, he promised them the plunder of the city. Having completed his arrangements for a final assault, he maintained, for a whole day and night, an unintermitting cannonade against the breach—not to render it more practicable, for there scarcely remained one stone upon another, but to deter the garrison from constructing new defences. At sunrise on the 27th of July, the Turks advanced in formidable array to the attack. The Christians, to shelter themselves from the Turkish artillery, had taken post on the inner slope of the rubbish that marked the site of the wall, where, worn out with watching and fatigue, many of them had fallen asleep. This lapse of vigilance allowed the Turks to gain possession of the rampart on each side of the breach without discharging a musket, and, before the Christians were aware of their approach, the Crescent waved on the walls. Never had the danger been so imminent. The Grandmaster, conceiving the hour of martyrdom come, ordered the great standard of Saint John to be unfurled, and called upon the knights who thronged round him to accompany him to the breach, and clear it or perish. Five hundred Turks, who had fought their way into Jew Street, were cut to pieces by the first charge of this devoted band. The stairs that led to the top of the rampart on which the Turkish ensign was planted, were choked with rubbish, and the knights had to use ladders to accomplish the ascent. The Turks endeavoured, by rolling down huge stones, and keeping up a constant fire of musketry, to repel this assault; but the impetuous valour of the knights was irresistible. The Grandmaster was twice hurled down and twice wounded; yet he was the first to gain a secure footing on the rampart; and the short spear he carried was reddened with Turkish blood, before a single knight had mounted to his support. Several Ozmanlis of note fell beneath his arm; and the Pasha who watched the combat from a distance, seeing his banner in jeopardy, ordered a chosen body of Janizaries to advance to its rescue, and in person cheered them on to the breach. By his side marched twelve devoted men, who had sworn to pierce the Christian ranks, and immolate the Grandmaster in the centre of his own lances. They found him in

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the front of the battle clad in glittering mail, and dealing death on every side. Three of their weapons pierced him at the same moment, but the swords of his knights instantly avenged him. Happily none of his wounds were so desperate as to drive him from the breach; but his brethren in arms, regarding them as fatal, flung themselves like tigers on the enemy, and put them to total rout. The Pasha, foaming with disappointment, was carried away in the general flight, and the Christians, with shouts of victory, pursued him to his own lines.

Covered with his own blood and with that of his enemies, the saviour of Rhodes was borne to his palace. The triumph was won —the deliverance of his people achieved—and, before surgical skill had cured his wounds, one of which was in his breast, the invaders abandoned the siege, and betook themselves to their ships. Their departure took place on the 19th of August, the siege having lasted eighty-nine days; and they carried off fifteen thousand wounded, and left behind nine thousand slain. While the embarkation was proceeding, two Neapolitan ships hove in sight, and prepared to enter the port with succours, in defiance of the Turkish fleet. The Pasha ordered all the cannon that remained ashore to be pointed against them; but the wind being unfavourable for the co-operation of his galleys, one of the Neapolitan vessels ran safely into the harbour, and was received by the Rhodians with shouts of joy. The other was assailed next morning by twenty Turkish galleys; whom she beat off after an action of three hours with the loss of their admiral, though she had been seriously crippled in her rigging the preceding day.

Three churches were built at Rhodes, commemorative of this glorious defence. One dedicated to Saint Mary of Victory, was specially endowed, that prayers might be offered up in it for ever, for the souls of the slain. The meanest soldier who survived the siege, received from the Grandmaster marks of favour; and, to relieve the peasantry of the island whose lands had been laid waste, they were subsisted from the public granaries till the next harvest, and exempted from all taxes for several years.

In the first paroxysm of rage at this defeat, the Sultan contemplated punishing his recreant general with the bow-string; but this sentence was commuted to loss of dignity, and banishment to Gallipoli, which the disgraced vizier hailed as a clement decree. In the following year, 1481, while planning the subjugation of Italy, in which Achmet, his most redoubted general, had already planted his standard, death closed Mohammed's sanguinary reign. He died at a petty town of Bithynia; and at his own request, the epitaph

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inscribed on his monument recorded only the conquests which he had projected, and left uncommemorated those he had won.

The vast empire which Mohammed left behind him was contested by his sons, both of whom aspired to become his successor. Bajazet, who is generally esteemed the elder, was a prince of studious and voluptuous habits, while Djem or Zizim, the younger, was ambitious, and impatient to emulate his father's warlike renown. They were absent at their respective governments in different corners of Asia Minor when Mohammed died, and the great men of the capital were divided as to which of them should ascend the throne. The influence of Achmet Pasha, Mohammed's greatest captain, who had just returned from planting the Ottoman banner on the Italian shore, decided the succession. He declared himself in favour of Bajazet; and Zizim, who had started for the capital the moment he heard of his father's death, was informed, while on the journey, that his brother had assumed the crown. This intelligence made him return to his government at Iconium, where he proceeded to levy a great army, in order to secure the sovereignty by force of arms. Defeated by the redoubted Achmet in a pitched battle, and reduced to the condition of a friendless outlaw, he fled to Egypt, from whence, after a great deal of futile negotiation with his victorious brother, he repaired to Cilicia, and stirred up the tribes of Mount Taurus to espouse his cause. The league which he formed with several Mohammedan princes, whose independence was menaced by the gigantic power of Bajazet, was countenanced by the Knights of Rhodes, who sent five well-manned galleys to cruise against the Turks off the Caramanian coast. But in a second battle, Zizim's prospects were again blasted; and, hunted from rock to rock, and from cave to cave in the recesses of Mount Taurus, he was at length reduced to the necessity of soliciting an asylum in Rhodes. The Grandmaster, with the concurrence of the council, who held it politic to encourage dissension among the Ottoman princes, consented to receive him; and a Rhodian squadron, under Don Alvarez de Zuniga, Grand Prior of Castile, was despatched to his rescue. Zizim, hotly pressed by his pursuers, reached the shore, and, to escape a detachment of spahis, flung himself into a small bark, and put to sea. The spahis arrived on the beach a few moments afterwards; and the prince, snatching up his bow, drew an arrow to the head, and shot it into the midst of them, with a billet fastened to it, directed to "The King Bajazet, his Inhuman Brother!" In this letter he took God to witness, that his brother's injustice alone had driven him to seek an asylum with the irreconcilable enemies of his race, and at the same time invoked the retributive vengeance of

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heaven on him and his descendants—an invocation which filled his persecutor with dismay, and was held in terrible remembrance in after days when trouble bent him to the earth.

The Rhodian squadron picked up the fugitive at sea, and he was received at Rhodes with the distinction due to a sovereign prince. An eye-witness* describes him as exceedingly unprepossessing in his person, being middle-sized, thick-set, paunchy, jolter-headed, and having an inveterate squint, a nose so hooked as almost to touch his lip,—in short, in every respect the air of a remorseless and intractable barbarian. Yet, notwithstanding this repulsive exterior, Zizim was a prince of a noble soul, deeply versed in Oriental literature, master of several languages, including the Greek and Latin, and famous for his deeds in war. Feasts and tournaments celebrated his arrival; but while the city rung with sounds of revelry, the Grandmaster was racked with inquietude at the dilemma in which he foresaw he should soon find himself placed, by the presence of this sinister guest. His gloomy anticipations were not long in being realized. Turkish spies found access to the island, on various pretences, chiefly of a negotiatory nature; and D'Aubusson, dreading that the Turkish prince would be murdered in his custody, or forcibly torn from him by an Ottoman army, resolved, with the concurrence of the council, to send him to France. Zizim acceded, with a sinking heart, to a proposition which he had not the power to gainsay. Prior to his departure, he invested the Grandmaster with unlimited authority to treat with Bajazet on his behalf; and also made several acts in favour of the Order, engaging, among other things, in case he were ever established on the Ottoman throne, to maintain perpetual peace with the knights, give their fleets free access into his ports, liberate annually three hundred Christian slaves, and pay into the treasury an indemnity of a hundred and fifty thousand crowns of gold. This done, he went on board the Chevalier de Blanchefort's galley, and sailed for Europe, to find there an exile's grave.

The Grandmaster, having thus rid himself of the presence of a man whom he stood pledged to protect, and yet did not see how he could safely shelter, was won upon by Bajazet to enter into a solemn treaty of peace, the grand condition of which was, that the Order should detain Zizim in a sort of honourable captivity, independent of the jurisdiction of any Christian or Infidel prince; for which good service, the Emperor engaged to pay the Order a pension of twenty-five thousand ducats of Venice every year. Of this

* Mathew Bosio.

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compact, it is impossible to speak but in terms of abhorrence. It is indeed averred by a contemporary historian, William de Jaligni, that the Grandmaster never guarantied safe-conduct to the fugitive, nor even passed his bare word that the Order would stand between him and his brother's wrath; and William de Caoursin, Vice-Chancellor of Saint John, another contemporary writer, argues, that the Grandmaster had no alternative but to accede to this base arrangement, or bring down the implacable vengeance of Bajazet on Rhodes; but these are the apologies of men evidently not over-scrupulous in forming an estimate of moral duty. The Grandmaster had virtually become bound to shield the fugitive who had thrown himself upon his generosity. If he trembled to give him shelter, he ought at least to have sent him chainless away. The treaty that made the knights jailers to the Sultan, is the foulest stain that lies upon their fame; and all the renown which the Grandmaster D'Aubusson won in that memorable siege in which he proved the victor, and in which he so lavishly shed his blood, is effaced by the mercenary policy that induced him to violate the rights of hospitality, and consign the wanderer to a cruel durance.

Zizim, on his arrival in France, was sent to the Commandery of Bourgneuf, on the confines of Poitou and La Marche, where he was constantly attended by a guard of the Order. He appealed to Louis the Eleventh; but that selfish king only mocked him with a promise of assistance in case he abjured his faith. Rage and despair overpowered him, when he learned that the knights of Rhodes had bartered his liberty and their own honour for Turkish gold; and his attendants trembled, lest he should terminate his sorrows by a voluntary death. It was at this juncture, when Christendom rung with his wrongs, that the Kings of Hungary, Sicily, and Naples, and several other princes who contemplated a league against Bajazet, entreated that Zizim might be put at the head of their army, to secure the co-operation of his Asiatic adherents; but the Grandmaster rejected their petition, on the insincere argument, that, should the war end disastrously, the exiled prince might be delivered up by some perfidious potentate to his implacable foe. Pope Innocent the Eighth, who made a similar application, was more successful; for the deference of the knights was still as profound as ever to the edicts of the Holy See. The Grandmaster, indeed, made a feeble effort to repel the Pontiff's petition also; but the latter was inflexible. He engaged, by way of compensation, to unite the minor Orders of Saint Sepulchre and Saint Lazarus to that of Saint John, and to confer a cardinal's hat on the Grandmaster. By this treaty was the custody of the captive prince again made a matter of mercenary speculation; and Zizim

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was removed from Bourgneuf to Rome, where he was received with considerable pomp, and had reason to congratulate himself on a change which secured him the external respect due to royalty, and agreeable communion with enlightened and illustrious men. But the death of Innocent, who had calculated on using his captive as a firebrand in the East, sadly reversed the wanderer's destiny. Cardinal Roderigo de Borgia, who succeeded to the pontificate, by the title of Alexander the Sixth, was one of the most unprincipled men that had ever dishonoured Saint Peter's chair; and, atrociously venal in all his transactions, he withdrew Zizim from the custody of the French knights who acted as his attendants, and threw him into close durance in the castle of Saint Angelo, for the purpose of disposing, to the highest bidder, of his liberty and life. Bajazet was again the purchaser; and the triple-crowned tyrant, by engaging to keep his prisoner constantly immured, secured an annual payment of forty thousand ducats. The arrival of Charles the Eighth of France before Rome, at the head of a victorious army, compelled him to transfer the custody of the Turkish Prince to that monarch. Zizim was given up to Charles; but poison administered by the agents of the Pope, on the eve of his removal to the French head-quarters, cut him off almost in the same hour that he arrived in the presence of the King; and his murderer received from Bajazet three hundred thousand ducats, as the price of his blood.

It were well for the honour of the Order of Saint John, if the chronicler could pass over in silence this black page in its annals. Horror and shame humbled the gray hairs of D'Aubusson in the dust, when he learned the tragical termination of his victim's life; and the circumstance of being compelled to conceal his detestation of the murderous act, gave additional poignancy to his grief. Trouble, too, began to menace the Order from the same blood-stained hand that had cut short the days of the Turkish Prince; and, but for the representations of the King of Arragon and Castilé, who supported the knights in their protest against papal usurpations, their privileges and independence would have been seriously invaded. Startled at the abhorrent spectacle which he presented to the Christian world, the unworthy representative of Saint Peter endeavoured to recover himself in popular estimation, by preaching a crusade. A league was formed by the principal sovereigns of Europe against the Turks, and the Grandmaster was nominated Generalissimo of the confederated army. D'Aubusson, who placed little reliance on the Pope's sincerity, would have declined the honour; but the Council represented, that it would be derogatory to the Order, if it remained inactive, while the standard of the Cross was unfurled by the European

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Kings, and on that argument he accepted it. But the league was ultimately dissolved, without any signal achievement being performed by the combined squadrons. A French fleet under Philip de Cleves-Ravestein made an unsuccessful descent on the Island of Mitylene, and the Venetians took the Island of Santa Maura; but with these successes the war ended. Several princes of the league made peace with Bajazet by separate treaties; and the Rhodians at last beheld their own ensign once more the only belligerent flag in. the Levant. A squadron under the command of the Chevalier de Villaragut, captured a fleet of Turkish and Egyptian vessels richly laden, and bound from Alexandria to Constantinople; but this prize, though of great value, was but small consolation to the Grandmaster for the desertion of his allies; and he was glad to deprecate the vengeance of the two potent adversaries whom he had defied, by a tacit suspension of hostilities.

It is painful to record the last acts of D'Aubusson's life. In the memorable siege in which he acquired so much renown, the Jewish part of the population contributed in a most essential degree to the defence of the island; yet he ungratefully lost sight of the services of that proscribed race, and, on the assumption that they were the hereditary enemies of the Christian faith, given to usury and addicted to odious crimes, cruelly expelled them from their possessions. Time had shaken the mighty mind, which, at a perilous crisis, had been the salvation of the Order; and his latter days were dedicated to the enactment of sumptuary laws, of which some historians speak in terms of laudation, but which appear to have been the futile edicts of a dotard. His deathbed was embittered by the intelligence, that the sanctified assassin, who had deprived Zizim of life, had resumed his iniquitous usurpation of the specific privileges of the Order; and, in open contempt of its authority, was bestowing the richest dignities on his minions. At eighty years of age, Peter D'Aubusson died; and, notwithstanding these shades on his otherwise illustrious character, the tears of his knights followed the saviour of Rhodes and the "buckler of Christendom" to his grave.

Emeri D'Amboise, succeeded D'Aubusson, as Grandmaster (1503). In the same year Pope Alexander the Sixth, a monster who had too long harassed the world with his crimes, perished by inadvertently quaffing the contents of a poisoned goblet which he had drugged for the purpose of shortening the life of one of his particular friends. On hearing of his death, D'Amboise, who was at the court of France at the time, employed in negotiations calculated to protect the Order from the unjust infractions to which it was exposed from papal rapacity, abandoned his diplomatic labours as useless, and re-

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paired to Rhodes, carrying with him, as a present from the French King, the sword which Saint Louis had worn in his crusades. He found Rhodes menaced by the Turks and the Egyptians. Amurath, son of the unfortunate Zizim, hunted from Egypt, in which his mother and brethren had found an asylum, threw himself, like his father, on the generosity of the knights. Bajazet, in revenge, ordered every corsair that scoured the Levant to harass the Rhodian coast. Amurath subsequently became a Christian, and had the Castle of Feracle in Rhodes assigned him as a residence, where he led a tranquil and exemplary life. The Turkish pirates, combining under Camali, a famous commander, made descents on Rhodes and its dependencies; but in every instance without success. Lero, a mere rock, was saved by the presence of mind of Paul Simeoni, a young Piedmontese knight, who lined the walls of the castle with peasants and women habited as knights, at the sight of whom the Turks hastily retreated to their ships. Seven flutes—long vessels with low decks, and provided with oars as well as sails, which Campson Gauri the Sultan of Egypt had equipped, were still more unfortunate. It was the intention of their commander to attack Lango, and he despatched two of his vessels to reconnoitre that island, but they were intercepted and driven ashore by two Rhodian galleys. The crews landed and hid themselves in the island, while the knights promptly remanned the deserted barks with Christian soldiers and mariners, and sent them out against the main body of the Egyptian fleet. The Egyptian admiral, seeing his cruisers returning, unsuspiciously permitted them to come within gunshot, when they instantly opened a furious fire; and at the same moment two well-manned Rhodian galleys swept round a headland, and poured in broadside after broadside into the Egyptian line, which induced the whole of the squadron to surrender.

In the same year, a single Rhodian galley commanded by the Chevalier de Gastineau, captured a magnificent Egyptian carrack, which the Egyptians boastingly termed the Queen of the Sea, bound for Constantinople with immense wealth. This vessel, which had long been watched by the knights, was of enormous bulk. The mast of a common galley barely rose the height of her prow; it took six men to embrace her mast, and she had seven tiers or decks, two of which were under water. For defence, she carried a hundred guns, and a thousand soldiers, independent of her crew. Gastineau, lay in wait off Candia for this vast bark, and, when within cannon-shot, sent his long-boat to summon her to surrender. The Saracen captain returned a proud and insolent answer; and the Rhodians, who had dropped close to the carrack during the parley,

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suddenly opened their guns. The first discharge killed the captain of the carrack and several of his bravest officers; and the survivors, rather than sustain another broadside, pulled down their flag, and struck. The crew were afterwards redeemed at an immense ransom.

Three years afterwards (1510), inflated by the remembrance of these triumphs, the Grandmaster prevailed on the council to send a squadron to the coast of Cilicia, to harass a colony of ship-builders whom the Sultan of Egypt had despatched, with the consent of the Turkish emperor, to fit out a new armament in that richly wooded country. The command of this fleet, which consisted partly of galleys and partly of high-decked vessels, including the great carrack, was intrusted jointly to Andrew D'Amaral, a Portuguese knight, and a French chevalier, Villiers de l'Isle Adam. Both these knights were brave, and well skilled in maritime affairs; but inordinate pride and conceit obscured the military virtues of the Portuguese. The two admirals came to issue while at sea respecting the mode in which they should attack the enemy. L'Isle Adam wished to lie in wait to intercept the Egyptian fleet on its homeward voyage, while D'Amaral was for running boldly into the gulf in which it was anchored, and giving it fair battle. The debate waxed so hot that the disputants were on the point of deciding it with their swords; but at length the good sense of L'Isle Adam induced him to give way, and the fleet entered the bay prepared for action. The Egyptian admiral, who had crowded his vessels with land forces, rather invited than shunned an engagement. By dint of superior seamanship, the Rhodians gained the wind of the enemy, and for three hours the fleets maintained a sanguinary fight. At the end of that time, the Rhodians boarded their adversaries. Several Egyptian ships surrendered, while the crews of others deserted them, and fled to the shore; but their admiral, who was young, and a near kinsman of the Sultan his master, died honourably on his own deck. Eleven ships and four galleys were captured by the knights, and the remainder destroyed. The runaways were pursued on shore, and many of them taken and made slaves; while the timber which the Egyptian carpenters had framed was set on fire and burned. This victory, at once replenished the treasury, and shed a lustre on the last days of the Grandmaster D'Amboise. He died in 1512, at the mature age of seventy-eight, having enjoyed the supreme dignity nine years.

Guy de Blanchefort, the same French knight who had been intrusted with the custody of the unfortunate Zizim during his captivity in Europe, succeeded to the Grandmastership. Blanchefort was in France at the time of his election; but a rumour being pre-

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valent that the Turks contemplated another descent on Rhodes, he instantly embarked for that island, though the state of his health was such as to incapacitate him from sustaining the exertion incident to the voyage. Off Trapani in Sicily, his illness assumed a fatal aspect, and his attendants entreated him to land; but he persisted in prosecuting his voyage, on the ground, that, were he to die so near Rome, Julius the Second, one of the most ambitious pontiffs who had ever sat in Saint Peter's chair, and who had for some time been industriously exerting himself to secure the co-operation of the Order in his warlike projects, would usurp the privilege of the Council, and nominate the next Grandmaster. Off the island of Zante, death closed Blanchefort's career; and, at his own request, a fast-sailing caravel was despatched to Rhodes, with injunctions to the Council to lose no time in electing a new chief. On the day subsequent to its arrival (December 14, 1513), Fabricio Caretto, Admiral of the Order—the same illustrious Italian knight who had fought side by side with D'Aubusson, amid the ruins of Saint Nicholas' Tower—was chosen Grandmaster in his stead.

The reign of the Emperor Bajazet had terminated in the preceding year. Poison, administered through the agency of Selim, the most warlike and ambitious of his sons, cut him suddenly from the earth; and his murderer ascended a throne stained with his father's and his brother's blood, to harass the world with new alarms. The Shah of Persia, routed by him in a pitched battle, was glad to solicit the alliance of the Knights of Rhodes; and in the league which was formed between them, Campson Gauri, Sultan of Egypt, was included at his own special request. Syria had long been harassed by the Turks; and the Egyptian foresaw, that the moment the Ottoman banner came to be firmly planted in the Holy Land, the main bulwark of his independence would be swept away. His anxiety to avert this event accelerated its arrival. Selim, finding it impossible to disengage him from the Persian league, turned his whole forces against him; and in the course of four years, Syria, Palestine, part of Arabia, and all Egypt, were prostrated at the Ottoman's feet. The dominion of the Mameluke princes was completely subverted by these conquests; and two traitors, who had abandoned their Sultan in the hour of danger, were installed as governors of the subjugated states. Having thus avenged himself of his Egyptian adversary, Selim began to make preparations for conquering Rhodes, when, in 1520, an acute disease prematurely terminated his reign.

Solyman the First, surnamed the Magnificent, Selim's only son, succeeded to his crown and empire. This prince, the most illus-

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trious of the Ottoman line, was, in the course of his long and glorious reign, the contemporary of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, Francis the First of France, Elizabeth Queen of England, and Mary Queen of Scots—all of them sovereigns whose names occupy a distinguished place in the annals of Europe. Solyman had barely arrived at manhood, when he was elevated to the throne; and Gazelles, the Mameluke governor of Syria, conceiving the opportunity favourable for shaking off the Turkish yoke, rashly unfurled the banner of revolt. Aware of the mighty power with which he had to contend, he applied to the Rhodians for military stores. The Grandmaster, delighted to see disunion separating the hereditary adversaries of the Order, not only granted the ordnance and ammunition solicited, but sent along with them several skilful officers to superintend the guns. But the Mamelukes were defeated in their first encounter with the Turkish troops; and Gazelles, after performing prodigies of valour, died on the field. His death put an end to the insurrection, and left Solyman leisure to mature his plans for the reduction of Rhodes, the conquest of which he held to be a tribute due to his father's manes. Policy, however, induced him first to disperse a war-cloud which had risen on his northern frontier; and while his army was engaged there in besieging Belgrade, the Order of Saint John lost its Grandmaster.

CHAPTER II.

Election of L'Isle Adam—Correspondence with the Emperor Solyman—New declaration of war between Turkey and the Knights—Defensive preparations—Arrival of the Turkish armament—Gallantry of Prejan de Bidoux—Opening of the Turkish trenches—Arrival of the Sultan Solyman—His stratagem to reanimate his troops—Attacks on the Tower of Saint Nicholas, and Bastions of England, Italy, Spain, Provence, and Auvergne—Severity of Solyman towards his generals—Renewed assaults on the Bastions—The Chancellor D'Amaral accused of treason—His execution—Sanguinary struggle at the Bastion of Spain—Offers of capitulation rejected—The city declared untenable—Pacific negotiations—Renewal of hostilities—Capitulation—L'Isle Adam's interview with Solyman—Departure of the Knights from Rhodes.

Caretto died in 1521, and three candidates aspired to the vacant dignity. These were, Andrew D'Amaral, Grand Prior of Castile; Sir Thomas Docray, Grand Prior of England; and Philip Villiers de L'Isle Adam, Grand Prior of France. The arrogance of D'Amaral so completely disgusted the Chapter that he was

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unanimously rejected, and the votes were divided between the English and French knights. The Englishman possessed considerable natural abilities, great experience in diplomacy, and had, moreover, a princely revenue to recommend him; while in point of mental qualifications alone was his rival equal. The great preponderance of French influence, however, decided the vote, and L'Isle Adam was declared Grandmaster.

L'Isle Adam was in France when he was elected, but he lost no time in repairing to Rhodes. He sailed from Marseilles in the great carrack, and had only been a day or two at sea, when, through the carelessness of one of his attendants, the vessel took fire. The seamen, panic-struck by the fury of the conflagration, were for deserting the ship, and making to the shore in four feluccas which bore her company; but the resolution of L'Isle Adam, who prohibited every man from leaving his post under pain of death, restored subordination, and inspired the crew with energy to extinguish the flames. Scarcely was this peril surmounted, when a new one beset them. A furious tempest rose; and while the carrack, at all times cumbrous and unmanageable, was labouring through the mountainous waves, a thunderbolt fell on her stern, killed nine men, and shivered the Grandmaster's sword to pièces in its scabbard. The mariners, in all ages and countries a superstitious race, regarded the latter circumstance as a presage of dismal import; and even the attendant knights spoke of it as a disastrous omen. L'Isle Adam alone scouted these womanish alarms. He ran into Syracuse to refit; and the moment his ship was in a condition for sea, resumed his voyage, notwithstanding he had advice that Curtoglu, a noted corsair, lay in wait for him off Cape St. Angelo, with a superior force. By judicious seamanship, the carrack doubled the perilous headland under the cloud of night, without encountering an enemy, and arrived safe at Rhodes, to the great joy of the Order.

In the summer of 1521, Belgrade, the bulwark of Hungary, surrendered to Solyman; and he found himself at leisure to complete his arrangements for the conquest of Rhodes. Notwithstanding the divan, which he always consulted, was divided as to the propriety of the enterprise, he could not bring himself to abandon it. Mustapha Pasha, a young and ardent soldier, who had married his sister, and Curtoglu, the pirate, were the principal advocates of the project. In order to gauge, as it were, the abilities of the Christian knights with whom he was about to enter the lists, in an arena from which the legions of one of his most warlike predecessors had returned covered with disgrace, Solyman, before unfurling his standard, addressed the Grandmaster by letter in the following terms.

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"Solyman, by the grace of God, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Most High Emperor of Byzantium and Trebizond, Most Mighty King of Persia, Arabia, Syria, and Egypt, Supreme Lord of Europe and Asia, Prince of Mecca and Aleppo, Master of Jerusalem, and Ruler of the Universal Sea,—To Philip Villiers De L'Isle Adam, Grandmaster of the Isle of Rhodes, greeting:

"I congratulate thee on thy new dignity, and thy arrival in thy dominions. Mayst thou reign there long and happily, and obscure the glory of thy predecessors! I offer thee our friendship, and entreat thee not to be the last of our allies to give us joy for our triumphs over the Hungarian King, whom we have stripped of the strong fortress of Belgrade, after having wasted his territories with fire and sword, and carried away many of his people. From Constantinople—Farewell."

The Grandmaster, who saw in this letter only a hidden menace, and who had just seen several merchantmen enter the port, after being roughly handled by the pirate Curtoglu in the neighbouring strait, returned the following answer:

"I understand right well the meaning of thy letter. It is as pleasing to me to be called thy friend, as it will be displeasing to the pirate Curtoglu to learn, that thou hast tendered me thy friendship. That corsair sought to make me captive on my voyage from France; but, failing in the project, he has since stole by night into the Rhodian waters, and attempted to plunder several ships and barks belonging to our ports. The galleys of the Order, however, have driven him homeward, and torn several prizes from his grasp in the moment of flight. From Rhodes—Farewell."

The Grandmaster, not caring to trust one of his knights in the power of a prince who sat on the throne of the "Manslayer," and whose native magnanimity was yet unknown, forwarded his answer by a Grecian messenger. This breach of etiquette led to some further correspondence, which terminated in open defiance. The Rhodians suspected that the main object of these letters was to entrap some knight of renown in the capacity of ambassador, and wring from him by torture a full account of the defences of the city; and the following circumstance proved the accuracy of this suspicion. While the intentions of the Sultan were yet dubious, or at least not distinctly avowed, signal-fires were kindled on the Lycian shore; and the Rhodians, who knew them to indicate a wish on the part of the Turks to hold a parley, despatched Mennetou, a French knight, with a well-manned galley, across the Strait. Mennetou carried with him a Rhodian named Jaxi, who spoke the Turkish language, and had acquaintances on the mainland, with instructions to ascer-

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tain, as far as practicable, the Sultan's designs. On nearing the hostile coast, Mennetou descried a group of Turks, apparently merchants, congregated near a fountain, with abundance of merchandise spread out around them. These men earnestly invited the Christians to land, and sent on board a richly dressed Turk, as a pledge that their intentions were amicable; whereupon Jaxi was put ashore; but no sooner was he fairly in the midst of them, than the false traders, who were in reality soldiers in disguise, made him prisoner. On witnessing this act of treachery, Mennetou bore away for Rhodes with his hostage, who, instead of a grandee, as his garments betokened him, turned out to be an ignorant peasant, decked out for the occasion. Jaxi was hurried to Constantinople; and, after being exposed to protracted tortures, divulged all he knew regarding the defences of the island. The atrocity of this act rests less probably with the Sultan than with his minions. Be this as it may, the depositions of Jaxi encouraged him to make an immediate declaration of his designs on Rhodes; for he had risen so far superior to the brutal usages of his forefathers, as to scorn to steal tiger-like on his prey. Signal-fires were again kindled on the Lycian coast; and the galley which was despatched to answer them, brought back a formal annunciation of war. With the pomp of his race, the Sultan called upon the knights to surrender their strongholds, in which case he solemnly pledged himself to grant them a safe and honourable convoy from the island; but, in the event of their resistance, he swore to immolate one and all of them at their guns, and to level the walls and bastions with the grass that grew at their foundations.

This was language that required no answer from men rallied round a banner which, for four hundred years, had waved proudly in the front of Paynim battle. The Grandmaster and his brethren made haste to complete the arrangements, which had long been in progress, to strengthen and provision the city. Instructed by the example of the Grandmaster D'Aubusson during the former siege, the villas in the suburbs were razed, and all the forage in the island stored within the walls. Three commissioners, Gabriel de Pommerols, John Buck, of the language of England, and the Chancellor D'Amaral, were nominated to superintend the replenishment of the magazines; and vessels were despatched to Candia, Sicily, Naples, and even France, for grain, wine, powder, arms, and men. Anthony Bosio, a serving-brother of great enterprise and sagacity, was intrusted with the mission to Candia, and easily succeeded in shipping the stores he was sent in search of; but he found it a more arduous undertaking to secure the services of five hundred Cretan archers, which the Grandmaster was anxious to obtain. The Candiot go-

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vernor was apprehensive of drawing down the vengeance of the Turks on his own island; and therefore forbade, by public proclamation, any of his subjects engaging, under pain of death, in the defence of Rhodes. By judicious management, however, and probably with the connivance of the Governor, Bosio not only secured all the troops he desired, but prevailed on Gabriel Martinigo, a Venetian engineer of distinguished reputation, to embark privately in a felucca and join the Order. The Candiots sent two fast-sailing vessels in pursuit of Martinigo; but Bosio eluded them by an adroit manœuvre at sea, and, passing safely through a Turkish squadron at the dead of night, exultingly entered the port, and presented the Venetian to the Grandmaster. He was received with greater distinction than if he had won a battle; and Martinigo, who was a man of illustrious descent, and full of that generous contempt of danger which prompts the soldier to noble deeds, not only cheerfully engaged to use his utmost exertion to strengthen the works and contribute to the salvation of the city, but in a moment of enthusiasm threw himself at the Grandmaster's feet, and entreated that, as he was determined to share the fate of the Order, let it be ever so disastrous, he might be received as a brother, and thereby enabled to appear in battle with the cross of Saint John on his breast. His election was unanimous; a considerable pension was awarded to him until a suitable commandery should become vacant, and he was named Inspector-general of the fortifications, and admitted into several other confidential offices. Under his superintendence the walls and towers were carefully repaired; the ramparts heightened, ravelins built before the gates, and casemates made in the flanks of the bastions. The counterscarp was mined and primed with gunpowder, ready to be fired by subterranean trains on the first emergency; and trenches were dug, and forts and barricades erected in every street.

But, though the knights manifested a truly heroic spirit, there were among them men whom selfish considerations betrayed into partial derelictions from their duty. The succours which the Grandmaster had summoned from the remote possessions of the Order, were tardily and niggardly forwarded; and several of the European commanders showed a discreditable indifference to the exigencies of the state. In Rhodes itself, a cabal, fomented by the Chancellor D'Amaral, broke out among the Italian knights. On the argument, that the Pope, Adrian the Sixth, had, to their great prejudice, usurped the patronage of their commanderies, they requested leave to repair in a body to Rome, and represent their grievances. The Grandmaster firmly refused to permit their departure at such a juncture; and the malecontents, exasperated at his refusal, and misled

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by perfidious advice, seized a vessel, in direct contravention of his authority, and retired to Candia. The Grandmaster instantly proclaimed them rebels and cravens, and, by a decree of the Council, they were deprived of the habit of the Order. Unwilling, however, to lose the services of a considerable number of brave knights at a time when the very existence of the state was at stake, the Grandmaster despatched a confidential mediator to Candia, by whose representations the deserters were induced to return to Rhodes, and throw themselves on their superior's clemency, with a protest that they were ready to wash out the stain on their honour with their blood. The Grandmaster graciously forgave them; and they were permitted to resume the habit which they had forfeited, and to take their station once more in the Christian ranks.

A general review of his troops satisfied L'Isle Adam, that his whole reliance was on the spirit that animated them—not on their numerical strength. The garrison with which he contemplated defiance to the legions of Solyman, amounted only to about five thousand regular troops—six hundred of whom were knights. In addition to this force, the mariners of the port formed themselves into an efficient band; and the citizens also took arms, but with much less courage than they had manifested in the former siege. The peasants, who crowded into the city, were disciplined to serve as pioneers; and the very slaves were made to work at the fortifications, and contribute to the general defence. The knights, the better class of citizens, and the mariners of the port, were animated by the noblest enthusiasm; and never had the fortifications been in a more perfect condition. As has already been mentioned, the city was encompassed by a double wall, strengthened by thirteen towers, five of which stood within ravelins and bastions, covered by barbacans or *fausse-brayes*, and other advanced works. The principal ditch was wide and deep, the counterscarp well faced and palisaded, and the adjacent country completely commanded by cannon of various calibre. Grenades, fire-pots, and enormous blocks of stone, were piled up for immediate use in every bastion; several ships laden with stones and rubbish were sunk at the entrance of the bay from which the Turks had assailed the Mole of Saint Nicholas in the former siege; and the port was shut by a double chain. From the glacis to the very centre of the city, there was a continued succession of fortifications, none of which could be carried without an immense sacrifice of life; and Rhodes, in these last days of its glory, stood the strongest, as it had long been one of the fairest, cities of the East.

The Grandmaster selected the most redoubted knights to fill the posts of honour and danger. The Venetian Martinigo, assisted by

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the knights Nueres and Britto, superintended the fortifications; while the command of the artillery devolved on Didier de Tholon de Saint Jaille. The bastion of Auvergne was confided to the knight Du Mesnil—that of Provence to Berenger de Lioncel—that of England to Nicholas Hussey—that of Italy to Andelot Gentili—and that of Spain to Francis des Carrieres. Raymond Roger commanded in the quarter of Auvergne—Raymond de Ricard in that of Provence—the commander Valdner in that of Germany—William Ouazon in that of England—George Einar in that of Italy—and John de Barbaran and Enard Sollier in those of Castile and Arragon—while Joachim de Saint Aubin, at the head of the flower of the French Knights, was intrusted with the defence of the wall, from the French tower to the gate of Saint Ambrose. The defence of the quarter of Saint Mary of Victory, the weakest point of the fortifications, was undertaken by L'Isle Adam himself; and, quitting his palace, he took up his abode, along with the knights whom he had selected to fight by his side, in a house in the immediate vicinity of that bulwark. The Knights Grand-crosses D'Amaral, John Buck, Peter de Cluys, and Gregory de Morgut, were named Adjutants-general, with the command of movable corps-de-reserve; while Gabriel de Pommerols was appointed Lieutenant-general, and the Chevalier de Bonneval commander of the Grandmaster's guards. Two corps of six hundred men each were ordered to patrol the city day and night; and their commanders were empowered to judge and punish malefactors with death, under the mere reservation of appeal to the Grandmaster. Twenty knights, and three hundred chosen soldiers, under the command of Guyot de Castelane, a brave gray-haired Provençal knight, were intrusted with the defence of the Tower of Saint Nicholas, which was still regarded as the key of the city; and, lastly, a knight of Dauphiny, named Anthony de Grolée, had the honourable post of bearing the great standard of the Order. To insure the fidelity, and encourage the zeal of the citizens, the Latin and Greek metropolitan Archbishops were instructed to enforce, in their sermons, the necessity and merit of a courageous resistance. All the inhabitants of the smaller islands were invited to repair to Rhodes, to avoid the fury of the Turks; and many of these refugees proved themselves valiant and efficient soldiers, by resolutely defending the castles of Lindo, Feracle, and other small fortresses in remote parts of the island.

It was a sight of sorrow to the citizens of Rhodes, to see the peasantry enter the capital laden with their household goods, and followed by their weeping wives and children. These poor people felt that ruin had already overtaken them, and that, in the recesses of a besieged city, privation and death would certainly be their lot.

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In the course of the siege, the cattle which they brought along with them were famished; and pestilence, generated by their putrid remains, scourged the island long after the war-blast had passed away.

Late in the spring of 1522, Solyman, having completed his arrangements, ordered a mighty armament to put to sea. He named Mustapha Pasha, his favourite and brother-in-law, generalissimo of the land forces, and the pirate Curtoglu, admiral of the fleet. Mustapha had under him Achmet Pasha, an able engineer, and Pyrrhus Pasha, an aged chief of great sagacity, who had been the Sultan's governor, and enjoyed his entire confidence, and who attended the general rather as a counsellor than as a lieutenant. The defenceless islands, which acknowledged the sovereignty of the knights in the adjacent sea, sustained the first burst of Turkish vengeance. The fruitful island of Lango was nearly laid waste by a body of marauders; but, through the valour of the governor, Prejan de Bidoux, a French knight, they were driven back with loss to their ships. While the grand expedition was rendezvousing in the Lycian ports, twenty Turkish galleys manœuvred almost daily in the middle of the adjacent strait, in the hope of alluring the Rhodian squadron out to battle; and, when they found the latter too cautious to risk an engagement in a spot where it ran a hazard of being assailed by an overwhelming force, they audaciously ventured within cannon-shot of the port. This bravado almost betrayed the Grandmaster into the snare they had laid for him. His own gallant spirit, supported by the strenuous counsel of the Chancellor D'Amaral, and the noble indignation of many of the knights, impelled him to punish the braggarts in the way they invited; but a dread of weakening the garrison, by sacrificing any of his troops in a voluntary engagement, induced him to reject the defiance. He felt that the Turkish general could, with more prudence, fling away the lives of a hundred spahis, than he could sacrifice that of one man.

Early on the morning of the 26th of June, a signal from Mount Saint Stephen intimated to the Rhodians that the Turkish fleet was in sight. Countless sails studded the Lycian Strait; and tumult and wailing instantly rose from every quarter of the city. The gates were formally shut, and public prayers were offered up in the churches, imploring heaven to grant the victory to the champions of the Cross. This done, the whole population hurried to the ramparts and towers to behold the terrible armament that threatened them with destruction. Four hundred sail swept past the mouth of the haven with the pomp and circumstance of a triumphant pageant; and on board this mighty fleet were one hundred and forty thousand soldiers, exclusive of sixty thousand serfs, torn from the forests of

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the Danube, to serve as pioneers. The Vice-admiral Cara Mohammed, when he arrived off the entrance of the bay, ordered his galleys to strike sail, and row into the port. The rowers accordingly stretched to their oars, and the Rhodians, conceiving their harbour in danger, rushed with noble emulation to the seaward bastion. But a few cannon-balls deterred the Turk from persevering in his bravado, and the Rhodians, proudly waving their standards, shouted in scorn and triumph as he bore away.

The main body of the Turkish army debarked in a small haven about three miles eastward of the city. Thirteen days elapsed before the troops, ordnance, and military stores were all landed; and, in the interim, the Rhodians were greatly cheered by the arrival of Prejan de Bidoux, governor of Lango, who, with the Grandmaster's consent, had evacuated that island, and made haste to throw himself into the beleagured capital. This brave knight, who had passed his life in war, made the voyage from Lango in a small pinnace, in which, at the dead of night, he passed safely through the Turkish fleet. He was a commander in whom the soldiers placed unlimited confidence. During the siege, he scarcely ever doffed his helmet; and the Grandmaster found him as sagacious in the council, as he had long been redoubted in the field.

The Turks, having completed their debarkation and pitched their camp, debated whether they should first reduce the minor fortresses in the island, or immediately assail the capital. The General advocated the latter course, and the regular investment of the city commenced. The enemy broke ground beyond cannon-shot; but in a few days the trenches were sufficiently advanced to admit of a battery being raised, which the Rhodian artillery speedily destroyed. To interrupt the labours of the pioneers, the garrison made sorties, in which vast numbers of these defenceless wretches were slain. Dragged from their rustic avocations in the forests of Hungary and Bulgaria, they came unwillingly to the war, and, constantly threatened with flagellation and death, if they remitted their exertions, they threw up works with incredible celerity, under the very fire of the Rhodian batteries. Every discharge from the walls made terrible havoc among these miserable slaves, and the adjacent plain was strewed with their mutilated remains. Every day there was a sally; and every day the trenches in which they laboured served hundreds of Dacian boors for a grave.

The Turks had embarked in the expedition, inflated by their recent conquest of Belgrade; but short experience satisfied them that the reduction of Rhodes was likely to prove a far more toilsome and sanguinary achievement. Dismayed by the terrible precision of the

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Rhodian cannoneers, and haunted by the remembrance of the Sultan Mohammed's defeat, they began to murmur; and symptoms of mutiny developed themselves in the camp. In this extremity, Pyrrhus Pasha held it his duty to report to his sovereign the state of his army. The Sultan's presence, alone, he said, could eradicate the seeds of revolt, and reanimate the courage of the soldiers; and Solyman, with the martial ardour of his race, instantly marshalled a body of fifteen thousand chosen men, and repaired in person to the siege. While this formidable reinforcement was on the march, a female slave, eager to recover her liberty, formed the daring project of firing the city, and, by that diversion, facilitating the entrance of her countrymen. But a hint of the plot inadvertently fell from an accomplice; and a number of suspected slaves were consequently arrested, and put to the rack. Pain extorted from all of them, save the chief culprit, an admission of guilt; but she endured the most acute tortures without flinching. Her judges sentenced her to be hanged and quartered along with her associates, and their severed limbs were publicly exposed, as a warning to the rest of the slaves to beware of cherishing similar designs. This woman, like Frapan the German engineer, who died the death of a malefactor during the former siege, appears to have been immolated on mere suspicion, and probably more as a matter of policy than from a thorough conviction of her guilt. In the present age, men shudder even to read of a woman suffering such a doom. How innumerable are the acts of error, injustice, and barbarity, which the annals of the world embrace!

Solyman, after a rapid march through Anatolia, reached Porto-Fischo, on the Lycian coast, from whence his fleet carried him to Rhodes. He entered the camp on the 28th of August, welcomed by salvos of artillery, music and martial cries; and the mutineers were appalled to hear, that he came to decimate, or put every tenth man to death. The whole army was ordered to assemble unarmed on the plain; and Solyman ascending, with a fierce and stately mien, a lofty and magnificent throne which had been prepared for him, commanded the fifteen thousand chosen soldiers, who had served as his escort from Constantinople, and who still retained their weapons, to surround the defenceless host. He then addressed the malecontents in contemptuous and wrathful language—reviling them as cowards, and menacing them with instant and exemplary punishment. "I myself," he concluded, "am fully resolved here to conquer or end my days; and if I depart from this resolution, let my head, my fleet, my army, and my empire, be for ever accursed and unfortunate!"

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The moment he ceased speaking, a signal was given to the armed soldiers, who instantly drew their scimitars; whereupon the mutineers, conceiving that their last hour was come, prostrated themselves on the earth, and implored mercy. Pyrrhus Pasha and the other generals affected to entreat the Sultan in their behalf; and Solyman, who had never seriously meditated a bloody revenge, agreed to forgive them, on the pledge that they would evince the sincerity of their repentance by their valour in the first assault. "I suspend," said he to Pyrrhus, "the punishment of these cowards; but let them seek their full pardon in the bastions and upon the ramparts of our enemies."

This judicious display of severity and clemency combined, completely dispelled the discontent of the soldiers, and reanimated them with a fanatical zeal. They burned for an opportunity of redeeming their character; and the pioneers, protected by strong detachments of troops, laboured so indefatigably, that they speedily carried their works as far as the counterscarp. A treacherous Jew within the city having instructed Solyman that the shot from his batteries merely grazed the battlements, and flew harmless over the city, his cannoneers, though ignorant of the modern method of lowering their guns, endeavoured to rectify the error. The same spy also warned him, that the knights were able to overlook his camp from the lofty steeple of Saint John; whereupon a battery was raised against it, which beat it down. In order the better to command the city, which was literally buried in fortifications, the pioneers were directed to raise two cavaliers; and in the course of a few days, two immense hills of earth, ten or twelve feet higher than the walls, rose over against the bastion of Italy, between the posts of Spain and Auvergne. As the cannon on the bastions completely commanded the site of these hills, the pioneers were swept away, gang after gang, by the shot incessantly hailed on them; but these poor slaves were of no value in the estimation of their task-master, who recked not how many of them perished, so the place were won. Nor were the Rhodians more careful of their Mohammedan captives. They exposed them, without compunction, to the fiercest fire, wherever their services could avail in strengthening the fortifications; and, on one occasion, a hundred and twenty of them, who were engaged in forming barricades and intrenchments, were assailed, under an erroneous impression that they were in a state of revolt, and cruelly massacred. As in the former siege, several huge guns, called bombards, projected enormous stones into the city, which, falling on the houses, sank down to their foundations. The Grandmaster narrowly escaped being crushed beneath one of these terrible projectiles, which,

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however, proved rather objects of terror than of danger, as during the whole siege they only killed ten men.

The Sultan's first attack was made on the post of the German knights; but the Rhodian cannon speedily demolished the batteries raised against it. He next attempted to batter the Tower of Saint Nicholas; and here, again, he beheld his guns dismounted, and his batteries ruined, by the fire of the valiant band that defended it. He adopted the stratagem of burying his cannon and gabions in the sand during the day, and replanting them on the platform at night; and by this means a breach was made in the western wall, but not to such an extent as to encourage an assault. Seeing a new wall erected by the garrison, spring up behind the ruins of that which he had just demolished, and aware that the troops of his predecessor Mohammed had been repeatedly foiled in their attacks on this fortress, he again moved his batteries; and day and night, for a whole month, his vast train played incessantly on the principal bastions. In this terrible cannonade, the knight De Barbaran, who commanded at the post of Spain, was killed by a round shot; and John d'Omedes, his successor, lost an eye from a musket-shot a few days afterwards. On the side of the Turks, the Master of the Ordnance, a renegade deeply skilled in military science, had both his legs carried away by a cannon-ball; and, at the same moment, five soldiers were killed by the splinters of a plank which it shattered in its flight.

Hitherto the warfare had been confined to an almost incessant interchange of heavy shot. The enormous battering train of the besiegers had beaten down many parts of the walls, and shattered every bastion; but still they had not gained an inch of ground within the regular defences of the place. The bulwarks of Italy and England were reduced to masses of ruin; but wherever the fortifications had sustained irreparable damage, barricades and entrenchments had been constructed within them; and these new works could only be carried by regular assaults. Solyman, who held the lives of his pioneers as of no value, ordered them to fill up the ditch with stones and earth; but the Rhodians, by means of the casemates, removed by night, the rubbish which their enemies, who laboured under a murderous fire, cast in during the day. Corps of Turkish miners were at the same time busily employed at various points; and the engineer Martinigo is said to have countermined no less than thirty-two mines —the existence of which he discovered by means of subterranean chambers, and other ingenious contrivances. Notwithstanding his vigilance, however, the English bastion was effectually sapped; and on the 4th of September, twelve yards of the wall were blown up, with an explosion that shook the city like an earthquake. The ruins

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were sufficient to fill the ditch; and several English knights, who manned the bastion at the moment, were overwhelmed beneath them. The Turks, who were under arms waiting the result, no sooner saw a breach laid open, than, shouting their battle-cry, they rushed, sword in hand, to the assault. While the Rhodians were yet struggling in the smoke and dust arising from the springing of the mine, the Moslems gained the summit of the bulwark, planted several ensigns on it, and would have carried it, but for an intrenchment which unexpectedly obstructed their advance. While they yet hesitated on the brink of this defence, the knights, recovering from the panic into which the explosion had thrown them, and headed by the Grandmaster, who rushed from the altar of Saint Mary of Victory, before which he had just been prostrated, furiously charged the Turks within the bastion. Covered by showers of musket-balls, grenades, and other missiles, and grasping a short spear commonly used in scalades, L'Isle Adam fought his way to the spot where the Turkish banner flapped lazily in the smoke of battle, and with his own hand dashed it to the earth. The Turks, quailing before the onset of the knights, lost the advantage they had gained, and, casting themselves headlong down the breach, fled in confusion towards their trenches. They were met in their flight by an avenger not less terrible than those from whom they sought to escape. Mustapha Pasha, who had watched the assault from his own lines, no sooner saw his troops begin to give way, than he hurried forward with fresh battalions to their support; and in his rage slew the foremost of the fugitives with his own hand. This prompt punishment turned the tide of the battle. Mingling encouraging exclamations with bitter reproaches, he led the recreants back to the breach, and the renewed assault became deadlier than the onset. "All men's ears," says the historian,* "were filled with the thundering of the shot, the noise of trumpets and drums, and crying of men." Christian and Turk grappled each other in mortal combat, and the poniard often despatched him whom the sword and bullet spared. Struck down in hundreds by the Rhodian musketeers, and incapable of a more protracted struggle, under the incessant shower of grenades, stones, and fire which descended on them, the Turks again gave way. In vain did their general lift up his terrible voice. They fled back to their lines in incontrollable panic, and the Rhodian artillery swept down whole ranks in their flight. Upwards of two thousand Turks, including three sangiacks, fell in this bloody assault. Of the Order, there were slain, the general of artillery, Guyot de Marselhac, the

* Knolles, vol. i. p. 393.

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Chevalier de Mauselle, who carried the Grandmaster's standard, and forty-eight knights,—"all men," say the Chroniclers, "worthy of immortal fame." A musket-ball tore out both the standard-bearer's eyes, and but for the intrepidity of Emeri Rujaulx, a knight of Auvergne, the ensign would have been taken.

The disastrous result of this assault did not deter Pyrrhus Pasha from making a similar effort to carry the bulwark of Italy. Having harassed its defenders for many successive days with a terrible cannonade, he stormed it with a strong body of troops at daybreak on the 13th of September. Overcome with continual watching, the knights within the bastion had relaxed their vigilance; and the breach was carried, and the sentinels slain, before the clangour of battle awoke on the ramparts. The Italians, on discovering the advantage which the enemy had gained through their supineness, made a gallant effort to regain the ground they had lost. The Turks, however, maintained themselves with great resolution. Pyrrhus advanced in person to the very edge of the ditch, and, while superintending the assault from that exposed position, the governor of Negropont, a young Turkish Emir, renowned for his valour, and in great esteem with his prince, was struck dead at his feet. The arrival of the Grandmaster with a body of chosen knights, decided the struggle. A second attack which Pyrrhus made with a strong *corps de reserve* at a different point, was equally unsuccessful, and his troops instantly retired to their lines filled with despondency and dismay.

These successive repulses, added to the discontent which again began to prevail among the soldiery, made the Turkish generalissimo tremble lest his sovereign, with the sanguinary policy of his predecessors, should make his head atone for the disasters that had tarnished his arms. Holding it preferable to die in the breach, rather than by the bow-string, he concerted a joint assault with Achmet Pasha, which, by dividing the forces, and distracting the attention of the Rhodians, appeared likely to leave both the points which they intended to attack imperfectly defended. Accordingly, on the 17th of September, at the head of five battalions, Mustapha again sallied out of his lines against the English bastion. In the same moment that the besieged discovered his advance, Achmet Pasha suddenly sprung two mines which had been carried under the bastions of Auvergne and Spain, and, favoured by the consternation which these explosions occasioned, the storming parties threw themselves into the breaches, and mounted boldly to the assault. Sustained by the intrepid example of their general, Mustapha's battalions, though galled by a murderous fire, fought their way to the intrenchments within the

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English bastion, and planted several ensigns upon them. Exasperated at this indignity, the English knights, headed by their commander John Buck, and supported by Prejan de Bidoux and Christopher Valdner, commander of the language of Germany, made a sortie from behind their defences, and forced the foremost of the Turks to recoil. The arrival of Mustapha with a reinforcement renewed the conflict; and could he have animated his troops with the indomitable bravery that sustained himself in this sanguinary strife, Rhodes would that day have seen the Crescent triumphant on her loftiest battlement. But in vain did he fling himself into the thickest of the battle, and cheer on his soldiers to contemn the fatal storm which the cannon of the bastion, the wall-pieces that scoured the breach, and the musketry in rear of the intrenchments, directed against them. They regarded neither his menaces nor his cheers; and in their headlong flight, they dragged him involuntarily along with them over the breach. Achmet Pasha was equally unfortunate in his attack. The mine sprung under the bulwark of Auvergne took vent and did no injury! but that which exploded under the bastion of Spain made a practicable breach, and, through this, the assailants instantly entered. The Spanish knights received them on the ruins, and kept them bravely at bay with musket-shot, until the knight Du Mesnil, captain of the bastion of Auvergne, had time to bring his guns to bear upon the very centre of the Turkish battalions. Dauntless as the Janizaries were, they could not support for any length of time this terrible cannonade; and, like their brethren in the bastion of England, they abandoned the assault and fled. This enterprise cost the Turks three thousand men. On the side of the Order, several knights, chiefly of the languages of England and Germany, lost their lives, and, among others, the valiant commanders John Buck and Christopher Valdner. The latter tore two standards from the Ottomans in the brunt of the battle, and retained them till his death. The knight, Prejan de Bidoux, after having killed several Turks with his own hand, received a musket-shot in the neck, from which, however, he happily recovered.

In a council of war which Solyman assembled immediately subsequent to this repulse, Mustapha presented himself with the port of a man whom adversity had humbled, but who still did not despair of ultimate triumph. He suggested a general assault, and Solyman agreed that it should be hazarded. The 24th of September was the day appointed for this memorable attack; and as a prelude, the bastions of England, Spain, and Auvergne, were again exposed to a tremendous cannonade. Throughout the preceding night, the Turkish camp resounded with the clang of weapons and the pattering of

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hurried and restless feet; and the Rhodians, who knew too well what these signs portended, kept anxious watch with their mail unbraced. The Grandmaster repaired in person to all the vulnerable posts, and exhorted their defenders to keep in constant remembrance, that, though their walls were rent and battered, they had still their weapons, and that, though victory might be denied them, Rhodes, the bulwark of Christendom, would be a glorious grave. To the citizens, whom he found congregated in trembling groups, he spoke of their wives, their maidens, and their inviolate hearths; and the men, gathering courage from his bold port and cheering voice, solemnly bade each other farewell, and, with protestations that the Turks should only enter the city over their bodies, hastened to the ramparts.

With the dawn, the Turkish artillery opened on every quarter in one wild unintermitting roar, and, veiled by the sulphureous haze that enveloped the whole circuit of the ramparts, the Turkish army rushed to the assault, and with savage cries entered at once the bulwarks of Italy, Spain, England, Provence, and Auvergne. Solyman watched the battle from the summit of a wooden tower which commanded a view of the whole arena; and his Janizaries, aware that they fought under the eyes of their youthful sultan, and stimulated by the prospect of plunder, flung themselves proudly into the shattered works. The Rhodians sustained the attack with equal firmness and pride. Every man, whether priest or citizen, able to bear arms, was stationed on the walls; and those whom age or infirmity incapacitated from serving as soldiers, assisted the women and children in carrying stones, fire-hoops, and boiling pitch, to be cast down on the assailants. The hoops, girt with wildfire, and skilfully flung into the centre of the Turkish battalions, often enclosed several victims in the same flaming girdle, while the pitch, dashed down in bucketfuls, penetrated to their very bones, and compelled them to fling away their arms, and quit the conflict with yells of agony and despair.

Mustapha Pasha, though he had been thrice repulsed from the English bastion, again led the attack on that post. Its principal defences were in ruins, but the devoted men within it were not to be panic-struck by the destruction of walls and ramparts. The Turkish leader's lieutenant, an officer of high reputation, was killed by a cannon-ball while in the act of planting an ensign on the breach, and the assailants, who were struggling behind him, saw his body roll past them a mutilated mass into the ditch. The posts of Italy and Spain were assailed with equal impetuosity,—the former by Pyrrhus Pasha, the latter by the Aga of the Janizaries. Both the

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English and the Italians were sorely pressed; and while the Grandmaster, with his chosen phalanx, was endeavouring to give them relief, a wild cry ran along the walls that the Spanish bulwark was taken, and, to his unspeakable dismay, he beheld no less than thirty Turkish pennoncels displayed upon it. This exploit had been achieved, not by the bravery of the assailants, but by an altogether fortuitous event.

The Aga, at the beginning of the action, had directed his operations against a part of the fortifications to the right of the bulwark, under an impression that the bastion itself was too strong to be carried; and the Spanish knights eager to be in the heat of the battle, rushed to the place where the danger seemed most imminent, leaving only a few sentinels to defend their special post. These sentinels, with a similar laxity of discipline, quitted their stations to assist in the removal of some pieces of ordnance to another position; and in the mean time, a body of cowardly Turks, who had sheltered themselves from the cannonade by skulking under the ruined parts of the bastion, hearing all quiet within it, crept out of their hiding-place, and, "like tall fellows," says Knolles, scaled the breach. Having gained the summit undiscovered, they cut the cannoneers to pieces, tore down the Christian ensign, and obtained possession of the whole fort. The Aga, informed by their triumphant shout of the conquest they had so unexpectedly achieved, lauding them as valiant men, instantly ordered a powerful body of Janizaries to their support; but the cannon on the bastion of Auvergne so completely swept the breach by which these succours tried to effect an entrance, that few survived the attempt. At the same time, the Grandmaster, followed by a band of valiant knights, scaled the inner face of the bastion, while the Commander De Bourbon entered it by the casemate, and a band of Cretan mercenaries burst in at a gate which the Turks had neglected to secure. Assailed on every side, the cravens, who had won and held the fort for nearly two hours, instantly gave way. Those who escaped the sword precipitated themselves headlong over the breach; and the Grandmaster, having seen the Christian standard replanted on the bulwark, hastened back to the point where Achmet Aga still pressed that part of the works called the post of Spain. There the conflict continued to rage with unabated fury. New adversaries incessantly sprung into the breach in the stead of those whom the Christians hurled back corpses into the ditch; and the Grandmaster, seeing the troops who had to sustain this desperate attack, worn with six hours' constant fighting, drafted two hundred men and several knights from the Tower of Saint Nicholas to their relief. This reinforcement, rushing fresh into the battle, was the

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portent of victory. The assailants abandoned the breach, and fled towards their own lines; and Solyman, descrying from his lofty station that the attack had failed at every point, sounded a retreat. In this terrible assault, fifteen thousand Turks, including several commanders of renown, were left dead in the breaches and at the foot of the walls. The loss of the Rhodians, considering the limited strength of the garrison, was also great. Many valiant knights perished; and there scarcely remained a man wearing the Cross of the Order who had not received a wound. The knight John Le Roux had his right hand carried away by a cannon-ball, but not till he had struck down seven Turks in fair battle. It is recorded that, in the heat of the conflict, a Greek female of exquisite beauty, instigated by anxiety and affection, stationed herself on the bastion in which her protector, a Dalmatian officer, fought, and had the misery of seeing a Turkish ball strike him dead at her feet. In her distraction, she rushed back to the house in which she had left her two children, stabbed them with her own hand, and then, arrayed in their father's habiliments, and grasping his sword, ran wildly to the breach, and fell, fighting with more than masculine bravery.*

The disastrous issue of this assault brought down on Mustapha Pasha the whole fury of his sovereign's wrath. Reviling him as a false counsellor and flatterer, who had advocated the war to the dishonour of the Ottoman arms, Solyman, in his rage, adjudged him worthy of death, and ordered the sentence to be carried into execution in presence of the whole Turkish host. No man durst venture to deprecate the monarch's vengeance, lest it should descend on his own head; and the troops, drawn up in battle-array, beheld the leader, whom they honoured for his valour, led out to die under his comrades' arrows. But at the moment when the signal of death was about to be given, Pyrrhus Pasha, the most venerable of the counsellors of the youthful prince, stepped forward, and earnestly implored him, for the sake of his own renown, to spare a servant who had in nowise merited so rigorous a punishment. Pyrrhus had been the governor of Solyman in his youth, and still retained a great influence over him; but he had overrated that influence, when he imagined that he could coerce him in a moment of furious excitation. Jealous of his authority, and exasperated to find, that there existed a slave in his empire who had the presumption to impugn his decrees, Solyman spurned the gray-haired suppliant from his feet, and commanded that he should suffer the same death. On hearing this terrible decision, all the other Pashas prostrated themselves before his throne, and be-

* Rottier, *Monumens de Rhodes*, p. 136.

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sought him to reverse so unjust a sentence. Moved by their intercession, Solyman granted the culprits their lives—Pyrrhus being pardoned ostensibly on account of his great age, and Mustapha for the sake of his wife, who had the blood of Othman in her veins. Mustapha was subsequently appointed Governor of Egypt, and left the camp while the siege was yet in dependence.

Curtoglu, Admiral of the Turkish fleet, was treated with still greater severity—not because he had attempted too much, but because he had attempted nothing. While the land forces were pressing the siege, he lay idly in the mouth of the haven,—satisfied that it was not to be entered with any chance of success, and that he performed his part well, when he furnished a constant supply of provisions and warlike stores for the camp. But Solyman, conceiving that he had not only manifested a disinclination to encounter danger, but had also, through negligence, allowed warlike munitions to be introduced into the city, sentenced him to suffer a cruel death. The mediation of Achmet Pasha mitigated his punishment—if mitigation it could seem in the eyes of a man accustomed to a lofty station, to be subjected to receive one hundred stripes from the lash of the common executioner, on the poop of his own galley, and then to be thrust ignominiously out of his command.

The last bloody assault had sickened Solyman of the war; and he seriously contemplated a retreat, when the assurances of an Albanian deserter, that the city was not only untenable, but that the bravest of its defenders were killed or wounded, induced him to persevere.

To dishearten the besieged, who calculated on the storms of winter breaking up his camp, and driving his fleet into more sheltered waters, he ordered a palace to be erected on Mount Philerme, as if he were resolved to fix himself, at all hazards, permanently in the island. He also, at the suggestion of Achmet Pasha, who succeeded to the chief command on Mustapha's degradation, became more careful of the lives of his soldiers; and endeavoured to achieve, by scientific skill, that triumph which brute force had failed to accomplish. The bastion of Spain continued to be the favourite point of attack; and a furious cannonade, which lasted for several days, reduced it to a complete ruin—nothing being left uninjured, save the *fausse-braye*, or barbacan. In the face of a deadly fire from the walls, the trenches were carried forward as far as this work; and a wooden gallery, covered with raw hides, was erected to shelter the pioneers from the showers of boiling pitch and oil thrown from the rampart, while they ran mines into the heart of the fortifications. In the course of his ingenious attempts to circumvent these operations, the engineer Martinigo, was deprived of an eye by a musket-shot,

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which entered a loop-hole through which he was engaged in reconnoitring the enemy's works. His wound was at first regarded as mortal; and, as his military skill had been the chief stay of the city throughout the siege, the prospect of his death struck every heart with dismay. He was carried to the Grandmaster's palace; and, by the time he was able to return to his post the struggle was nearly ended.

Assault followed assault, and again and again were the bastions of Provence, Italy, Spain and England, strewed with turbaned dead. So enormous were the breaches in the bastion of England, that a whole battalion could have entered it in battle-array; yet still the besieged presented, with their mailed breasts, an insurmountable barrier to the Turkish lances. Mines exploded into countermines; and, amid these subterranean horrors, man grappled man in deadly strife, perishing as proudly in the bowels of the earth, as on the summit of the ramparts. The Rhodians had dwindled to a handful: but their hearts were still elate. For thirty-four successive nights, the Grandmaster had a pallet spread for himself behind the intrenchment on the Spanish bastion, where he lay in the pride of his veteran renown, constantly ready to fling himself into the battle. Truly is it said, that man is very strong and very formidable, when he contemns, in an honourable and just war, all personal considerations.

In this, as in the former siege, the excited minds of the populace were constantly on the alert to detect treason within the walls. Prior to the general assault on the 24th of September, a Jewish physician, who had been discovered shooting an arrow, with a letter tied to it, into the Turkish camp, and was afterwards tortured into a confession of guilt, suffered an ignominious death. Now suspicion, exaggerated by the imminence of the danger, looked round for a nobler victim; and the Chancellor D'Amaral was the object it selected. A constitutional arrogance tarnished the character of this unfortunate knight, who had grown gray in the battles of the Order; and the moment the finger of detraction pointed him out as a traitor, every minion whose pride he had outraged eagerly applied himself to discover proofs of his guilt. Blaise Diaz, one of his attendants, was observed to repair, day after day, at unseasonable hours, with a bow in his hand, to the post of Auvergne; and this being reported to the Grandmaster, the menial was arrested, and his conduct subjected to a judicial scrutiny. His judges, dissatisfied with his answers, recommended the torture; and at the first twitch, he confessed that he had been employed by his master to throw treasonable letters into the Turkish lines. On this evidence the Chancellor was imprisoned in the Tower of Saint Nicholas, and brought to a formal

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trial before two Grand-crosses and the civic magistracy. He was confronted with Diaz, who persisted in his deposition; and a Greek priest, a chaplain of the Order, confirmed it so far, as that, on one occasion, he had observed the Chancellor and this man skulking in a nook of the fortifications, with a cross-bow, and quarry or square arrow, having a paper fastened to it, as if anxious to shoot it into the enemy's camp. Diaz moreover swore, that it was entirely at the instigation of D'Amaral that the Sultan had invaded the island; and that he had been in secret correspondence with the Turks from the day in which L'Isle Adam was elected head of the Order—an assertion which obtained the readier credence, from the circumstance of D'Amaral having been heard to declare at that time, with the bitterness of foiled ambition, that Rhodes would never have another Grandmaster. D'Amaral repelled these allegations with scorn. Diaz, he protested, was a false villain, who, because he had been justly punished for a series of delinquencies, sought, out of revenge, to swear away his life. He admitted the expression that had been resuscitated to his crimination, but ascribed it solely to his want of confidence in the courage and abilities of the knight who had rivalled him in the estimation of the Order. Notwithstanding his intrepid port and honourable station, his judges subjected him to the cruel indignity of the rack; but it only extorted from him a proud declaration, that, after forty years of honourable service under the banner of the Cross, he would never, to escape a few bodily pangs, stain his renown by attesting himself capable of so base a crime. His appeals were made to men who were firmly persuaded of his guilt; and both master and servant were adjudged worthy of death. Diaz was hanged, but the Chancellor was sentenced to the more honourable doom of decapitation. Judgment was passed on him in a full assembly of the Order; after which, he was stripped of the habit of a knight, and consigned to the secular authorities, who, next day, carried him publicly in a chair to the place of execution. He met death with the fortitude of a martyr; and there exists not, in the whole records of his tragical story, a single circumstance that discredits the inference, that he filled a martyr's grave.

Hitherto the Rhodians had been supported by a hope that the Kings of Europe would not leave them unsuccoured in their extremity; but when the winter drew near, and the navigation of the adjacent sea became dangerous, they found themselves necessitated to admit the bitter conviction, that on their own efforts alone were they to place their trust. Europe was agitated by the wars of the two greatest potentates of the age—Charles the Fifth of Germany, and Francis the First of France; and, with sanguinary tumults so

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much nearer home to occupy their attention, the Christian Princes unanimously left Rhodes to its fate. The Cardinal Julio de Medicis made an effort to interest Pope Adrian the Sixth in behalf of the forsaken knights, but without success. Adrian, though a good man, was a weak Prince, entirely devoted to the Emperor, who had advanced him to the papal chair; and, instead of sending such forces as he could spare to uphold the banner of Saint John in the Levant, he marched all his troops to assist his benefactor in chasing the French from Lombardy. Disappointment, too, attended the attempts of the knights-commanders of the Order resident in Europe, to relieve their besieged brethren. Two ships, laden with stores from Marseilles, were lost in the Tuscan Sea; and, in the same storm, a vessel with succours from England, commanded by Sir Thomas Newport, was also cast away. Several other disasters of a similar description conspired to dishearten the garrison, who accused the very elements of being in a league against them.

In the mean while, Achmet Pasha, on whom Solyman had devolved the direction of the siege, replanted his batteries against the Italian and English bastions, and completed their destruction. Having advanced his trenches to the base of the walls, and formed a covered way with huge beams of timber, under which his pioneers wrought in safety, he ran his mines so deeply into the works, as to demolish the intrenchments, by which means he permanently established himself on the platform of the Italian bastion. To obstruct his further advance, the Grandmaster demolished the churches of Saint Pantaleon and Notre Dame de la Victoire, and formed new defences out of their ruins. Several sanguinary but indecisive combats followed. At length, a mine was sprung, with fatal precision, under the bastion of Spain; and to prevent the knights from raising new defences in rear of the vast breach which the explosion effected, incessant discharges of round-shot were poured into it for twenty-four successive hours. Next day (30th November), the Turks advanced in great force against the bastion. Their ensigns glittered brilliantly in the morning sun, and they cheered each other to the onset with warlike shouts and songs of victory. A similar attack was made on the Italian bastion; and the Turkish fleet, at the same time, sailed proudly to and fro before the haven, as if about to assail the seaward defences. Warned of their danger by the tolling of the bells and the roar of the cannon, the Rhodians rushed to their posts with the fury of despair. The Turks had no longer walls to surmount; but they found in their stead a rampart of devoted breasts, against which they vainly dashed themselves. In the midst of the conflict, the sky was overcast, and the clouds poured down torrents of rain upon the combatants. Hap-

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pily for the Rhodians, the flood washed away the shoulder-work of the Turkish trenches, and exposed them to the cannon on the bastion of Auvergne. The destructive fire which immediately opened from this post, supported by the deadly volleys of the musketeers who covered the breach, speedily choked it with mutilated bodies. The Rhodians, who believed the last day of their liberty arrived, fought with the desperation of men who had sworn not to outlive its extinction. The whole city awaited in trepidation the issue of the conflict. Every house resounded with woman's plaintive cries, and every altar was watered with her tears. The Turks had commenced the assault confident of victory, and ever and anon their fierce war-shouts mingled with the roar of the battle. Dreadfully galled by the Rhodian fire, they at length recoiled, and the knights shouted exultingly in their turn as they saw them retire. Not even the certainty of instant destruction could drive the Ottomans from the breach, chased by that derisive cry. Once more they turned their lances towards the corse-strewn gap, and entered it with impetuous bravery; but again the same deadly shower struck them down in bleeding heaps. Achmet could support the scene of slaughter no longer, and, with a heavy heart, he ordered the retreat to be sounded, leaving in the breach and ditch upwards of five thousand men.

This repulse filled Solyman with such despondency, that for several days he refused to be comforted, and shut himself up in his tent. Achmet, though trembling at the hidden face of his prince, relaxed not his efforts to work his way into the heart of the city. The Rhodians, he saw, were prepared to fall to a man; but even on that desperate condition he knew he might calculate on the victory. He kept the besieged constantly occupied with skirmishes and alarms, while at the same time, multitudes of pioneers laboured incessantly within the works which he had taken, and gradually ran their trenches so far into the town, that the Rhodians gave up the defence of their shattered walls, and pulled down the houses behind them to make new fortifications. Still, even the bravest of the Ottomans shrunk from attempting another general assault; and at the suggestion of Pyrrhus Pasha, who had resumed his influence over the Sultan, Solyman agreed that the besieged should be invited to capitulate. Hieronymo Monilio, a Genoese, who chanced to be in the Turkish camp, was intrusted with this service. He presented himself before the bastion of Auvergne, and, on being recognised as a Christian, was requested to declare his mission. He refused to deliver it openly;* but stated, that he would make it known verbally,

* Knolles, vol. i. p. 399.

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or by letter, to Matteo de Via, one of the principal citizens of Rhodes. Upon hearing this, Francis Fornovi, a French knight of a choleric disposition, who is reputed to have shot, with his own harquebuss, from the top of Saint George's Tower, no less than five hundred Turks during the siege, moved with indignation, bent his deadly tube on the envoy, and, telling him that the knights of Saint John never treated with the Infidels but sword in hand, warned him to abandon all hopes of any such conference. Monilio retired; but two days afterwards he again presented himself before the walls, as the bearer of a packet from the Sultan to the Grandmaster. The Grandmaster, aware that many of his bravest soldiers had begun to speculate on the propriety of a surrender, refused to receive the letter, lest his so doing should strengthen the desire for negotiation. The sentinels were instructed to pay no regard to signals of parley, but to fire on every person who approached the fortifications from the Turkish camp.

Had the maintenance of this heroic position rested solely with the Grandmaster and the majority of his knights, Rhodes would have been their grave. But no sooner did it come to be generally known in the city that the enemy were disposed to negotiate, than energetic representations were made to the Grandmaster that the offer should be accepted. The populace, being chiefly Greeks, held mutinous cabals, in which they agreed, that, though it might be perfectly becoming and proper for the knights to perish at their posts, it was better for the citizens to save their lives and fortunes, by submitting to the Ottoman yoke. They empowered their metropolitan to remonstrate with the Grandmaster in their name; and that prelate accordingly pointed out, in very moving terms, the desolation that would inevitably fall on the city, were the knights to hold out until the Moslems entered it over their lifeless remains. The Grandmaster, in reply, dismissed him with the declaration, that he and his brethren were resolved to be buried in the breach and in the last intrenchments; but next day other deputies renewed the remonstrance with a protestation, that if he longer neglected the preservation of the inhabitants on such terms as the foe chose to offer, they would adopt measures of their own to insure the safety of themselves and families. Startled by this menace, the Grandmaster referred the matter to the Council; and three merchants presented to that assembly a petition, bearing the signatures of all the principal citizens, praying that their wives and children might not be exposed to the fury and brutality which invariably characterized the Turkish soldiery in successful assaults. The Council, before answering this petition, ordered the commandants of the principal posts to report as to the state of

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the defences; and, in particular, the engineer Martinigo, who had recovered from his wound sufficiently to be able to resume his duty, and the Grand Prior of Saint Giles, were required to deliver a candid opinion. Both these knights agreed that the place was no longer tenable. The Turks, they said, were already established within the walls—the flower of the Rhodian forces had perished—and a dearth of provisions and ammunition would speedily compel a surrender, even though they should determine to protract the struggle by making every house a bulwark:—in short, it was their decided conviction that the next assault would be triumphant. This declaration determined the Council in favour of negotiation. The Grandmaster alone stood up in the midst of the assembly, and entered his protest against it, on the argument, that it was their duty, as the sworn champions of the Cross, to court a holy and glorious death. This the whole members of the Council admitted to be true; and, with one accord, proclaimed their readiness to lay down their lives in honourable battle for the cause to which they were solemnly devoted. But they maintained that they had no title to expose the citizens to certain slaughter, and their wives and maidens to violation and bondage. Overcome by this affecting consideration, the Grandmaster bowed his venerable head in silent acquiescence; and it was decreed that the overtures of peace should be accepted.

In accordance with this determination, the next friendly signal from the Ottoman camp was answered by a corresponding one from the city; and two Turkish officers of rank instantly presented themselves at one of the gates, and silently delivered to the Prior of Saint Giles, and the Bailiff Martinigo, who advanced to meet them, a letter from the Sultan to the Grandmaster. Solyman, while he held out proffers of clemency, provided the place were immediately surrendered, menaced a general massacre in case he were compelled to enter it at the point of the sword; and the Council at once agreed to exchange hostages and receive his proposals. Anthony Grolée, standard-bearer of the Order, and Robert Perrucey, Judge of Rhodes, both "men of great gravity, and skilful in the Greek tongue," were despatched to the Turkish camp; while the Turks, on their part, sent into the city a near kinsman of Achmet Pasha, and Solyman's chief dragoman. As the dragoman, notwithstanding his office, knew no language save his own, he was accompanied by an Epirote renegade, a man of sharp wit, and completely conversant with the Greek, Turkish, and Italian languages. Solyman received the Christian deputies with proud courtesy. He pledged himself, in the event of Rhodes and its dependencies being surrendered, to permit the knights to depart with the honours of war to a Christian country; and with

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this answer Perrucey was sent back to the city, while the standard-bearer was detained and treated with marked distinction in Achmet Pasha's tent. The message of Perrucey induced the Council to send two other deputies to the Turkish camp, who demanded three days for consideration; but the Sultan, dreading the arrival of succours from Europe, returned for answer, that they must either accede to immediate negotiation, or prepare for a fresh assault. Some historians assert that Solyman acceded to the truce, and that it was broken by the impetuosity of the French knight Fornovi, who, in a fit of rage, at seeing the Turks lounging in whole companies under his guns, discharged a volley of round shot into the midst of them. On this, several Christian prisoners, deprived of their hands, ears, and noses, were sent back to the city with a message to the Grandmaster, that for this iniquitous violation of the truce, he should be similarly mutilated as an example to posterity. This terrible mission was followed by successive discharges from the Turkish batteries, and the Rhodian cannoneers also resumed their fire; though, for lack of ammunition, their guns were but lazily worked.

Meanwhile, a sort of reaction had taken place among the inhabitants of Rhodes. A band of young Greeks presented themselves in a tumultuous manner before the Grandmaster, and demanded that the negotiations should be broken off. They preferred perishing, they said, with arms in their hands, to being hewn to pieces after capitulation, like the citizens of Belgrade. The Grandmaster, who knew well how to estimate this vainglorious language, answered gravely, that he was rejoiced to find so many brave men of his own way of thinking, and that he trusted they would not forget that they stood pledged to bury themselves in the ruins of the city, when the hour of doom arrived. When the Turkish batteries began to play again on the shattered walls, these braggarts were summoned, by the sound of a trumpet, to repair to the advanced posts, and to remain there constantly under pain of death. One craven who disobeyed this order was hanged, as an example to his companions; and from that time discipline was more easily maintained.

On the 17th of December, the Turks made an attempt to dislodge the Rhodians from a position which they still maintained in the *fausse-braye* of the Spanish bastion. After a sanguinary conflict, which lasted nearly a whole day, the enemy were once more driven back to their lines. Next day, however, the Ottomans renewed the assault; and, borne down by numbers, the knights were at last compelled to abandon the bastion, and retire into the city. Filled with consternation at the immediate prospect of having their hearths violated by a merciless soldiery, the citizens forgot the momentary

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ardour that had induced them to resume their arms, and implored the Grandmaster to renew the negotiations.

L'Isle Adam, who saw that longer resistance would only bring down indignity and destruction on the trembling multitude, consented to adopt their suggestion; and deputies were accordingly despatched, with full authority to arrange the terms of surrender. Solyman received them, surrounded by his Janizaries, all cased in glittering armour; and it reflects imperishable honour on him, that the conditions he imposed were of the most magnanimous and clement description. The principal stipulations were,—that the churches should not be profaned—that no children should be taken from their parents—that the citizens should be allowed the free exercise of their religion—that every person, whether knight or citizen, should be at liberty to quit the island—that those Christians who remained, should pay no tribute for five years—that the knights should depart in their own galleys, and be supplied with additional transports from the Turkish fleet, if they required them—that they should be allowed twelve days from the ratification of the treaty, to embark their property—that that property should include relics, consecrated vessels, records and writings, and all the artillery employed on board their galleys—and that the Turkish army should, in the interim, retire several miles from the city, and only four thousand Janizaries enter it. In behalf of the Turks, it was simply conditioned, that Rhodes and its dependencies, including the Castle of Saint Peter on the continent, should be surrendered; and that, in pledge of his sincerity, the Grandmaster should deliver up as hostages, twenty-five of the principal citizens, and the same number of knights. On the subscription and ratification of the treaty, the hostages repaired to the Turkish camp; and the Aga of the Janizaries, at the head of a chosen body of troops, entered the city, and planted his sovereign's banner in the stead of the Christian standard.

While this humiliating ceremony was taking place, a mighty fleet was descried in full sail for the island; and, for a short space, the Rhodians were tortured with the idea that they had voluntarily delivered themselves into the hands of their enemies, at the very moment succours from the West were about to befriend them. The Turks, impressed with dread that the fleet in sight was really a Christian armament, stood to their arms; but, as it drew near, the Sultan recognised his own flag, and remembered that, in a moment of despondency, he had summoned fresh troops from the frontiers of Persia to press the siege. Had this reinforcement arrived at an earlier period, the Rhodians could scarcely have made so honourable a capitulation. Had it been a Christian expedition despatched to

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their rescue, the hour of their surrender would have been embittered, by the consciousness that another week's resistance would have placed them in a condition to contemn the fiercest assaults of the Turkish host.

Historians differ as to the manner in which the treaty of capitulation was observed. It appears to have been neither strictly kept nor grossly broken, but to have been infringed in a few trivial particulars by the Turkish soldiery, whose insolence even the dread of their Emperor's vengeance could not entirely restrain. On one occasion, a body of Janizaries, actuated by a desire for plunder, committed several bloody outrages; but a threat from the Sultan, that their Aga's head should answer for their insubordination, prevented a general spoliation. Glory was Solyman's idol; and there exists no doubt that he was anxious that the knights should propagate over Christendom a favourable report of his clemency and inviolable faith, as well as of his warlike renown. Two days after the treaty was ratified, the Grandmaster was invited by Achmet Pasha to repair to the Turkish camp, and be introduced to his conqueror. L'Isle Adam at first refused to subject himself to so painful an interview; but, holding it unwise to incense an enemy who, by a single word, might exterminate the Order, he, after some hesitation, put on a plain habit befitting a vanquished man, and presented himself, with a few attendants, before the Imperial tent. The day was tempestuous; and Turkish pride exposed the heroic old man to the inclemency of the weather for several hours, without offering him the smallest refreshment. At length, towards evening, a splendid robe was flung over him, and he was admitted to the Sultan's presence. For a time, the two warriors eyed each other with piercing glances. The venerable and majestic port of the Grandmaster, won the admiration of the youthful despot; and he magnanimously requested his interpreter to console the Christian chief with the assurance, that even the bravest of men were liable to become the sport of fortune. He invited him, at the same time, to embrace the Mohammedan faith, and enter his service, since the Christian princes, who had abandoned him in his extremity, did not merit the alliance of so redoubted a chief; and, by way of a bribe, promised to advance him to the highest dignities of his empire, and make him one of his chosen counsellors. The Grandmaster answered, that were he to dishonour his gray hairs by becoming a traitor and renegade, he would only show how unworthy he was of the high opinion which his conqueror entertained of him; and that he would far rather retire into obscurity, or part with life itself, than be accounted a recreant and apostate by his own people. Solyman dismissed the venerable knight with

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honour; and his attendants carried back with them each a magnificent garment, in token of the Sultan's favour. Some days afterwards, Solyman entered the city, and repaired to the Grandmaster's palace. L'Isle Adam, overcome by this unexpected condescension, attempted to humble himself at his feet; but the generous Moslem declined the homage, and graciously saluted him by the title of "Father." L'Isle Adam acknowledged the honour, by thanking God, that, since Rhodes had fallen, it had fallen before the arms of so merciful and noble-minded a prince. As Solyman left the palace, he said to Achmet Pasha, who was in attendance, "It is not without regret that I drive this unfortunate old man, full of sorrow, from his home."

The departure of L'Isle Adam, and the small body of knights who survived this memorable siege, was expedited by a report that the Sultan was about to quit the army for his capital. Dreading to be left at the mercy of the officers whom he might leave in command, the Grandmaster ordered the knights to repair on board their vessels without delay. The embarkation took place at night; and four thousand Christian natives followed the Order into exile. The moans and lamentations of these wanderers resounded throughout the city —even the sternest knights were overwhelmed with grief at bidding an eternal farewell to the sacred walls which, for upwards of two hundred years, had presented an impregnable barrier to the Ottoman arms. L'Isle Adam alone had sufficient fortitude to hide his grief. Amid the confusion that prevailed, he issued his orders with the same tranquillity as if he had been despatching his galleys to gather fresh laurels on the waves. Amurath, son of the unfortunate Zizim, who had long resided in Rhodes as a pensionary of the Order, expressed the greatest desire to accompany the expedition; but, though he made several attempts to elude the vigilance of the Turkish emissaries who were in search of him, he found it impossible, and the Grandmaster had to leave him to his fate. He was subsequently arrested, with his four children, and brought before his puissant kinsman. It was Solyman's ardent desire that the world should consider him a clement king; but the fratricidal spirit of his race was not thoroughly subdued, even in his magnanimous bosom. He demanded of his prisoner, whether he was still numbered among the Faithful: and when Amurath intrepidly answered, that he and his children were followers of Christ, he sternly ordered the hapless apostate and his two sons to be strangled. They were executed in presence of the whole army, to prevent successful imposture in their name in after times; and two girls, whom this sanguinary act left orphans, were sent to Constantinople, and immured in the old seraglio.

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There is but too much reason to conclude, that Amurath and his family were purposely excluded from the benefit of the capitulation, and that they fell victims to a cruel policy, alike dishonourable to the vanquisher and the vanquished.* History, however, has failed to chronicle the fact, from a desire, probably, to transmit the laurelled name of L'Isle Adam to posterity without a stain.

L'Isle Adam, like a true father, embarked the last of his sorrowing band. He fixed his head-quarters on board the great carrack; and on the morning of the 1st of January, 1523, the fleet, consisting of about fifty sail of all descriptions, put to sea. It was an hour of wo, but the wanderers departed not unsolaced. They looked their last on the shattered towers from which the fate of war had driven them, supported by the consciousness, that, though Rhodes had passed from under their sway, their protracted resistance had conferred the fame of victory even on defeat. The Turks, in token of respect for the vanquished, refrained from defacing the armorial insignia and inscriptions on the public buildings of the city; and, to this day, they venerate it as a place worthy of being held for ever holy and illustrious in the estimation of mankind.

CHAPTER III.

Arrival of the Knights at Candia—Voyage to Messina—Residence at Cumæ and Viterbo—Negotiations regarding the Cession of Malta—L'Isle Adam's voyage to Spain—Sack of Rome by the Constable Bourbon—Malta ceded to the Order—The Knights take possession of that island—Unsuccessful attack on Modon—Capture of Coron—Domestic tumults—Suppression of the Order in England—Death of L'Isle Adam—The Brothers Barbarossa—Expedition to Africa—Conquest of Goletta and Tunis.

The Christian fleet stood away for Candia, but the voyage was unprosperous. Several vessels foundered in a hurricane, and the remainder made the ports of Sitia and Spina Longa in a very shattered condition. It had been found necessary to lighten several of the ships during the storm; and many of the exiles landed in a state of beggary and starvation. The Grandmaster exerted himself to alleviate their deplorable condition, and pledged himself, that, while the Order had a rood of ground in Christendom, or a ducat in its treasury, their claims should be respected. The Venetian au-

* Rottier—*Monumens de Rhodes*, p. 140.

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thorities in Candia received the refugees kindly; and the governor of the island offered them the amplest relief, and invited the Grandmaster to the capital. Circumstances did not permit L'Isle Adam altogether to reject this courtesy; but when he saw the republicans eager to load him with honours, he could not refrain from reproaching them with having detained sixty of their galleys inactive in port, when Rhodes only wanted the presence of a Christian ally to have successfully defied the Ottoman arms. He declined an invitation to winter in Candia; and having refitted his fleet as expeditiously as possible, again put to sea. A fast-sailing brigantine preceded him, carrying envoys to the Pope and all the other Christian princes, to announce the fall of Rhodes, and the consequent destitution of the Order. The Christian world had forgotten the knights, while they were battling with the Infidels under the cover of walls and bastions; but no sooner did it become known that the insular bulwark of Christendom was beaten down, and its brave defenders wandering homeless over the waters, than the public voice loudly and bitterly reprobated the selfish policy which had left them to contend singly with so gigantic a foe. The Emperor Charles the Fifth, and his chivalrous adversary Francis the First, endeavoured to throw the blame of the loss of Rhodes on each other; but Europe justly ascribed it to the ambitious contests of both, which had mutually engrossed their sympathies and their arms.* To mark their deep sense of the calamity that had befallen the Order, the Hospitaller-nuns, who had hitherto worn a red robe with a black mantle *à bec*, on which was a white cross, assumed a habit entirely black, in token of mourning, which they continue to wear to this day.

The Grandmaster, who felt that the authority of a prince had departed from him with his temporal possessions, and that the special countenance of the Pope would be requisite to prevent a general dispersion of the knights when they reached Europe, subdued his private resentment so far as to announce his misfortunes in modest and temperate language to that potentate. Adrian's heart was touched with the old warrior's misfortunes; and he at once granted a bull, enjoining all the knights, by the obedience due to him, and on pain of degradation, to remain united under their venerable chief. This edict was forwarded without delay to Messina, to await the arrival of the refugees at that port.

The fleet had a tedious voyage from Candia to Sicily. By the Grandmaster's orders the larger vessels, commanded by Austin, commander of the language of England, proceeded alone, while he

* Robertson—Hist. Charles V.

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himself remained behind, to cheer, by his presence, the sick Rhodians who crowded the brigantines and feluccas. To relieve the distresses of these poor sufferers, he put into the port of Gallipoli, a town on the Gulf of Tarento; and it was not till the beginning of May that the forlorn squadron arrived off the Sicilian coast. He entered the harbour of Messina with the standard of the Order furled; while in its stead, he displayed at the topmast of his ship a banner, bearing the figure of the Virgin clasping her dead son in her arms, with the motto, "*Afflictes spes mea rebus.*" He was received with marked distinction by the Sicilian authorities; and the viceroy invited him, in the Emperor, Charles the Fifth's name, to make Messina his home. His first care was to provide accommodation for the sick, and to set an example to his knights of that charitable devotion inseparable from the character of a faithful Hospitaller. This done, he instituted a rigorous investigation into the conduct of those knights who had been sent to Europe during the siege, to procure succours, but had never returned. Many of these laggards had rendezvoused at Messina in expectation of his arrival; and they were cited before the Council to account for their delay. They defended themselves, by throwing the blame chiefly on the elements. Adverse and tempestuous winds had rendered navigation almost impossible; some vessels had been cast away in futile attempts to prosecute their voyage; others had been damaged by rencontres with corsairs; but no evidence was adduced, to show that any knight had failed in his duty to the Order. The tribunal pronounced a general acquittal; and L'Isle Adam, with tears in his eyes, blessed God that the loss of Rhodes was not ascribable to the negligence of any of his associates.

Scarcely had the Grandmaster suppressed the discontent which this rigorous proceeding excited, when he had to grapple with a new enemy. The plague made its appearance at Messina; and to escape the contagion, he again took ship with all his followers nearly as precipitately as he had done at Rhodes, and sailed in search of a more salubrious station. It is probable that the pestilence was brought to Sicily by the refugees themselves, and that the magistrates of Messina commanded their immediate departure. Be this as it may, they carried the disease along with them, and several knights of distinction died of it at sea. With the concurrence of the Viceroy of Naples, L'Isle Adam landed his forlorn band in the Gulf of Baiæ, and encamped near the ruins of Cumæ. At the end of a month the plague disappeared; and re-embarking his people, he sailed with the Pope's permission to Civita Vecchia. After some delay, Adrian notified to him that he was ready to receive a personal visit; and, attended by all his knights, the Grandmaster set out for Rome. He

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entered it with some pomp, surrounded by a throng of Roman patricians, and welcomed by salvos of artillery. The Pontiff, though an invalid, rose from his chair, and honoured him with a friendly embrace, designating him, at the same time, the hero and defender of the Christian faith—words, says the historian,* which cost his Holiness much less expense than would have done the succours necessary for the preservation of Rhodes. Shortly afterwards, the malady which the Pope laboured under cut him off, and the Cardinal Julio de Medicis, who had formerly been a knight of Rhodes, but had laid aside the sword for the cowl and rosary, was unanimously elected in his stead, as Clement the Seventh (1523).

The election of a prelate who had worn the cross of Saint John, revived the drooping spirits of the knights, who argued that they would not long be left wanderers under the papacy of a Pontiff so sincerely disposed to befriend them. These anticipations were fully realized. Clement took the earliest opportunity of showing his high consideration for the Grandmaster; and in the pageant that celebrated his election, the great standard of the Order was carried before him by Julian Redolfi, Prior of Capua, who wore his battle-harness on the occasion, and rode a splendidly-caparisoned horse. The Vice-chancellor of the Order was subsequently called upon to detail, in a full consistory, the history of the siege to the Pontiff and his court; and so eloquently did he acquit himself, that many of the cardinals shed tears. Viterbo, a place about forty miles from Rome, was offered to the knights as a temporary asylum, with permission for the fleet to remain at Civita Vecchia. Thither accordingly they repaired, and thither also the demon of pestilence, which had driven them from Messina, pursued them. In this extremity, the Duke of Savoy generously provided them a temporary retreat at Nice in Piedmont, and accommodation for the fleet at Villa Franca; and there the majority of the knights sojourned, until the abatement of the plague at Viterbo allowed them to reassemble with safety at that station.

Before taking leave of the Pope to repair to Viterbo, L'Isle Adam privately debated with him various schemes for the permanent re-establishment of the Order in some port or island, from whence the knights might continue their warfare against the followers of Mohammed. The port of Suda in Candia, and the islands of Cerigo and Elba, were severally named and rejected; but they finally came to the conclusion, that, could the Emperor Charles the Fifth be prevailed upon to grant the Order the islands of Malta and Goza in

* Vertot.

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absolute sovereignty, it could not possibly be planted in a more favourable position. In accordance with this decision, the Grandmaster lost no time in despatching an embassy to the Emperor, who was then at Madrid, with instructions to use every exertion to achieve this desirable object. The knights employed in this mission were the Prior of Castile, the Chevalier Martinigo, who had rendered himself so distinguished in the defence of Rhodes, and the commander Bosio, a man of great learning, and skilled in negotiation. They represented to the Emperor, in forcible language, the protracted and glorious services of the Order—the desolate condition to which it was now reduced—and the fair opportunity which he consequently had of becoming as it were its regenerator, and rearing an impregnable bulwark between his Sicilian possessions and the Turks. The Emperor, who saw reason to dread that Solyman would sooner or later turn his arms against the Sicilian or Sardinian coasts, listened complacently to the petition; but, with the selfish policy for which he was remarkable, he sought at the same time to arrange the treaty of cession, so as to secure to himself the fealty of the Order. The knights, startled at his obvious designs on their independence, yet careful to restrain any expressions of indignation, which might give offence to so potent a patron, were glad to allow the negotiations to fall asleep. In the prospect of their ultimate resumption, however, the Grandmaster despatched commissioners to Malta and Goza, to report on the nature and capabilities of these islands, and the condition of the fortress of Tripoli on the coast of Africa, which was also at that time an appanage of the Sicilian crown.

While these knights were thus engaged, Achmet Aga, the Turkish general who had so greatly contributed to the reduction of Rhodes, having succeeded to the government of Egypt, raised the standard of revolt against his sovereign, and invited the Grandmaster to enter into a league with him for the re-conquest of that island. To ascertain whether the project were practicable, L'Isle Adam despatched the commander Bosio to visit Rhodes in the disguise of a merchant; and the worthy knight ably fulfilled his perilous mission. He found the walls unrepaired, the people pining under a rigorous thrall, and a renegade captain, who was devoted to Achmet, and who commanded the defences of the harbour, perfectly disposed to betray his trust the moment a Christian force capable of carrying the place appeared before it. But the untimely death of Achmet, who found it impossible to keep the field against the army of his sovereign, terminated Bosio's labours, and abruptly dissolved the project.

The report of the Maltese commissioners was, as far as regarded that island and its insular dependencies, favourable to the views of

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the Grandmaster; and, though they represented the situation of Tripoli as one of great exposure, unattended with any commensurate advantage, it was determined that the negotiations for the cession should be renewed. But the situation of European politics, at that juncture, was any thing but favourable to the desires of the knights. Germany, Italy, and Spain, were prostrate at the feet of Charles, who held his chivalrous opponent, Francis the First of France, a prisoner in Madrid; and scarcely a prince in Christendom dared to exhibit an interest in the fate of the captive monarch. To facilitate his liberation, his mother, who held the regency of his kingdom, determined on assailing the stony heart of Charles, through the medium of her daughter, the Duchess of Alençon—a princess of surpassing beauty and irresistible fascination. The Grandmaster of Saint John, who, in virtue of his nativity, had always been forward to manifest a deference for the King of France, was solicited to give the Duchess the convoy of his galleys from Marseilles to Spain, which, with more gallantry than consideration, he agreed to do; under an impression, that it would afford him an opportunity of personally renewing his application to the Emperor to be put in absolute possession of Malta. His fleet, accordingly, ran down to Marseilles; but no sooner did the Emperor's ministers become aware of the object of the expedition, than they sequestrated all the revenues of the Order in Italy. Charles, jealous of the sentiments of the Grandmaster, approved of this arbitrary proceeding, and called upon the Council to give him a definite answer, without further delay, as to whether they would accept of Malta on the terms offered them. The Spanish knights, who regarded themselves as under the special patronage of the Emperor, were for instantly acceding to these conditions; but the Council returned for answer, that, in the absence of the Grandmaster, they could come to no decision. At the same time, they despatched information to L'Isle Adam of the sequestration of the revenues, and of the imperative nature of the message which the Emperor had sent them. The receipt of this intelligence had no effect on the Grandmaster's arrangements; and, with the French princess under his protection, he sailed for Spain.

The beautiful and witty sister of the imprisoned king was honourably received at Madrid; and even L'Isle Adam, notwithstanding the untoward circumstances under which he presented himself, met with a favourable reception. In a private audience, he laid before the Emperor copious details of the misfortunes of the Order; and when he saw him affected by the narrative, gently bewailed the rigour of the Imperial functionaries in Italy, and, by a strain of politic arguments, satisfied his illustrious auditor that the hope of

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recovering Rhodes alone, rather than any want of gratitude for the offer of Malta, had prevented the Council from at once accepting of that island. The Emperor, with more generosity than usually distinguished him, agreed not only to restore the sequestrated revenues, but to assist any enterprise which the Order might undertake against Rhodes. To crown his sense of L'Isle Adam's high deserts, he permitted him to have free access to the King of France; and in a short time, the venerable knight saw himself firmly established in the confidence of both monarchs. Francis, indeed, admitted him to all his councils; and though the Duchess of Alençon failed in her negotiation, and was compelled to hurry back to France, leaving her brother in durance, the Grandmaster, who was as skilful in diplomacy as he was brave in battle, ceased not to exercise his influence as a mediator between his Imperial and Royal patrons. It was chiefly through his exertions that the monarchs were at last brought to agree to a treaty of peace; and he had the honour of being present at their first interview after it was signed. It is told,* that on this occasion, the two monarchs having to pass through a door, the Emperor offered the King the precedence, which Francis declined. Charles, disconcerted by his refusal, appealed to the Grandmaster by the title of Father; when the latter, with that wisdom for which he was remarkable, promptly answered, addressing himself to the King of France, "No one, Sire, disputes that the Emperor is the mightiest prince in Christendom; but as you are not only in his dominions, but in his palace, it becomes you not to decline the courtesy by which he recognises you as the greatest of European kings." This subtle decision satisfied both princes; and Charles, in particular, was gratified by the manner in which it accorded him the supremacy—a proof how insignificant are the things that inflate even the greatest among mankind.

The Grandmaster left Spain (1526), honoured with many marks of the Imperial favour, and cheered by pledges of cordial support in all his projects. The eloquence, the sagacity, the halo that a long life of glory threw around him, and, above all, his gray hairs—that noblest of all coronals when undishonoured—had secured him the esteem and confidence of one of the sternest and most selfish hearts that ever ruled the destinies of nations. He had the additional satisfaction, before he left the Peninsula, of prevailing on the King of Portugal, to abandon a project of seizing on the revenues of the Order within his territories, which he contemplated doing, on the pretext that they were no longer applicable to the defence of Christen-

* Bosio.

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dom, and might be better employed in a crusade against the Moors of Barbary. Other sovereigns were not slow, however, to manifest a similar disposition. The suppression of the Templars was a precedent which avaricious princes treasured in vivid remembrance; and the knights of Saint John, driven from their insular principality, and without a permanent and independent lodgment for their banner, found that the memory of their past services was but an indifferent shield between them and royal rapacity. In particular, Henry the Eighth of England, a proud and arrogant prince, who had learned to regulate ecclesiastical matters with small scrupulosity, indignant at the Grandmaster having neglected to honour him with a personal visit, as he had done the Emperor and his royal prisoner, usurped the patronage of the Order, and demanded military service from the English knights. The Grandmaster was in France when intelligence of this misfortune reached him; and, aware that temperate measures might do much, while outrageous complaints could do nothing, he instantly despatched an embassy to the English monarch, and, when it failed to mollify his wrath, repaired in person to his court. Henry, pacified by this token of respect, and captivated by those time-furrowed cheeks and that hoary head, which even the stern nature of the imperial despot had found it impossible to withstand, received him with the distinction befitting a great commander. He was lodged in the palace, and, in the private conferences with which his royal entertainer honoured him, had ample opportunities of advocating the interests of his fraternity. The Grandmaster prudently avoided all complaints against the King, for his infringement of the rights of the Order; and Henry, of his own accord, abandoned the rigorous measures he had adopted. All he asked was the nomination of John Ranson, the Turcopolier, a knight who had done him good service in Ireland, to the Grand Priory of that country. This favour the Grandmaster held it impolitic to refuse, though it superseded the Chevalier Babington, who was in possession of the Priory; and, in return for his complaisance, the King confirmed all the privileges of the Order; and, when the venerable knight bade him farewell to rejoin his brethren, presented him in his own and the Queen's name with a golden basin and ewer, enriched with precious stones, which was afterwards deposited in the treasury of Saint John, and constituted one of its most magnificent ornaments.*

Meanwhile, warfare and political strife had been busy in Italy; and the Pope, after daring the Emperor's vengeance, by heading a notable league against him, beheld his territories a prey to intestine

* Boisgelin.

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divisions, and invested his capital by a hostile army. That army was led by the famous Constable Bourbon, the Emperor's General-in-chief in Italy, who, reduced to the most desperate straits, by the repacity and mutinous threats of his soldiers, daringly resolved to propitiate them with the spoil of the Vatican. The history of this extraordinary expedition, and of the no less extraordinary man who headed it, belongs not to the annals of the chivalry of Saint John. Suffice it to say, that, on the 5th of May, 1527, Bourbon and his excommunicated legions, for the Pope had ineffectually employed the thunder of the church against them, encamped on the plains of Rome. Next morning, clad in complete armour, over which, for the sake of distinction, he wore a white vest, he placed himself in the van of his army, and attempted to carry the city by scalade. Seeing his troops, who loved him to adoration, begin to waver, he seized a scaling ladder, and, planting it against the walls, was in the act of mounting it, when a bullet from the ramparts struck him down mortally wounded. With the intrepidity of a warrior, whom even the pang of death could not subdue, he called on the friend nearest him to cover him with a cloak, that his soldiers might not be disheartened by his fall; and in that position, in the thirty-eighth year of his age, he soon after breathed his last.* The death of their general only stimulated the fury of his troops, who, blending the name of Bourbon with cries of blood and revenge, flung themselves into the city, sword in hand, drove the Pope into the fortress of Saint Angelo, and indulged in all the criminalities of pillage and massacre. Never, even in the days of her barbarian conquerors, had that proud city been exposed to greater desolation. The streets were strewed with dead; the noblest and fairest were degraded and outraged; and the Roman blood, already contaminated by the Huns, the Vandals, and the Goths, suffered yet another pollution, from the intermixture of the Spanish and German nations.†

The Pope and thirteen Cardinals held out the castle of Saint Angelo nearly a month. At the end of that time they acceded to the terms which the Imperialists offered; and Clement was carried a prisoner to Naples. The humiliation of the Pontiff, which was aggravated by the expulsion of his family, the Medici, from Florence, filled the Emperor with joy; yet policy instigated him to conceal his triumph; and he affected great horror at what he called the sacrilegious and unsanctioned crime of Bourbon and his army. While these commotions agitated Europe, the Knights of Saint John remained quiescent in their retreat at Viterbo. Neither their project

* Guicciardini. † Wraxall. France under the race of Valois.

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for the recovery of Rhodes, nor their negotiations for the cession of Malta, could advance, while Christendom was distracted by such bloody and deplorable contests; and it was not till after the lapse of two years, when a treaty of peace was signed by the Pontiff and his imperial adversary, that the interests of the Order again received the attention of these two potentates. In that interval, the knight Bosio paid a second visit of espial to Rhodes, and, at imminent personal hazard, ascertained that all hope of recovering that island was futile. On his return to Viterbo, he endeavoured to console the Grandmaster for the abandonment of this favourite project, by proposing a descent on Modon, a city of the Morea, which, with a little exertion, he argued could be rendered a pleasant and tenable position. Bosio, with the love of enterprise natural to his character, had drawn up a plan for the achievement of this conquest; but the experience of L'Isle Adam forbade, or rather procrastinated, its adoption.

The reconcilement of the Emperor and the Pope, one result of which was the restoration of the House of Medicis to the sovereignty of Florence, was followed by the cession of Malta to the knights of Saint John, who lauded the Pontiff as the re-establisher of their Order. The act of donation received the imperial signature at Syracuse, on the 24th of March, 1530. By this deed, Charles ceded for ever to the Grandmaster and religious fraternity of Saint John, in absolute title and fee-simple, all the castles, fortresses, and isles of Tripoli, Malta, and Goza, with power of life and death, and that without appeal to any lord paramount whomsoever. The only conditions he attached to the grant, were, that the Order should never suffer its subjects to make war against the King of Sicily and his states—that the said King or his Viceroy, should receive the annual homage of a falcon—that he should have the power of electing any one of three candidates named by the Council, to the bishopric of Malta whenever it fell vacant—that the knights on whom the command of the squadrons of the Order devolved, should be persons in whom he could confide—and that the sovereignty of the island should not be conveyed away from the Order without his special sanction.

The Commander Bosio received the deed of donation from the Emperor's own hand, and, with that generous zeal which had always distinguished him, set off to present it in person to the Grandmaster.

In the course of his hasty journey, the carriage in which he travelled was overturned, and he received several severe contusions. An unskilful surgeon attempted to bleed him, but, instead of pricking a vein, ignorantly opened an artery, and a gangrene ensuing, put a period to this brave and talented man's life. A Rhodian gentleman, to whom he intrusted his despatches, carried them safely to the

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Grandmaster, who bewailed him with sincere grief, as a knight whose place, whether in camp or council, it was not easy to refill.

The territory which the Order acquired by this grant, embraced, as already stated, the islands of Malta and Goza, and the town of Tripoli, on the coast of Africa. Malta, according to the report of the commissioners sent to survey the islands when their cession was first bruited, was nothing better than a shelterless rock of soft sandstone called tuffa, six or seven leagues long, and three or four broad. The surface of the rock was scantily covered with earth, but of so coarse and arid a kind that grain refused to vegetate in it. It produced, however, abundance of figs, melons, and other fruits, besides cotton and cummin, which, together with honey, were exchanged by the native traders for corn with their Sicilian neighbours. The island had no rivulets, and, except in the interior, it was destitute of springs—consequently, the inhabitants had to store up the rain in cisterns. Fuel was so scarce, that wood was sold by the pound; and the natives usually dressed their food on fires made with thistles, or cow-dung dried in the sun. The *Citta Notabile*, or capital, occupied a rising ground in the centre of the island, and was a paltry, miserable, and defenceless place. One side of the island was shelterless, and destitute of harbours, but another was provided with several of sufficient capacity to accommodate the largest fleet. The fortifications, however, that commanded them were insignificant, and in ruins. The inhabitants numbered about twelve thousand; but an ungrateful soil, and the rapacity of the corsairs, who made periodical descents on it, sweeping whole families into captivity, kept them miserable and debased.

Goza was described, in the same report, as divided from Malta by a channel about a league and a half wide, in the midst of which lay two islets or rocks, called Cumin and Cuminot. According to the survey, Goza was eight leagues in circumference, destitute of harbours, and environed by shoals and reefs, but withal blessed with a fertile soil. The inhabitants amounted to about five thousand, who dwelt, like the people of Malta, in casals or hamlets. Their only defence from the corsairs was a badly fortified castle, built on a hill.

As to the city and castle of Tripoli, on the adjacent coast of Africa, their report was still more unfavourable. Situated at the distance of eighty leagues from Malta, destitute of defences, which the sandy nature of the ground rendered it almost impracticable to erect, and commanded by a neighbouring mountain, the commissioners regarded it as an untenable position, and maintained, that any garrison that might be sent thither would certainly be delivered into the hands of the Moors of Tunis, if it escaped starvation. These were not very

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encouraging pictures; but the prospects of the knights did not warrant the rejection of the Emperor's donation, however repulsive and perilous the exile to which it consigned them.

To the details furnished by the commissioners, it is almost unnecessary to make any addition. Malta—the Melita of Scripture—lies in the bosom of the Mediterranean Sea, about fifty miles southward of Sicily, the nearest point of Europe. Its first inhabitants were of Carthaginian origin; and, to this day, the Maltese language, which is a corrupt dialect of the Arabic, blended with Italian, is supposed to bear an affinity to the Punic tongue. From the Carthaginians it passed to the Romans, who, in turn, gave place to the Goths, and these, again, to the Saracens. In 1090, it was recovered from the Infidels by the Norman adventurers who had settled in Calabria. It afterwards became an appanage of the German Emperors, from whom it was taken by Charles of Anjou, King of Sicily, who, in turn, was dispossessed of it by the troops of Spain; and, after being repeatedly bought and sold for the convenience of its rulers, was finally granted to the Knights of Saint John, by the Imperial act of donation. These transferences, conjoined with its exposure to the descents of the Saracen and Turkish rovers, had completely desolated the island and its dependencies, and the impoverished inhabitants could barely provide themselves with the necessaries of life. In the year 1516, only fourteen years prior to its cession to the Knights of Saint John, all the revenue which the Imperial governor could wring from it, was forty-one ducats.* Under these circumstances, the generosity of Charles appears of a very niggard description; and when it is considered, that, by planting the champions of the Cross on these sterile rocks, he threw a buckler of proof between the Infidels and his Sicilian possessions, his benefaction dwindles down into a selfish and contemptible gift.

On the confirmation of the grant by the Pope, the Grandmaster despatched two distinguished commanders, to receive investiture from the Viceroy of Sicily, which was conferred in the Emperor's name. These knights afterwards proceeded to take possession of the new territories, along with six commissioners nominated by the Viceroy, who installed the commander, Aurelio Botigella, temporary governor and captain-at-arms of Malta. The castle of Saint Angelo, which commanded the most commodious port of the island, was delivered up to the commander Piton and a company of infantry; and, soon afterwards, a small squadron carried a number of knights to Tripoli, which was intrusted to the government of Gaspar of

* Boisgelin.

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Sanguessa, a veteran knight, who had rendered himself renowned by many heroic actions.

While these matters were in progress, the Grandmaster, at the head of the convent, removed from Viterbo to Syracuse in Sicily, as a preparatory step to the final transportation of the Order to its new asylum. The return of the commissioners was a signal for him to expedite his departure; and he was on the point of embarkation, when he learned, with dismay, that the Viceroy of Sicily was instructed not to permit the necessary supply of corn to be shipped, without paying the full exportation duties; and that at the same time, the privilege of coining money in his new possessions did not come within the limits of the Emperor's donation. As the former restriction was a virtual sentence of starvation on the islanders, who found it impracticable to raise grain, and the latter a type of bondage, the Council was disposed to spurn them and the islands together; but the Grandmaster, with his usual prudence, despatched two ambassadors to discuss the subject verbally with the Emperor; and, through their exertions, supported by the representations of the Pope, Charles was prevailed upon to concede the points to which they objected. This matter adjusted, the Grandmaster and his followers, including the remnant of the Rhodian exiles who had accompanied the convent in its wanderings, and were subsisted from the treasury of the Order, embarked for their new country. Though the Maltese channel is barely fifty miles wide, the fleet did not cross it without danger. A dreadful storm overtook it on the voyage—one galley was dashed to pieces on a reef, and a carrack was stranded. The Grandmaster's fortitude almost deserted him, when he beheld the sterile and miserably-peopled rock to which a hard destiny had exiled him, and which contained no edifice superior to a fisher's hut, save a dilapidated and almost untenable fortress. The natural riches of Rhodes—its corn, wine, and oil—its forests—its fleets—its numerous rich dependencies, dwelt on his memory with painful tenacity—making his new retreat look drearier from the contrast. Nevertheless, he had passed through too many vicissitudes to sink into despair. He immediately threw up a few defences round the insignificant casal which had risen under the guns of the Castle of Saint Angelo, and at the samet ime marked out a position for his future capital. Thus, in the end of 1530, after a pilgrimage of seven years from their expulsion from Rhodes, were the soldier-monks of Saint John deported to an inhospitable rock in the bosom of that sea which had for centuries borne their victorious flag; and henceforward were they most popularly known as the Knights of Malta.

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It was at this time, while L'Isle Adam and his knights could not refrain from bewailing the severity of their lot, that the project of surprising the town of Modon in the Morea was revived. The commander Bosio, with whom it originated, had, before his death, secured the connivance of two Greek renegades who held appointments of trust in that city; and the correspondence with these men had never been entirely suspended. Though the treasury was but ill able to fit out an expedition, the Grandmaster, supported by the hope that victory would put it in his power to transport the convent permanently to the Morea, strained every nerve to render the armament effective. His age, and the necessity of his remaining to superintend the works in progress at Malta, prevented him from personally assuming the command; and he therefore devolved it on the knight Salviati, Prior of Rome. Besides the flower of the Order, the armament included a considerable body of veteran mercenaries, hardened in all the atrocities of the Italian wars. The squadron was reinforced by a galley from Sicily, and another from Genoa; and also, by two armed vessels, commanded by a famous privateer called the Viscount de Cicala. A young Greek named Scandali, son of one of the renegades on whose co-operation the knights relied, was also employed in the enterprise.

The Prior of Rome put to sea in the middle of August, 1531, and arrived without disaster off the island of Sapienza, which covers the port of Modon. As had previously been arranged, his little fleet, striking their masts, ran into a secluded roadstead; and two spies, disguised as merchants, were sent into the town, and soon returned with the two renegades. Notwithstanding these traitors spoke sanguinely of the enterprise, the Christian leader held it prudent to have better authority that it was practicable, than their bare asseveration; and three knights, disguised in the same manner as the first messengers, accompanied them back to gain information. Scandali, one of the renegades, who commanded a tower built on a mole for the protection of the harbour, introduced the spies into that fort, and showed them not only how it might be taken, but how, with the connivance of his brother-traitor, one of the city gates might also be secured. The spies returned to the fleet with a favourable report; and on the following evening the attempt was made.

At sunset two feluccas, one of them commanded by young Scandali, stood boldly into the harbour. They were apparently laden with timber; but under the planks, which were intended to assist the debarkation, were concealed several knights and a number of soldiers. Through the contrivance of Calojan, one of the renegades, who was superintendent of the port, they entered it without molesta-

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tion; and the elder Scandali having succeeded in intoxicating the few Turks who garrisoned the tower of the mole, it was occupied by the Christians, while several of the Janizaries were put to death without alarm. At daybreak, a gate of the city was forced. The drowsy guards, who had just opened it, were cut down; and the Christians, to the amount of about three hundred, rushed into the place, when one of the feluccas instantly fired a signal gun, to warn the Maltese general to hasten to sustain the assailants with all his forces. Had the three hundred men, who thus flung themselves into the heart of the city, availed themselves, with common discretion, of the advantage which surprise gave them over the slender garrison, Modon had been taken. But, instead of pressing onward to the castle, where the governor was stationed, the soldiers, fancying the city already in their power, and accustomed to the predatory character of Italian warfare, instantly dispersed, to indulge in pillage and rapine. While thus engaged, the governor, speedily instructed of the insignificance of their number, assailed them at the head of all his troops, and, at the same time, despatched swift messengers to summon succours from a distance. A sanguinary combat ensued; both parties fought with desperation; for the knights, though the odds were fearfully against them, relied on the timely arrival of their admiral to the rescue. Unhappily, a tempestuous wind had prevented the signal-gun from being heard by the fleet; and it was past noon before Salviati, informed of what was passing by a fast-sailing bark, despatched by young Scandali, unmoored and stood into the harbour. He found the conflict still raging; and his arrival so far decided it, that the governor was driven back into the castle. The knights were preparing to cannonade that fortress, when several squadrons of Turkish cavalry, who had been summoned from a distance, threw themselves into it by the landward gate; and information was at the same time conveyed to the Maltese leader, that six thousand infantry were advancing from a camp in the interior. This intelligence, followed as it was by a desperate sally from the castle, determined him to abandon the enterprise; and his troops, infuriated by the repulse, gave themselves up to outrage and plunder. In this spoliation, the knights themselves, to their dishonour, did not scruple to share. The booty carried off was immense, and several hundred women were torn from their families and made slaves. One Turkish girl, of exquisite beauty, fell into the hands of the rover Cicala, who carried her to Sicily, where he had her baptized, and made her his wife. From this union sprung Scipio Cicala, a renowned adventurer, who, after passing through many vicissitudes, assumed the turban; and, as a Turkish commander, amply revenged the sack and desolation of his mother's home.

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The unsuccessful issue of this expedition, which entailed a serious pecuniary loss on the Order—for the booty was appropriated entirely as private property—determined the Grandmaster to settle permanently in Malta; and henceforward he devoted himself assiduously to the improvement of that island. The standard of Saint John, however, did not long remain furled. Though a serious misunderstanding subsisted between the Pope and the Emperor and Grandmaster, in regard to the nomination of a candidate to the vacant bishopric of Malta, which led to much acrimonious debate, the whole three concurred heartily in the propriety of a descent on the Turkish coast; and a powerful combined fleet, commanded by the famous Andrew Doria, Prince of Melfi, accordingly put to sea. The squadron of Saint John was commanded on this occasion by the Chevalier Salviati, the same knight who had headed the unsuccessful attack on Modon. On the arrival of the fleet off the coast of the Morea, Salviati, eager to wipe away the disgrace of his late defeat, urged Doria to storm Modon; but, as plunder was the grand object of the expedition, and indeed the only security the soldiery had for pay, the proposition was scouted, on the ground that the place had been too well gutted the preceding year; and it was determined to assault Coron, the ancient Corone, a weakly fortified city, situated on the gulf of the same name. Doria, accordingly, ran into the gulf, landed his troops, and moored his great ships and galleys abreast of the place, the walls of which quickly crumbled down before his cannon. Two land-batteries having effected a breach, a Spanish regiment advanced to the assault, but was repulsed, and three hundred soldiers left dead in the gap. Reinforced by the Priors of Rome and Auvergne, at the head of two hundred knights and five hundred stipendiaries, the remnant of the Spanish battalion again rushed to the attack. The ladders, which the knights planted against the walls, proved too short; and they had to scramble into the breach on each other's shoulders—galled the while by musketry and cross-bows, missiles and Greek fire. Shouting the name of Saint John, their favourite war-cry, they gained the top of the wall, and displayed on it the great standard of the Order. It was the signal of victory; and the whole army rent the air with an exulting cry, while the inhabitants, regarding the city as taken, hung out a flag of truce, and agreed to a capitulation. The Turks were exempted from pillage; but, by a cruel, yet, in those days, not unusual clause, the houses of the Jewish part of the population were abandoned to the troops. The conquest of Coron, in which Doria left a garrison, was followed by that of Patras, and of several minor fortresses on the western coast of the Morea; after

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which the combined fleet separated, and the different squadrons returned to winter in their respective ports.

Early in the following year (1532) the squadrons reunited, and steered directly to the relief of Coron, which a famous corsair had blockaded, by Solyman's orders, while an army invested it by land. Covered by the guns of the great carrack of Saint John, which led the battle, an attempt was made to throw succours into the place; but it proved futile, and brought on a general engagement. For a time, the issue of the conflict was extremely doubtful. The Turks fought with great fury, and repeatedly boarded the ships and galleys of their adversaries. At length, victory declared for the Christian flag; and after destroying or dispersing the Turkish fleet, Doria threw into Coron the necessary supplies without further molestation.

While the combined fleet was contemplating new conquests, the Maltese squadron was recalled to protect its own territories, which were threatened, in common with the coasts of Sicily and Malta, with a piratical visit from Barbarossa, one of the most redoubted corsairs of Barbary, who, with an armament of eighty-two galleys, scoured the circumjacent sea. At the Grandmaster's suggestion, the records of the Order were sent to Sicily as a place of greater safety; but when the Council, out of consideration for his advanced age, proposed that he also should retire to that island, the illustrious old man nobly answered, that he would never set so base an example to his knights, for the sake of adding a few days to his life. Happily, Barbarossa's attention was diverted to a different quarter; and the Grandmaster was enabled to prosecute his plans for the improvement of the island, and the better regulation of the Order, which nearly eight years of wandering had somewhat disorganized. The chapter which notified the necessity of immediate reformation, however, was dishonoured by a brawl which ultimately involved the whole brotherhood in a disastrous contest. A Florentine gentleman, one of the Prior of Rome's attendants, having quarrelled with a young French knight, challenged him to fight, and slew him. The uncle of the deceased, who was a knight commander, conceiving his nephew to have come unfairly by his death, collected a few friends, and, having encountered the Florentine along with others of the Prior's suite, drove them at the point of the sword into their patron's palace. The Prior's whole establishment, which amounted to sixty persons, instantly espoused the Florentine's cause, and sallied forth with arms in their hands to avenge him. The French knights were indiscriminately assailed; some were slain at the first onset, and several wounded; and the broil soon became a declared war between the language of Italy and the languages of France. The latter demanded justice at the hands

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of the Grandmaster; and the Prior of Rome was ordered to punish the guilty; but Salviati, proud of his influence with the reigning pontiff, who was his near kinsman, and disposed to regard his adherents as the injured party, contented himself with sending the most unruly among them, under arrest, on board his galley. The French knights, exasperated at this proceeding, set discipline at defiance, and, boarding the Prior's galley, sword in hand, sacrificed four of the culprits to their wrath, and returned with shouts of triumph to their quarters. This was an outrage which the pride of Salviati could not pardon; and he not only rallied round him the whole of the Italian knights, but secured the support of the languages of Arragon and Castile. The French knights, warned of this confederacy, besieged the Prior's palace, and were received with discharges of musketry by the inmates. The Bailiff of Manosque, at the head of a strong body of troops, ultimately suppressed the tumult; and next day, twelve of the ringleaders were publicly deprived of the habit of the Order, while several of the more turbulent and stubborn, who contemned the authority of the Council, and manifested a disposition to perpetrate new outrages, were thrown alive into the sea.*

The loss of Rhodes itself scarcely affected the venerable L'Isle Adam more than this domestic warfare; and, oppressed with melancholy, his health rapidly declined. To increase his despondency, Henry the Eighth of England, having come to an open rupture with the Pope, in consequence of the Pontiff's steady refusal to countenance the divorcement of Catharine of Arragon his queen, commenced a fierce and bloody persecution against all persons in his dominions, who persisted in adhering to the Holy See. In these circumstances, the Knights of Saint John, who held themselves bound to acknowledge the Pope as their superior, at whatever hazard, did not long escape his ire. The power of the Order, composed as it was of the chivalry of the nation, while the Prior of London sat in Parliament on an equality with the first baron of the realm, for a time deterred him from openly proscribing it; but at length his wrath blazed forth in an ungovernable flame. The knights Ingley, Adrian Forrest, Adrian Fortescu, and Marmaduke Bohus, refusing to abjure their faith, perished on the scaffold. Thomas Mytton and Edward Waldegrave died in a dungeon; and Richard and James Bell, John Noel, and many others, abandoned their country for ever, and sought an asylum at Malta—completely stripped of their possessions. In 1534, by an act of the Legislature, the Order of Saint John was abolished in the King of England's dominions; and such knights as

* Bosio.

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survived the persecution, but who refused to stoop to the conditions offered them, were thrown entirely on the charity of their brethren at Malta. Henry offered Sir William Weston, Lord Prior of England, a pension of a thousand pounds a year; but that knight was so overwhelmed with grief at the suppression of his Order, that he never received a penny, but soon after died.* Other knights less scrupulous became pensioners of the crown.

L'Isle Adam received the English refugees with the tenderness of a father, and generously offered them that consolation in their proscription of which he himself stood in need. But the care and anxiety to which the rigorous measures of the King of England gave birth, bent his gray hairs in sorrow to the grave. A violent fever deprived him of the little remains of vigour which were yet left him; and on the 21st of August, 1534, he expired. In him the Order lost the most illustrious Grandmaster it had ever possessed. His reign of thirteen years, was marked by a continued succession of perils and disasters; but his bravery, his wisdom, his fortitude, his clemency, and his devotion to his Order, threw a radiance even over reverse. The knights laid him in the dust, with filial sorrow; and the simple epitaph, "Here lies virtue triumphant over misfortune!" was inscribed upon his tomb.†

Peter Dupont, a Piedmontese knight, succeeded L'Isle Adam as Grandmaster. He was resident at his bailiwick of Santa Euphemia in Calabria, at the time of his election, and, being stricken in years, was with difficulty prevailed on to accept the dignity. The honour was indeed a burdensome one for infirm shoulders; for a series of revolutions had occurred among the piratical states on the coast of Barbary, which threatened the nearer shores of Christendom with desolation. To explain these, it is necessary to give a brief outline of the history of two remarkable men, by whom they were principally effected. Horuc and Hayradin, surnamed the Barbarossas or Redbeards, were natives of the island of Mitylene, who, in their infancy, had abandoned the humble home of their father, and devoted themselves to a maritime life. At first, a single brigantine was all their fortune; but

* Sir William Weston was buried in the chancel of the old church of Saint James, Clerkenwell, where an altar-tomb, in the architectural style of the age, was erected over his remains. He was represented on it by an emaciated figure lying upon a winding-sheet, (Vide Malcolm's Londonium Redivivum); and in 1788, when circumstances occasioned the grave to be opened, his mouldering remains were found in a state not unlike the figure upon the tomb.—*Brayley's Londoniana*, vol. i.

† As an instance of the mutability of fortune, it is worthy of note that the noble family from which L'Isle Adam was descended, continued to exist in France at the end of the seventeenth century, but so reduced in circumstances, that a gentleman of the name became a common carter in the neighbourhood of Troye in Champagne, in order to support his father.—*L'Art de verifier les Dates.*

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a succession of daring and infamous piracies soon enabled them to equip a small squadron, which, swelling by degrees, ultimately became a potent fleet. The fame and success of these redoubted brothers, whom nothing could disunite, and who, scorning alike the alliance of Frank and Moslem, boasted that they were good friends to the sea, and enemies to all who sailed on it, drew to their flag all the rovers of the Levant. A civil war having broken out in Algiers, they interfered as mediators and allies, and, by treachery and the bowstring, despoiled the reigning prince both of his kingdom and his life. Horuc, supported by his troops, took upon himself the title of King; and to secure his usurped dignity, offered to hold it as a tributary of the Emperor Solyman—an offer which that potentate, who had long been desirous to extend his supremacy to the coast of Barbary, eagerly accepted. Stimulated by this triumph to attempt other conquests, the pirate prince carried his arms with equal success into the adjacent territory of Tremezen, which was under the protection of Spain, but was in turn, besieged in the capital of that principality by the Spanish governor of Oran. The Spaniards, exasperated at the injuries inflicted on their vassals, speedily reduced the fortifications to ruins; and Horuc, seeing further resistance impossible, stole from the city by a subterraneous passage, and endeavoured to escape into the desert at the head of fifteen hundred men. This flight was instantly discovered by the Spaniards, whose hot pursuit he tried to slacken, by scatttering the treasure with which he had provided himself in their route. Nevertheless, his pursuers overtook him on the banks of the river Huexda, where, scorning a pusillanimous surrender, he turned on them like a lion at bay, and, after slaying several Spanish officers with his own hand, fell, like a warrior, with all his followers round him (1518).* Hayradin, his brother, succeeded him as King of Algiers; and his name, in common with those of his lieutenants, Sinan a renegade Jew, and a Caramanian, known by the strange cognomen of *Devil-driver*, soon became the terror of the whole Mediterranean. Struck by the fame of his exploits, the Sultan Solyman conferred on Hayradin the command of his whole fleet, as the person best able to compete with Andrew Doria, the admiral of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, and the greatest naval captain of the age. Devil-driver, imitating his superior in his exploits, surprised Tachora, a town in the vicinity of Tunis, and became in some mea-

* It is worthy of remark, that the government of Algiers continued till its recent subversion by the French (1830), virtually the same as that established by the Barbarossas. The ranks of the regular military force or Janizary corps, were filled exclusively with Levantine Turks and Christian renegades, and no native was ever permitted to enter it; while, from the fierce adventurers of which it was composed, the Dey was invariably chosen.

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sure independent. From thence he carried his arms to the walls of Tripoli, and raised a fortalice within cannon-shot of that fortress, and in such a position as completely to overlook the harbour. Enraged at this insolence, and the loss of two brigantines which he had captured, the knights, who garrisoned Tripoli, combined with the Moorish prince of Tunis, to expel him from his new conquest. Tachora was besieged by their united forces, but without success; and the Order had to mourn the death of the Chevalier De Harlai, who, with the detachment he commanded, fell into an ambuscade and was slain. Soon afterwards, Barbarossa, in accordance with a scheme of conquest concerted at Constantinople, availed himself of the intestine divisions that prevailed in Tunis, to enter that port with a powerful fleet, when he expelled Muley Hascen the reigning prince, and took possession of the city and adjacent territory as the Viceroy of the Ottoman Porte. Such was the state of affairs in Africa, when the Grandmaster Dupont arrived in Malta to assume the duties of his new office; and the danger appeared so imminent, not only to Tripoli, but to Malta itself, that he lost no time in imploring the Emperor Charles, whose Sicilian and Neapolitan territories were also endangered, to send into Barbary an army sufficient to arrest the progress of the intrepid corsair, who had brought nearly the whole of it under his dominion.

Had the security of the Order of Saint John been the only argument employed to stimulate Charles to undertake this expedition, he would in all probability have turned a deaf ear to these representations. But the danger impending over his own territories, combined with the complete interruption given to commerce in every part of the Mediterranean by the terror of Barbarossa's name, induced him to submit the matter to his Council; while, at the same time, he covertly endeavoured to bribe the corsair into an amicable alliance, by a promise of recognising him as king of the whole of northern Africa, provided he would consent to hold the sovereignty as a tributary of Spain. The ambassador who carried this proposal to Barbarossa, had also secret instructions to ascertain the disposition of the Tunisians, and, if possible, to enlist some of the most influential of them in favour of his master, whom he was authorized to represent as the ally of their banished prince. But this negotiant soon rendered himself suspected by the corsair, who, scorning the laws of civilized nations, put him to death. This outrage decided the question of peace or war; and Charles, without further hesitation, invited the knights to join him in an attempt to humble the arrogance of the barbarian.

The Christian armament put to sea in the spring of 1535, and

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rendezvoused at Cagliari in Sardinia. It consisted of upwards of three hundred sail; and the troops, including two thousand horse, amounted to nearly thirty thousand.* Volunteers from every part of Christendom, many of them of illustrious lineage, and eager to distinguish themselves like their fathers in Paynim war, were enrolled under the Imperial banner. The Grandmaster strengthened the expedition with four large well-equipped galleys, eighteen armed brigantines, and the great carrack, which had long been the hope and pride of the Order. The commander Botigella was named admiral of this squadron, and Anthony de Grolée, the valiant knight who had borne the great standard of Saint John at the siege of Rhodes, commanded the great carrack and the land-forces.

The expedition arrived at Porto Farina, the ancient Utica, without adventure. Barbarossa, aware of the storm gathering round him, spared no exertions to place himself in a condition capable of defying it. He stored his granaries abundantly with provisions, and his arsenals with munitions of war; and, denouncing Muley Hascen as an infamous apostate, who had become the vassal of the Christians, he stirred up all the petty princes of Barbary to support him in the contest, and even allured into his service fifteen thousand mounted Arabs from the desert. The Emperor landed without opposition, within cannon-shot of the Goletta, a fortress about six miles from Tunis, and four from the site of ancient Carthage. The Goletta commanded the mouth of the canal, by which the sea communicates with the large but shallow lake on which Tunis is situated; and Barbarossa, who regarded it as almost impregnable, had thrown into it a garrison of six thousand chosen soldiers, under Devil-driver and Sinan, and left the greater part of his navy in port, under the protection of its guns. The Emperor having pitched his camp in the vicinity, at the expense of seven hundred men whom the Turks massacred in their sallies, and thrown up batteries against the fort, caused it to be cannonaded with great fury both from the land and the sea. As at the siege of Coron, the great carrack of Saint John, moored astern of the fleet, kept up from her lofty decks an uninterrupted fire, without doing the least injury to the low-built galleys in her van; and several knights in the command of vessels, distinguished themselves by the promptitude and intrepidity with which they manœuvred them. At the end of twelve hours, the Emperor seeing a breach effected, ordered an assault. The knights claimed the honour of leading the attack on the seaward breach, and were rowed in small boats to the foot of the rampart. The boats grounded at a distance

* Robertson's Hist. of Charles the Fifth.

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from the shore; whereupon the Chevalier Copier, who carried the standard of the Order, leaped into the waves with the banner in his hand, and, followed by his companions, rushed, amid a shower of balls, to the beach. The Turks stood the onset with great resolution; but the Christians gradually fought their way from the bulwarks to the Cavalier, and, at the end of an hour, the place was won. Many brave knights perished in the attack; and scarcely one engaged in it escaped without a wound. The garrison evacuated the fortress as the conquerors entered it, and retired to Tunis, hotly pressed. This victory, which put the Emperor in possession of the chief stronghold of his antagonist, encouraged him to advance instantly against Tunis. Barbarossa, preferring the hazard of a pitched battle to being shut up in a city, the population of which was hostile to his government, advanced at the head of his army to fight the invaders. His troops made a gallant onset; but no sooner did the Spanish artillery open fairly on their dense masses, than the Moors and Arabs were thrown into confusion and fled, followed by their General and his Osmanlis, who, with the indomitable bravery of their nation, were ready to perish, but whom he did not think it prudent to sacrifice.

Previous to marching out to battle, Barbarossa had debated with his lieutenants, the propriety of immolating ten thousand Christian captives; but Sinan prevailed on him to postpone this inhuman sacrifice; and he was content to leave them in a prison, the subterranean apartments of which were filled with gunpowder, ready to blow the whole into the air, the moment he should give the order. On re-entering the city as a fugitive, he made secret preparations for abandoning it; and commanded that the train should be fired. But before the hour arrived for executing this atrocious act, a revolution took place, which put the captives in a situation to defend themselves. In the prison was a Maltese knight, called Paul Simeoni, for whom Barbarossa had repeatedly refused to accept a reasonable ransom. This knight, who had signalized himself in many enterprises against the Infidels prior to the surrender of Rhodes, particularly in defending the little islet of Lero against a superior Turkish force, bribed two renegades, who acted as jailers, to enable him and his companions in durance to burst their chains. This done, they stormed the armoury, cut to pieces the Turks who garrisoned the citadel, and displayed a white flag on its highest tower, to notify to the Christian army what had happened. Barbarossa, when he attempted to burst the gates, was saluted with a shower of musket-balls, and instantly abandoned the city to its fate. The Emperor, advised of the victory achieved by the slaves, ad-

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vanced promptly to their assistance; and Simeoni, at the head of six thousand of his companions, welcomed him into the place with shouts of joy. The Emperor embraced Simeoni, in testimony of his admiration! saying, as he did so, "Brave knight, blessed for ever be the valour which enabled you to break your chains, to facilitate my victory, and increase the glory of your Order.

The Christians disgraced their conquest by the foulest atrocities —and, as usual in such cases, outrage fell heaviest on the sex least able to bear it. Moorish maidens of the most illustrious birth were reduced to the basest bondage by the fierce Spanish and German soldiery; and no sanctuary escaped profanation. It is told, that Muley Hascen, the exiled Prince of Tunis, who re-entered the city under the shadow of the Christian banner, seeing a beautiful Moorish girl, whom he knew to be of noble extraction, unfeelingly treated by a Spanish officer, offered to purchase her of her captor; but the proud Morisco, regarding him as the origin of the war which desolated her native land, and overwhelmed with despair, scornfully spit in his face, and protested that she would never have a tyrant and traitor for her deliverer.*

The restoration of Muley Hascen to the sovereignty of Tunis, as a tributary of Spain, with the understanding that the Emperor should retain a garrison in the Goletta, to be paid by the Tunisian prince, terminated the expedition; and Charles returned to his European territories, as did the squadron of Saint John to Malta. Christendom resounded with the Emperor's fame; for the captives whom he had emancipated, and whom he sent well clothed, and furnished with the means of travelling, to their respective countries, spread his renown far and wide. The principal knights who had served in the war were honoured with special marks of the Imperial favour; and the privilege of receiving all sorts of provisions and military stores from Sicily, duty free, was permanently conferred on the Order.

* Bosio.

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CHAPTER IV.

Successes of the Knights against Devil-driver—D'Omedes elected Grandmaster—Leo Strozzi—Unsuccessful attack on Susa—Grand expedition against Algiers—Its disastrous issue—Exposed state of Tripoli—Dragut the Corsair—Conquest of Mehedia—Descent of a Turkish armament on Malta—Its repulse—Goza ravaged—Loss of Tripoli—Unwarrantable proceedings of the Grandmaster—His persecution of La Vallier—Unsuccessful attack on Zoara.

The Grandmaster Dupont lived long enough to see his flag return in triumph; and Didier de Saint Jaille succeeded to the vacant dignity (1535.) In the following year, Devil-driver, who still remained master of Tachora, and of the fort called Alcaide, which he had erected in the environs of Tripoli, made an attempt to surprise that place, by scaling the insufficient wall that encompassed it, under cloud of night. Happily, the garrison, which was commanded by Schilling, a German knight, were aware of his intention, and repulsed him with great slaughter; and, by way of reprisal, an armament was despatched from Malta, with instructions to raze the obnoxious fortalice. The conduct of this enterprise devolved on the commander Botigella, who had rendered himself renowned as a naval captain all over the Mediterranean. He landed at Tripoli, at the head of five hundred knights and seven hundred stipendiary soldiers, and, supported by a body of Arabian horse, whose services Schilling the governor had secured by bribing some Sheiks of the desert, threw up batteries against the tower of Alcaide, and, after some skirmishing with Devil-driver, who hastened to its relief, completely razed it. This triumph was enhanced by the capture of a Turkish galleon, on the voyage back to Malta—the merchandise on board of which was valued at one hundred and sixty thousand crowns.

The exultation of the Order, however, was subdued by the death of the Grandmaster, who died at Montpellier in France, whither he had repaired for the benefit of his health, and by two crimes of magnitude perpetrated by individuals amenable to the statutes. One of these was the robbery of a highly venerated shrine, by an aspirant for the clerical habit of the Order. The other was the murder of a Maltese woman by an English knight, who, in a transport of rage and jealousy, stabbed her to the heart. The thief and the murderer shared the same doom. They were formally sentenced to death by the secular judges of the island, and, being tied into sacks, and carried a mile from the port, were thrown into the sea.

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John d'Omedes, a knight of the language of Arragon, succeeded the Grandmaster Didier de St. Jaille. Though the majority of the knights were disposed to give their suffrages in favour of the commanders, Botigella or De Grolée, both of whom were distinguished for talents and valour, brother Garcia Cortez, who chanced to be the electing knight, supported by the Spanish faction, craftily decided the vote in the Arragonian's favour. This election placed at the head of the Order one of the most narrow-minded, partial, and rigorous chiefs, who ever held the supreme authority. Among other unpopular and unjust acts, by which he commemorated the commencement of his reign, he removed the veteran Botigella from the command of the galleys, and conferred it on Leo Strozzi, a young Florentine knight of illustrious birth, who had served his apprenticeship in war, under the famous Andrew Doria, in the Emperor's fleet. Strozzi, though an undue act of favouritism advanced him to this dignity, and though he had been, from his boyhood, a spoiled child of fortune, proved afterwards, that nature intended him for a great captain. But the intestine troubles that distracted his native city, subsequent to the assassination of the Duke Alexander de Medici, ultimately deprived the Order of his services. Philip Strozzi, his father, the fomenter of these troubles, fell into the hands of his enemies, and perished in a dungeon by his own hand, at the very time his son was hurrying from Malta, to endeavour to effect his liberation. One of the last acts of the elder Strozzi's life was, to invoke an avenger to rise from among his descendants; and, from that hour, his sons Peter and Leo, regarding Charles the Fifth as the subverter of the liberties of their country, and the indirect murderer of their father, dedicated themselves to the service of France, merely that they might pass their lives in arms against him.

Paul Simeoni, the knight who had signalized himself by the liberation of the Christian captives at Tunis, succeeded Strozzi in the command of the galleys. Shortly after his appointment, an envoy arrived from Muley Hascen, the Moorish prince of Tunis, complaining that the Turkish pirates, who had overrun the African coast, had obtained possession of the port of Susa, and several other places in the vicinage of his capital; and that, without the assistance of the same allies who had restored him to the sovereignty, he could not, for any length of time, maintain himself against them. An ambassador from the Order reported the Tunisian's jeopardy to the Emperor; and that monarch, conceiving his dignity outraged in the person of his Moorish vassal, instantly equipped an armament in the ports of Sicily, and despatched it, in company with fourteen Maltese galleys, to Muley's relief. The whole fleet sailed under the com-

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mand of the Maltese admiral; but the land forces were headed by the Marquis of Terra Nova, the Emperor's lieutenant. Having joined forces with the Tunisian prince, the Marquis invested Susa; but, owing to his credulous reliance on the representations of a renegade, who entered the camp as a deserter purposely to betray him, he expended all his ammunition against a part of the fortifications which was impregnable. The knights, seeing the store of powder exhausted, and ashamed of the incapacity of the Sicilian general, made an effort to enter the town by a narrow breach which their cannon had effected. One hundred and thirty of them, followed by four hundred soldiers, endeavoured to make a lodgment on the top of the wall, to which they had to scramble in single files; but no sooner did they gain that perilous elevation, than the Turkish musketeers and cross-bowmen assailed them both in front and flank, from the inner side of a deep intrenchment, and they were forced to abandon the assault. The Marquis, finding himself compelled to raise the siege, prepared to wreak his vengeance on the renegade who had deceived him; but the traitor eluded his pursuit, and regained the city in safety. The expedition returned to Malta without honour; the knights bewailing the many brave men whom they had buried at the foot of the unpropitious walls, and banning the incapacity of the stranger who had commanded them.

The commander Botigella, who had just returned from the government of Tripoli, his period of service at that exposed station having expired, joined loudly in these complaints. He represented it as sheer folly to attempt forming permanent establishments among the faithless and turbulent tribes on the African coast; and strenuously urged, that Tripoli itself should be abandoned, unless the Emperor agreed to refortify it, and assist in its defence. The Council, though wary of offending Charles, held the arguments of Botigella as too cogent to be altogether scouted; and a formal application was accordingly made to the Imperial dictator, that he should either render Tripoli tenable, or permit the Order to evacuate it. Charles readily promised to place it in a state capable of resistance, but, in the meanwhile, recommended the knights to hold themselves in readiness to join him in an expedition, which, he anticipated, would sweep the whole race of corsairs from both shore and sea.

The enterprise he contemplated was a descent on Algiers, the stronghold of the redoubted Barbarossa, who had confided it to the government of a viceroy, while absent in command of the Turkish Emperor's fleet. Spain, Sicily, and Naples, resounded with the clangour of warlike preparation. Large levies of troops were made in Italy, and even Germany sent a formidable body of cavalry to the

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war. So greatly did these preparations stimulate the soldier-monks of Saint John, that the whole brotherhood burned with a desire to be included in the expedition; but prudence forbade the Grandmaster to encourage a general crusade; and the contingent of the Order was limited to four hundred knights, each of whom was accompanied by two armed attendants. George Schilling, great Bailiff of Germany, was appointed to command the Maltese squadron.

The expedition rendezvoused at Majorca. The veteran Doria, and the Marquis del Guasto, who headed the land forces, ventured to remonstrate with the Emperor on the imprudence of risking his fleet on a shelterless coast, at the autumnal season of the year, when hurricanes prevail; but Charles ridiculed their apprehensions. When Doria bluntly remarked, that, if the enterprise were persisted in, it would end in their destruction, the Emperor answered, that since he himself had enjoyed two-and-twenty years of empire, and Doria threescore and twelve of life, both ought to die satisfied—die when they might.

The voyage from Majorca to the African coast was speedy, but tempestuous. The fleet arrived off Algiers in the end of October; but, though the winds that had buffeted it by the way had subsided, the surge broke furiously on the shore; and two days elapsed before the troops were able to disembark. Many of the soldiers had to wade breast-high through the waves; but happily no opposition was made to their landing. The army, including six thousand horse, amounted to about twenty-six thousand men; and, to oppose this mighty force, Hassan-Aga, a Sardinian renegade, whom Barbarossa had left as viceroy in Algiers, had only eight hundred Turks and five thousand Moors. Part of the latter, however, were refugees from Granada, eager to avenge their wrongs on the heads of the Christian oppressors who had deprived them of their country. The Emperor, to prevent national jealousies among his troops, judiciously divided them into three bodies. In the van, he placed the veteran soldiers of Spain; in the centre, the Italians and the knights of Saint John; and in the rear, the troops from Germany and Flanders, and the volunteers. The knights came to the war, not mounted as of old, when they sojourned in Palestine, but on foot, wearing cuirasses and helmets, and carrying each a short spear, in lieu of the chivalrous lance which their predecessors had so often reddened with Paynim blood. Their surcoats were of crimson velvet, on which shone a white cross, the symbol of their Order; and never had the banner of Saint John been intrusted to a band of nobler-looking or braver men.

Algiers, the city against which this formidable expedition was directed, occupied the slope of a hill, facing a spacious bay of the

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Mediterranean. The houses rose terrace above terrace, in such a manner that the windows of the one tier looked down on the roof of the next below it, "most beautiful to behold."* Having pitched his head-quarters, and erected a battery in the immediate neighbourhood of the city, the Emperor called upon the Viceroy to surrender; but the latter treated the summons with contempt. The landing of the army was the signal for the Arab auxiliaries, whom he had allured into his service by the prospect of plunder, to commence operations. Mounted on fleet horses, and armed with long javelins, which they hurled with fatal dexterity into the Christian ranks, they maintained an incessant skirmish, notwithstanding the battalion of Malta was thrown forward to the left of the army, and repeatedly repulsed them. These harassing attacks continued throughout the night; and it was not till the morning broke, that the storm of arrows and darts, which fell thick as hail into the camp, was stayed by a fierce charge of the Sicilian pikemen, who chased their half-naked adversaries beyond the adjacent hills.† But, on the evening of the second day, while every Christian heart beat high with the hope of victory, the sky was overcast, torrents of rain flooded the bivouac, and the sea, chafed into fury by the autumnal blast, roared like thunder along the coast. The troops having landed unprovided with tents, passed the night ankle-deep in the mire of their comfortless camp, grasping their spears, which they had stuck into the saturated earth, to prevent the hurricane from sweeping them away—their bodies benumbed, and their watch-fires extinguished. Their plight was too lamentable to escape the knowledge of their vigilant adversaries. At break of day, a band of Moorish horsemen sallied from the gate nearest the Christian position, cut a picket stationed in advance to pieces, and, sword in hand, attempted to fight their way to the Imperial quarter. The Italian regiments of Colonna and Spinola, sustained by the Maltese battalion, stood to their arms, however, in time to arrest this sortie; and a sanguinary combat ensued between the Moorish cavalry and the Christian knights. The knights, though fighting at a disadvantage, dismounted, and slew many of their opponents; and several acts of individual heroism crowned with glory their united valour. Nicholas de Villegagnon, a French chevalier, rushing into the thickest of the battle, had his left arm pierced by a Moorish lance, on which he attempted to spear the horseman who had wounded him, but without success. The Moor was about to repeat his blow, when Villegagnon, who was a man of great stature and proportionate strength, vaulted up behind him, and stabbed him to the heart. Ano-

* Knolles. † Ibid.

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ther French knight, named Ponce de Savignac, the standard-bearer of the Order, pursued the flying Moors to the very walls of the city, and, in chivalrous bravado, stuck his dagger into the gate, as evidence that nothing but bars and bolts had stayed his progress.

The cannon planted on the walls, speedily drove the knights back to their former position, and the Moors, armed with iron cross-bows, which were infinitely more serviceable in a humid atmosphere than the Christian matchlocks, made a second sortie, in greater force, and with greater fury than before. The Italian regiments, most of whom were raw troops, gave way before this new onset; but the knights still kept their ground, and, with the assistance of a body of Germans whom the Emperor sent to their succour, drove the Infidels once more within their own walls. The Bailiff Schilling, who commanded the knights on this occasion, brought them back from the pursuit covered with wounds and glory. As the Moors made use of poisoned quarrels for their cross-bows, every wound inflicted by them proved mortal. Among those who fell, was the brave De Savignac, who, after one of these fatal bolts was buried in his breast, refused to resign the standard which it was his duty to uphold, till death loosened his grasp. Seventy-five knights, three chaplains, and about four hundred soldiers in the service of the Order, perished in this bootless fight.

The army had scarce time to ascertain the extent of its loss, when a new and far greater calamity obliterated the remembrance. The storm of war had for the moment rolled away, but that of the elements still raged with unmitigated violence; and, as the day advanced, the sea, lashed into fury, drove the ships from their anchors, and strewed the whole coast with wreck. In the short space of half an hour, the Christians, bleeding from their recent wounds, and destitute not only of shelter but of provisions, beheld fifteen war-galleys, one hundred and forty store-ships and transports, and eight thousand men, engulfed in the waves. Some of the vessels went down at anchor, in the deep trough of the sea; others were either dashed against each other, or beaten to pieces on the rocks. Several commanders of galleys, finding it impossible to ride out the hurricane, ran their vessels ashore on distant parts of the coast, which they reached only to fall under the scimitars of the marauding Arabs. It was a scene of indescribable desolation; and the Imperial leader, crowned though he was with half a dozen diadems, could only gaze in futile anguish on the spoil of the winds of heaven.

The Maltese galleys, being more seaworthy and better manned than the majority of the fleet, rode out the storm in safety. The crew of one galley, conceiving her in momentary danger of founder-

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ing, proposed to run her ashore; but the knight who commanded her, less careful of his life than his honour, threatened the first man who should take the helm for such a purpose with instant death; and, by his firmness, subordination was restored. The rudder of another being torn away by the violence of the waves, and the vessel consequently left at their mercy, two mariners voluntarily suffered themselves to be lowered by ropes into the sea, and shipped a new one; by which intrepid act they saved their ship from destruction.

This frightful disaster decided the fate of the expedition. The Emperor no longer contemplated the reduction of Algiers—all his anxiety was directed to the re-embarkation of his army. He immediately commenced his retreat towards Cape Matafus, near which the remnant of his fleet had found shelter; and the knights of Malta had the perilous honour of covering the line of march, and repelling the incessant attacks of the Moorish cavalry, who hovered incessantly on their right flank. The army bivouacked the first night on the margin of the brook Alcarez, which the rains had rendered impassable. It was crossed next day, however, by means of a bridge which the pioneers constructed of the fragments of vessels which the waves had strewed along the coast. Three days' marching brought the army to Cape Matafus, where it re-embarked—the soldiers quitting the inhospitable shore with joy. Scarcely, however, had the fleet put to sea, when another tempest assailed it. Several ships foundered in the gale; and the Emperor beheld one, on board of which were seven hundred Spaniards, go down before his eyes. The armament rendezvoused at Bugia, where Muley Hascen, Prince of Tunis, furnished it with supplies; and on the 25th of November, the shattered remains of the army were relanded at Carthagena in Spain. While at Bugia, the Emperor dismissed the Maltese squadron, after conferring on all the knights who outlived the campaign several honorary testimonials of his admiration and regard.

The untoward result of the expedition against Algiers filled the knights with new apprehensions regarding Tripoli. They foresaw that, sooner or later, the vengeance of Barbarossa would burst in that quarter; and once more they petitioned the Emperor, either to render it defensible, or agree to its being abandoned. This fresh appeal produced from Charles only a pledge, that, in case Tripoli were besieged, he would relieve it. As to immediate succour, he added, he had neither troops nor money to spare; but still he could not exonerate the knights from a duty specially imposed upon them by the treaty of feoffment, by which the cession of Malta had been completed. To increase the gloomy anticipations of the defenders of Tripoli, their neighbour and ally Muley Hascen, Prince of Tunis,

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was deposed by Muley Hamida his eldest son, who took him prisoner in battle, and put out his eyes with a red-hot lancet. Ferdinand de Braccimont, Governor of Tripoli, on learning this event, applied to be recalled; and his successor, Christopher de Solertarfan, Grand Chancellor of the Order, after a short trial of the office, also abandoned it, as one of peril without honour. In these circumstances, the Grandmaster and Council conferred the government on the Commander de la Valette, a wise and intrepid Provençal knight, who, from the day of his admission into the Order, had never quitted Malta, save to encounter the enemy on the circumjacent sea. He possessed that indomitable courage, which is proof against all reverse, and contemns all danger; and, no sooner did he assume the command at Tripoli, than he applied himself indefatigably to reorganize the garrison, and place that town and castle in a proper state of defence.

While the new governor of Tripoli was thus employed, the noted Barbarossa terminated his career. He died at Constantinople, at the advanced age of eighty years, and was succeeded in his maritime command by Dragut his lieutenant—a famous corsair, who had sprung, like himself, by a course of lawless enterprise, from obscurity, to an elevated station. This bold pirate, who had long been the scourge of the Mediterranean, entertained the most implacable hatred of the Christian name. In one of his expeditions, he was forced to strike his flag to an Imperial squadron commanded by Jannetin Doria, a beardless boy; and the shame of such a defeat, combined with the indignities inseparable from a rigorous captivity which extended to four years, greatly increased the natural ferocity of his disposition. The authority vested in him by the Emperor Solyman, after the death of his old commander, stimulated Dragut to new enterprises; and, in imitation of the Barbarossas, he possessed himself of the town of Africa or Mehedia, the ancient Adrumetum, a place between Tunis and Tripoli, for the purpose of securing to himself an independent sovereignty, and a good port where he might deposit the spoil which he swept in such abundance from the European shores. Mehedia was, at that time, one of the strongest fortresses in Barbary. It was encircled by thick and lofty walls, strengthened by towers and bulwarks, and commanded by a citadel, well provided with cannon. The narrow promontory on which it stood was almost insulated by the sea, while the large and commodious harbour was sheltered from every wind; and that part of it appropriated to the galleys could be secured at pleasure with iron rails. It had originally been subject to the Princes of Tunis; but at the time of Dragut's attack, had thrown off its allegiance to that state, and was governed by the inhabitants

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as a sort of commonwealth. So jealous were these Moorish republicans of their independence, that they refused alike to admit either Turk or Christian within their walls; and it was more by treachery than by force of arms, that the corsair overcame their stubborn attachment to freedom. He suborned the captain of one of the towers, by whom he was admitted at midnight, along with a considerable body of troops, when the citizens, taken by surprise, acknowledged him as their master.

The conquest of Mehedia alarmed not only the Maltese knights, but the Emperor Charles, who, anticipating constant descents on the coasts of Naples and Sicily, while Dragut retained so convenient a stronghold, resolved to root him out of it. Accordingly, Doria his admiral sailed with a considerable armament for the African coast; and the galleys of Malta under the Bailiff de la Sangle, having on board a hundred and forty knights and four hundred stipendiary soldiers, joined the expedition. The Christians disembarked at Cape Bon, and, after one or two trivial conquests, won chiefly by the valour of the Maltese knights, blockaded Mehedia; but as the siege could not be undertaken until the arrival of reinforcements from Naples and Sicily, a considerable time elapsed before the place was regularly invested. The interval was employed by Dragut in ravaging the coast of Spain; he, nevertheless, did not neglect to put Mehedia in the best possible state of defence. In the end of June, 1550, trenches were opened before the town, and batteries raised against it. At first, the inhabitants, who justly regarded their Turkish tyrants as the authors of the war, manifested a wish to capitulate; but the Governor, Rais Essé, a young and resolute adventurer, nephew to Dragut, threatened the whole of the magistrates with death, and the city with desolation, if they did not make the most desperate resistance. Hostilities commenced with a sortie by the garrison; and a fierce and obstinate combat ensued between it and the Neapolitan troops, in which the latter suffered considerable loss. The knights of Malta, seeing their allies thus roughly handled, advanced to their assistance; and the Moorish squadrons, broken by their onset, quickly disbanded, and sought safety in flight. A breach having been effected in the wall which ran across the isthmus that connected the town with the mainland, the Viceroy of Sicily, who, in conjunction with Don Garcia, son of the Viceroy of Naples, commanded the land forces, ordered an assault. The knights claimed the honour of leading the attack as their special privilege; but the Viceroy, anxious to monopolize the whole glory, ordered his own battalions to advance. The Sicilians, though galled by a terrible fire, rushed gallantly into the breach, and leapt sword in hand into the

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works behind it. Here, however, their progress was fatally checked by a succession of deep trenches, skilfully flanked and filled with iron spikes. The Viceroy, warned of the jeopardy of his troops, sounded a retreat; but of the brave men who led the attack, only one escaped the deadly discharges of the Moorish musketeers; and he was spared, merely from a desire, on the part of the Governor, to ascertain the besiegers' designs. This repulse spread despondency through the Christian ranks; and the general dejection was aggravated by a scarcity of provisions, and by the contagious distempers which fatigue and privations engendered. It was now that the generous self-devotion of the knights of Malta shone forth with its ancient splendour. They constructed an hospital-tent, into which the sick were received, without distinction of rank or nation; and the whole army had reason to admire and bless their charitable labours. But, though thus occupied with offices of mercy, they laid not aside their battle-harness; and an attempt which Dragut made to throw succours into the city, was foiled chiefly through their valour, in which skirmish several brave knights lost their lives.

The landward wall being found impregnable, a floating battery was raised against a weak part of the fortifications which was washed by the sea, and in a little time a practicable breach was made. The Viceroy of Sicily no longer disputed with the knights the honour of leading the attack; and, pursuant to ancient privilege, the banner of Saint John once more fluttered in the van. At the discharge of a signal-gun, the knights flung themselves into a number of light shallops, and pushed towards the battered walls; but finding their progress obstructed by sand-banks, on which their boats momentarily grounded, they leaped into the water, and, sword in hand, waded to the foot of the fortifications. The Moors defended the breach with great obstinacy, and the knights entered it amid a murderous discharge of shot and fire. The Commander De Giou, who carried the standard of the Order, was foremost in the assault; but scarcely had he planted his banner on the wall, when a bullet struck him backwards into the sea. The ensign was immediately grasped by the Chevalier De Cossier, who, despite the deadly shower of musket-balls and cross-bow bolts that fell around him, held it proudly aloft during the whole of the battle. Still, though the breach was gained, there were defences behind it which the enemy contested with great bravery; and many knights and distinguished volunteers, who fought under the banner of the Order, perished. The Commander De Guimeran, who headed the attack, disheartened at seeing so many of his companions weltering in their blood, hesitated whether to retire or persevere in his efforts to effect an entrance; but happily, at this

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perilous juncture, he discovered a practicable passage, of which he promptly availed himself, and the innermost streets soon resounded with the Christian war-cry. Intrenchments had to be surmounted in every quarter; but nothing could check the ardour of the assailants. The citizens, filled with dismay, abandoned the contest, and sought safety in flight; but the Turkish soldiers of Dragut refused to accept of quarter, and perished to a man. A prodigious booty fell into the hands of the conquerors. The knights and other officers of distinction who fell in the assault, were honoured with interment in the principal mosque, which was first purified, and consecrated as a Christian temple. Afterwards, when the place was abandoned by the Imperial troops, the ashes of these warriors were transported to Sicily, and deposited in the cathedral at Montreal, where a stately monument was erected, bearing an inscription commemorative of their renown.

The share which the knights of Saint John had in the conquest of Mehedia rendered them so obnoxious to Dragut, that he exerted all his influence with the Emperor Solyman, to engage him in an enterprise for their extirpation. Rumours that a mighty armament destined against Malta was fitting out in the Turkish ports, forewarned the knights of the storm about to burst upon them; but the Grandmaster, D'Omedes, who was far more careful about the enrichment of his own kindred, than the security and dignity of the Order, treated these reports with contempt. The commander de Villegagnon—the same knight who had signalized himself before Algiers—a man of a noble presence and illustrious reputation, abandoned the service of Henry the Second of France, in which he had acquired great honour, and repaired to Malta specially to rouse the Grandmaster from the fatal lethargy into which he was plunged; but D'Omedes was proof against all his arguments. Tripoli was reinforced with twenty-five refractory knights—young men who had been under arrest for insubordination—and a small body of Calabrian peasants, pressed into military service by the Viceroy of Sicily; but Goza was left totally undefended; and the wives and families of the inhabitants, when they sought an asylum in Malta, were rudely refused it, on the argument, that their husbands and fathers would fight the better, when all that was dear to them was dependent on the triumph of their arms.

About midsummer, 1551, a Turkish fleet appeared off the coast of Sicily, and, after a futile attempt to besiege Catania, invested the town and castle of Augusta, which capitulated in a few days. The Grandmaster, with that fatal blindness which had all along marked his conduct, persisted in his belief that this armament was not destined against Malta, but was about to act against Naples in concert with

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the French fleet. But, on the 16th of July, his incredulity was removed, by the arrival of the Ottoman squadron off Port Musceit—one of the great bays which peninsulate the rocky slip of land called Mount Sceberras, on which stands the modern city of Valetta. The Grandmaster, to his dismay, beheld, from the windows of his palace, ship after ship, bearing the ensign of the hereditary enemies of the Order, furl their sails in the offing; and the people, filled with consternation at the formidable aspect of the armament, crowded into the fortresses for refuge. Malta, notwithstanding the efforts that had been made to render it defensible, could at this time boast of only two places of retreat capable of holding out for any length of time against an invader; namely, the Bourg or town, situated on one of the small spits of land that project from the southern side of the grand port; and the *Cité Notable*, or capital, a place in the interior of the island. The Bourg was defended by the guns of the Castle of Saint Angelo, and was the ordinary residence of the convent. As the refugees found it impossible to obtain roofs to shelter them, they bivouacked in the streets and market-places, exposed to a burning sun, and tormented by the want of water.

Notwithstanding the panic that prevailed, and the comparatively defenceless condition in which the knights found themselves placed by the fatal conceit of their chief, they put a bold front on the war, and prepared for a stout resistance. Perceiving the Turks making demonstrations as if about to land, the Commander Upton, an English knight distinguished for his bravery, headed a band of thirty of his brethren, and four hundred native volunteers, who had formed themselves into a mounted battalion, and galloped down to the point of the coast where a descent was most likely to be made; while the Commander De Guimeran, the same Spaniard who so honourably distinguished himself at the siege of Mehedia, took with him a hundred knights on foot, and three hundred harquebusiers; and, passing over the port in skiffs, planted an ambuscade among the rocks at the extremity of Mount Sceberras. Soon afterwards, Sinam Pasha, the General of the Ottoman army, and Dragut, Admiral of the fleet, descended from the lofty deck of their war-ship into a stately galley, and stood in towards the great port, to ascertain the practicability of a debarkation. To avoid the artillery of Fort Saint Angelo, the galley steered close under the sterile rocks of Mount Sceberras; and, no sooner was it within musket-shot, than De Guimeran's harquebusiers saluted it with a furious volley. The discharge staggered the Turks for a moment; but Sinam, enraged at this surprisal, ordered them, on their peril, to hold on for the shore; and De Guimeran, seeing a powerful body of Moslems advancing against him, re-em-

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barked his small battalion, and returned to the convent. Sinam contented himself with climbing Mount Sceberras, from whence he reconnoitred the Castle of Saint Angelo. Its aspect damped his ardour; and he openly reproached Dragut with having miscalculated the difficulty of the enterprise, remarking, at the same time, that the eagle itself could scarcely have chosen a more inaccessible eyrie. Dragut defended himself sharply, as was his wont; and Sinam prudently referred the matter to a council of war. The council, in complaisance to their commander, voted the siege of the Bourg and Fort Saint Angelo inadvisable; and all that the impetuous Dragut could prevail on the General to attempt, was the conquest of the Cité Notable. The troops accordingly disembarked, and advanced into the interior of the island in considerable force, accompanied by field-artillery. Fire marked their march;—not a hamlet, not a corn-field, escaped destruction—the whole country was enveloped in the smoke of these wanton conflagrations.

The Cité Notable was under the government of George Adorno, an illustrious Genoese knight, and but poorly garrisoned. Many peasants capable of strengthening the garrison had taken refuge within the walls; but there was a want of knights to discipline and command them. Adorno, while he exerted himself to increase the means of defence, despatched a special messenger to the Grand-master, imploring succour, and particularly the aid of the French knight Villegagnon, whose valour and experience were in themselves a host. D'Omedes, with his usual selfishness, refused a reinforcement of knights; but, as Villegagnon's frankness had become disagreeable, he readily consented that he should repair to the post of danger. He endeavoured to impress that knight with an idea, that he had selected him on this occasion as a mark of confidence; but Villegagnon saw at once through the shallow finesse. He answered boldly, that to save the place, at least a hundred knights ought to be thrown into it; but that, nevertheless, as a true soldier of Saint John, bound but to obey and to die, he was ready to enter it singly, and cast his life away for the honour of his Order. The Grandmaster, ashamed of his conduct, and still unwilling to alter his plans, offered him six chosen knights for his companions; and with these Villegagnon quitted the convent under the cloud of night. Having reached the Cité Notable before daybreak, they crept close to the wall; and on a given signal, were drawn up by ropes, unperceived by the besiegers. The generous self-devotion of these knights reanimated the garrison; and many persons who had trembled at the Ottoman name before their arrival, now burned with an ardent desire to emulate their bravery. Villegagnon cheered the townsmen

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with fallacious hopes; but with the Governor Adorno he had no concealment. On the contrary, he frankly told him, that there was no further succour on the way, and that he and his companions had only come there to die as became Christian knights, and the renowned banner under which they were banded.

The knowledge that succours had found access into the place, and revived the drooping valour of the garrison, disheartened the besiegers; and the Turkish general was further intimidated by false advices, that a mighty Christian armament, under the famous Andrew Doria, and destined for the relief of Malta, was actually at sea. Conceiving himself beset with perils, he again called a council of war, and, in accordance with its advice, abruptly raised the siege, and re-embarked. To quiet the turbulence of his troops, who murmured loudly at the unsuccessful issue of the expedition, he permitted them to make a descent on the island of Goza, which they cruelly ravaged. The governor, Galatian de Sessa, made a feeble attempt to defend the untenable war-tower in which he took refuge. It commanded a small town which lay at the foot of the hill on which it was situated; and the natives, stimulated by a dread of Turkish barbarity, volunteered to fence the breach, which the enemy's artillery quickly effected; but De Sessa's valour was not proof against the thunder of the cannon, and, like a craven, he abandoned his post, and hid himself in his chamber. The inhabitants, panic-struck at seeing a knight deport himself like a dastard, would have deserted the breach to a man, had not a brave English cavalier taken the command, and, with his own hand, fired off the cannon which defended it. A ball from the Turkish batteries speedily terminated the career of this good soldier; and no one being found to take his place, the Governor despatched a messenger to the Turkish general with an offer of capitulation; but, as he demanded the most honourable conditions, Sinam contemptuously rejected it, and returned for answer, that, if the fortress were not instantly surrendered at discretion, he would enter it sword in hand, and hang the coward who commanded it at the gate. De Sessa, after another and scarcely less futile attempt to negotiate, gave orders that the Turks should be permitted to occupy the place; and his own quarters were the first that fell a prey to their rapacity. To show the contempt in which they held him, they compelled him to act the part of a beast of burden in carrying his own furniture to their ships; after which, though he had Sinam's pledge that his own liberty, as well as that of forty other persons should be respected, he was stripped almost naked, and chained down like a slave. Sinam, to save the appearance of having basely violated his pledge, gave

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forty infirm old men their freedom—arguing, with the characteristic sophistry of a Turk, that the oldest were of course the principal inhabitants. Upwards of six thousand Christians were hurried into slavery on this occasion. As a proof that some traits of magnanimity dignified the inroad, it is stated, that a Sicilian, who had become naturalized in Goza, preferring death to bondage, first poniarded his wife and two fair daughters, and then, sallying forth with his musket and crossbow, expended every bullet and quarrel against the enemy, and, having slain and wounded several, at length flung himself despairingly on their swords.* The cowardly De Sessa, who was the countryman and personal friend of the Grandmaster, was saved from universal disgrace through his influence. A report was promulgated, that he had fallen in defence of his post; and it was not till many years afterwards, when he returned from slavery, that its falsity was generally detected. By that time, the abhorrence entertained against him had in a great measure died away; and the hardships of a protracted bondage being regarded by the Council as a sufficient punishment for his pusillanimity, he was permitted to pass the remainder of his days in peace.

Dragut and Sinam Pasha, having thus devastated Goza, stood away for Tripoli with an intention of razing that place. The Grandmaster, apprehensive that Europe would resound with reproaches against him should it be taken, prevailed on Gabriel D'Aramont, the French ambassador at the Porte, who had touched at Malta on his way to Constantinople, to act as a mediator; and he immediately repaired to Tripoli in that capacity. Meanwhile, Sinam, having debarked his troops at Tachora, four leagues from Tripoli, where he was joyfully received by the Morat Aga, the prince of the district, despatched a Moorish horseman with a white flag to the Christian post. This messenger, advancing to the edge of the fosse, stuck a cane into the earth, with a paper fastened to the end of it, which, on examination, was found to contain a cartel or defiance, to the effect, that unless the place were instantly surrendered, in which case the garrison would be at liberty to depart, the Turkish army would enter it by assault, and treat it as a conquered city. Tripoli was governed by Gaspard La Vallier, Marshal of the Order, a veteran knight, highly respected for his experience and valour—though the Grandmaster, jealous of his popularity, held him in no favour. His answer to Sinam was as laconic as the cartel which required it. He had been intrusted, he said, with the defence of Tripoli, and he would defend it to the last drop of his blood. On receiving this resolute

* Relation de N. Nicolai.

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reply, Sinam landed his battering train, and invested the place. Before the trenches were opened, however, the French envoy entered the port, and repaired to the Turkish camp, where he was received with the distinction becoming the representative of a puissant and friendly monarch. D'Aramont exerted himself to divert the Pasha from attacking the city; but Sinam cut his arguments short, by exhibiting his sovereign's orders, and saying, that his head would be struck off if he did not fulfil them. The Frenchman would instantly have put to sea again, with the intention of carrying his petition to Constantinople; but Sinam, apprehensive that a change of orders would mar his conquest, caused the brigantine which had brought him to be unrigged, and interdicted his departure.

The trenches being opened, a fierce cannonade was directed against the castle, which was the only well-fortified point. The batteries thundered without intermission, though to little purpose, for several days; but at length a deserter pointed out a weak part of the wall, and a breach was effected. The commandant endeavoured to fence it by intrenchments; but the slaves refused to work in the teeth of the Turkish fire; and the terror with which they were seized extended to the garrison, which consisted only of two hundred raw recruits from Calabria, and the same number of Moorish allies. The Calabrians were stationed chiefly in a small fort called the Chatelet, at the entrance of the harbour, under the command of a military serving-brother, named Des Roches. This officer, observing symptoms of discontent among his troops, took measures to ascertain their designs; and his vigilance was rewarded, by the discovery of a plot which they had hatched, to escape to Sicily in a brigantine then in the port, and leave a burning match so situated as to fire the powder-magazine and blow up the tower, as soon as they were out of danger. Des Roches lost no time in reporting this conspiracy to the Governor, who, unwilling to proceed to extremities, confined himself to removing the malecontents into the city. This clemency proved fatal to his authority, for these turbulent rogues speedily infected the whole garrison with their seditious fears. Supported in their insubordination by several Spanish knights, they abandoned their posts, and, simultaneously surrounding their leader, threatened to take his life if he did not compel the Governor to a timely capitulation. The Marshal endeavoured to reason with the mutineers; but they were deaf to his arguments, insolently calling on him to surrender. A council was summoned, and the knights and officers who composed it were requested to give their advice. The Chevalier De Poissi, a French knight, declared that he had examined the breach, and found it perfectly defensible; but Herrera, a Spaniard, delivered

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himself differently, and ascribed the Frenchman's valour to the knowledge, that the knights of that nation had a friend in the person of D'Aramont in the enemy's camp. It was at length determined to re-examine the breach; but the mutineers would listen to no reports, save such as were made by their abettors; and these being of course unfavourable, they protested, that, if a white flag were not instantly displayed, they would themselves propose a capitulation. The knights, thus cruelly abandoned, had no alternative but to yield. Deputies were despatched to the Turkish camp, and a treaty was agreed on, which, even at the moment of subscription, Sinam was determined not to observe. To adjust certain preliminaries, he requested that the Governor would visit him in his camp; and La Vallier, fearful of showing too great an anxiety about his personal safety, accordingly repaired thither, accompanied only by a single companion. Sinam received him with great arrogance; and, fretted by his insolence, the Marshal told him, that if he were not pleased with the capitulation, he might destroy it, and allow the sword still to decide between them. Enraged at this boldness, Sinam ordered him to be manacled, and sent a prisoner on board his war-ship; but his companion, the knight De Montfort, was permitted to return to Tripoli, with a message to the Commander Copier, recommending that, as he was in the hands of the enemy, he might, in every thing that concerned the safety of the city, be considered a dead man. The knights, when informed of his detention, abandoned all idea of capitulation, and endeavoured to inspire the troops with the same spirit of resistance which burned in their own breasts; but neither remonstrances nor menaces could prevail on the dastards to resume their arms. The negotiations with Sinam were renewed, and at length he ratified the original treaty. The mutineers being told, that it stipulated for their liberation and immediate departure, would not consent to remain longer within the walls, but rushed tumultuously out into the open country; whereupon, Morat Aga suddenly surrounded them with a body of Turkish cavalry, and made the whole of them prisoners. The knights, thus abandoned, also quitted the city, and fell into the same snare. Des Roches, the brave serving-brother who commanded the Chatelet, alone spurned to submit to so base a destiny. Though the Turkish general employed both bribes and menaces to induce him to surrender, he persisted in resistance, till his little fortress was reduced to a pile of ruins, when, finding it no longer tenable, he embarked in a small bark during the night, with the thirty men who composed his detachment, and made his escape to sea—some writers say, to the French ambassador's galleys.

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Through the exertions of D'Aramont, the whole of the knights, and a considerable number of the citizens, were either gratuitously liberated or ransomed. To accomplish their redemption, the generous Frenchman not only used his utmost influence with Sinam, but sacrificed a large sum out of his private fortune. Accompanied by the warriors whom he had thus rescued from bondage worse than death, he sailed for Malta, naturally anticipating a most hospitable reception from the head of the Order. But the Grandmaster, startled at the loss of Tripoli, and conscious that he had misapplied the funds set apart for its defence, artfully impressed the knights with a suspicion, that the French envoy had acted faithlessly in the negotiation, and, to serve his own sovereign, who was on amicable terms with Solyman, had delivered up Tripoli to the Turks. This report having been industriously circulated, D'Aramont, on arriving off the harbour about sunset, found it barred with a chain, and the garrison of the castle under arms.

Next morning, however, he was permitted to land, when, finding himself an object of general execration, instead of respect, he instantly demanded to be heard in full council, touching the mission with which he had been intrusted. With this demand, the Grandmaster, however averse to a public explanation, found it necessary to comply; but D'Aramont, contemning the base imputations promulgated against him, contented himself with reminding the assembly, that the Grandmaster's entreaties alone, coupled with his own anxiety for the interests of Christianity, had induced him to engage in so thankless a service—adding, that he had performed it honourably, and that he relied on the Grandmaster's honour, for the fulfilment of certain stipulations under which the knights had been ransomed. The Grandmaster vouchsafed only a cold and cautious answer; and D'Aramont, seeing the tide of popular opinion setting strongly against him, quitted the island in disgust for Constantinople.

D'Omedes, encouraged by the credulity with which his aspersions against the ambassador had been received, now looked round him for a special victim as a shield to his own reputation. He had long regarded the Marshal La Vallier with dislike; and, at his suggestion, that veteran, together with his companions in misfortune, the knights Fuster, De Sousa, and Herrera, who had been implicated in the seditious proceedings that accelerated the surrender, and were therefore justly arraigned, were cited to stand their trial for the loss of Tripoli. The tribunal appointed to take cognizance of the matter, consisted of three knights and a secular judge, named Anthony de Combe—all of them men completely subservient to the Grandmaster's pleasure. The whole brotherhood were officially warned that no solicitations in

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favour of the accused would be entertained; while, on the other hand, the vilest criminals were received as credible witnesses against them. The Marshal, against whom this prosecution was chiefly directed, would have inevitably fallen a victim to it, had not the Commander Villegagnon, with that generous intrepidity which distinguished him, stood forward in open court as his advocate. He boldly ascribed the loss of Tripoli to the true reasons—the Grandmaster's negligence and avarice; and, captivated by his arguments, a strong party, consisting chiefly of French knights, espoused the cause of the prisoner. This revolution only stirred D'Omedes to greater exertion. Fresh witnesses were suborned; but Villegagnon exposed their corruption, and brought forward no less than sixty respectable persons to testify in behalf of his friend. At length, the commissioners gave in their report, and the secular judge pronounced sentence in full council. It was to the effect, that, though the loss of Tripoli was to be ascribed solely to the cowardice of the Calabrese soldiery, yet any knight who surrendered a post intrusted to him, without instructions from the Grandmaster, was liable to degradation; and the court, therefore, adjudged the whole four criminals to be deprived of the habit and cross of the Order.

Iniquitous as this sentence was, as far as respected La Vallier, it fell short of the wishes of the Grandmaster. Though it would have given him no concern had it touched the Marshal's life, he was disappointed to find, that it subjected the three Spanish knights to punishment. They had been included in the accusation, merely to obviate a suspicion of the prosecution being instituted from national hatred; and he formally represented to the Council, that, as far as respected them, the sentence was unjust, and that only that part of it which referred to the Marshal should be carried into immediate execution. In consequence of this appeal, the judge, with a villanous pliancy, revised the sentence, and exempted the Spaniards from its operation. The Bailiff Schilling, enraged at this flagitious proceeding, publicly reproached the parasite with his profligate submission to the opinion of the Grandmaster; while Noguez, a Castilian knight, contemptuously reviled him as a wretch, and vowed never to permit the sentence to be executed against the Marshal, unless the Spaniards suffered along with him—a declaration which the whole assembly supported, and to which even D'Omedes himself was ultimately obliged to bend. But his vengeance was only smothered—not extinguished; and, with his usual craft, he again suggested the remodelling of the sentence. The Council, however, could not be swayed to leave it in the hands of a judge whose corruption had been rendered so notorious; and, foiled at every point, D'Omedes dissolved the assembly.

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Meanwhile, through the machinations of the Grandmaster and his confidants, the calumnies fabricated against the ambassador D'Aramont had been industriously circulated throughout Europe, and at length reached the ears of his sovereign, Henry the Second of France. That monarch instantly made a formal complaint to the Grandmaster, and followed it up by demanding the fullest explanation touching the innocence or guilt of his envoy. D'Omedes, perplexed by this epistle, submitted it to the Council, who decided that the French King should be assured that the Order had every reason to be satisfied with D'Aramont's conduct. The secretary was instructed to draw up an answer to that effect, for signature by the Grandmaster; and the Chevalier De Villegagnon, who was about to quit Malta for his native country, was appointed to carry it to the court of France. But D'Omedes, unwilling to abate his persecution of La Vallier, and yet afraid to deal uncandidly with so potent a monarch as Henry, delayed the letter from day to day, till Villegagnon, rendered suspicious by his procrastination, instituted a strict scrutiny into the motives which occasioned it. By this means he was enabled to detect a plot for the revisal of the sentence passed on the Marshal —D'Omedes having determined to reappoint his minion De Combe to the head of the commission, after taking him bound, under a heavy penalty, to give such a judgment in the matter as he himself should prescribe. The Marshal, according to this iniquitous arrangement, was first to be interrogated on certain points calculated to criminate him, and, if he either denied or refused to answer them, then to be put to the torture, and the confession which his persecutor doubted not would be extorted from him, forwarded to the French King, instead of the letter dictated by the Council.* As soon as Villegagnon was fully assured of the reality of this conspiracy, he presented himself before the Council, and peremptorily demanded, in the name of the French envoy, the explanatory letter ordered to be written to his sovereign, or, in lieu of it, a copy of the sentence passed on La Vallier and his companions. Enraged at the interference of this generous-hearted knight, who had long been a thorn in his side, the Grandmaster sternly requested him to explain on what grounds he demanded, in behalf of a secular prince, an explanation of any criminal process which had occurred within the jurisdiction of the Order. With the candour which had always distinguished him, Villegagnon assigned, as his reason, his knowledge of the conspiracy between the Grandmaster and De Combe against the Marshal's life. D'Omedes, roused to fury, fiercely denied the truth of the allega-

* Memoires de Villegagnon.

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tion, and poured forth a torrent of abuse on his accuser. Notwithstanding his vehement protestations, however, the Council detected ample proofs of his guilt, both in his speech and bearing; and Villegagnon withdrew from the assembly, with the assurance that the credentials he waited for would be consigned to his custody without delay. A subsequent attempt was made by the Grandmaster to qualify the letter to the French King, in a manner suited to his own views; but here again the vigilance of Villegagnon foiled him. The letter which the latter ultimately carried to the court of France, fully exonerated D'Aramont from the charges which the insidious reports propagated by the Grandmaster embraced, and which the partisans of the Emperor Charles had spared no exertions to disseminate.*

As D'Omedes had impeached the Spanish knights, Fuster, De Sousa, and Herrera, more from motives of policy than from a wish to bring them to justice, they were soon after liberated; but his animosity towards La Vallier continued unabated, and he was left to pine in dishonourable confinement. The persecution of this venerable knight, whose conduct, though in some respects imprudent, never approached criminality, furnishes remarkable evidence of the influence possessed by the head of the Order, and also of the freedom with which even the meanest knight, when he saw occasion, could call in question the proceedings of his chief. The government of D'Omedes, like all unprincipled despotisms, was, in reality, weak and wavering. That such was the case, the following incident is good testimony. Leo Strozzi, Prior of Capua—the same Florentine knight who, in consequence of the undue partiality of D'Omedes, superseded the veteran Botigella in the command of the galleys, but subsequently devoted himself to the service of France—after having rendered all the maritime countries of Europe too hot to hold him, presented himself before the port of Malta, and requested, as a member of the Order, to be received under its protection. With this request D'Omedes, who regarded him as the implacable enemy of his patron Charles the Fifth, refused to comply; and Strozzi, taking to himself the extraordinary title of "The Friend of God alone," became the enemy of all mankind, and for a whole summer scourged the Mediterranean with his piratical exploits.† Tired, at length, of the proscription in which he lived, he entered into a negotiation with the Emperor Charles, to whom, despite his hereditary antipathy, he tendered his services; and while it was pending, privately landed at Malta, and, without intimation, presented himself before the Grandmaster. A more dignified chief would have sternly resented this

* M. de Thou. † Brantome.

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intrusion into his territories; but intimidated by the bold bearing of the Prior, and the evident devotion of the many friends whom he had in the Order, and influenced also by the knowledge that the Emperor was anxious to secure his services, the Grandmaster not only overlooked the audacity with which he had forced an audience, but received him into his confidence. This pliancy of temper, however, the Order had no reason to regret. Strozzi was a warrior of great natural talents and vast experience, and his advice was of the utmost utility in the erection of the military works which were subsequently executed for the defence of the island.

These works, though not so extensive as the commissioners appointed to superintend them recommended, were nevertheless numerous and important. The Bourg, though protected by Fort Saint Angelo, was commanded by Mount Saint Julian, another salient point; while the spacious haven called Marsa Musceit, on the opposite side of Mount Sceberras, was totally undefended. It was the opinion of the commissioners, that a new town should be instantly built on Mount Sceberras, as it presented the greatest facilities for fortification; but, as the treasury of the Order was not in a state to authorize such an undertaking, the knights confined themselves to building a castle at the extremity of that promontory, and another on Mount Saint Julian. The one was named Fort Saint Elmo, and the other Fort Saint Michael, in commemoration of the towers bearing the same names, which defended the port of Rhodes.

The knights laboured with the greatest ardour at these works; and the Prior of Capua acquired so much popularity by his exertions to expedite them, that D'Omedes, with his usual narrow-mindedness, became jealous of his renown; and, to get rid of him, sent him with an armament to threaten the coast of Africa (1552). Strozzi landed his troops near Zoara, in the province of Tripoli, and, eager to earn distinction under the banner of the Order, attempted to carry that place by coup-de-main. The town was totally defenceless towards the land; and, as the Christians entered it at night, the inhabitants were unaware of their jeopardy, until the clangour of drums and trumpets filled their streets. No sooner did the soldiers find themselves in possession of the place, than, contrary to the instructions of their leader, they dispersed, and proceeded to inflict all the miseries of war on the population. In the midst of these atrocities, they were startled by the fierce onset of a Turkish army, which happened to be encamped in the neighbourhood, and whose watch-fires they had, during their midnight march, mistaken for those of a tribe of predatory Arabs. At the head of this force, which was thrice as numerous as that which Strozzi commanded, fought the redoubted Morat Aga; and a desperate conflict commenced in the streets of the half-

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sacked city. The knights, though they numbered three hundred, and fought with their ancient bravery, found it impossible to turn the tide of battle. Strozzi's nephew fell gallantly in the foremost ranks; and, eager to avenge his death, his uncle, at the head of a fresh body of troops, flung himself into the conflict. Disabled by a musket-shot which lodged in his thigh, the Prior was on the point of being cut down by a Turk, when a small band of knights formed themselves in a circle round him. The Commander Copier, and the knights Soto-Major and Sainte Jaille, were struck lifeless at his side; and he must have fallen alive into the hands of the enemy, but for Torcillas, a Majorcan knight, remarkable for his strength and stature, who, lifting him in his arms, hurried him to the beach, from whence a boat carried him to his galley. This event was the signal of retreat to the whole army; and, though hard pressed, it retired in good order, stubbornly contesting every inch of ground. The knights themselves were the last to embark. To cover the embarkation of the soldiers, and preserve the standard of the Order, they drew up in a solid phalanx at a narrow pass, and, with their swords and short pikes, repelled several charges of Turkish cavalry. Seeing a body of Turkish musketeers advancing, they at length threw themselves into the sea, which was shallow, and waded breast high, amid a shower of balls, to their shallops. La Cassiere, the standard-bearer, held the ensign of the Order constantly displayed during the whole of this perilous retreat; and several knights were killed in the act of assisting him through the waves. Few of the knights or military serving-brothers engaged in this expedition survived it. The language of Italy lost, among others, the brothers Valperga, Sforza, and Justiniani—all scions of families renowned in story; and sixteen knights descended from the most illustrious houses of France, were also among the slain. As the attack, however, was totally unprovoked on the part of the inhabitants of Zoara, the unprosperous issue may be regarded as a sort of retributive justice; for the knights, notwithstanding their chivalrous character, and vaunted devotion to the cause of humanity, were too often regardless of the dictates of that generous virtue.

The miserable plight in which the Prior and his battered armament returned to Malta, did not deprive him of the reputation of a wise and valiant commander. He had behaved intrepidly in the fight; and no sooner were his wounds closed, than he was reappointed to the command of the galleys, and subsequently made so many captures under the flag of the Order, that he not only brought immense riches into its ports, but rendered his name a terror to all the Moslem pirates who showed themselves betwixt the Straits of Gibraltar and the mouths of the Nile.

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CHAPTER V.

Death of D'Omedes and election of La Sangle—Death of Leo Strozzi—Malta devastated by a hurricane—Election of La Valette—Expedition against Galves—An immense Turkish armament arrives before Malta—The city besieged—Attack on Fort Saint Elmo—The ravelin taken—Desperate situation of the fort—Fire-hoops used by the garrison—Dragut mortally wounded—Fort Saint Elmo carried by storm—Barbarity of the victors.

The Grandmaster D'Omedes died on the 6th of September, 1553. In the last days of his sovereignty, intelligence reached Malta that Mary of England, the daughter of Henry the Eighth, conscience-stricken, say the Catholic historians, at her father's unjust spoliation and persecution of the Order of Saint John, and eager to manifest to the uttermost her implicit devotion to the Church of Rome, had determined to make restitution of all the commanderies and manors which he had confiscated. The envoy intrusted with this mission, brought an invitation to the knights to send a deputation to England without delay; and the Commander De Montferrat was accordingly despatched to that country, and, in virtue of the authority reposed in him, was reinvested in the estates which had formerly belonged to the Order. In the reign of her successor Elizabeth, however, the reinvestment was abrogated, and the Order completely and finally suppressed.

D'Omedes left behind him the reputation of an avaricious, imperious, and revengeful man; the valour which he had displayed at the siege of Rhodes was forgotten, and he descended unhonoured to the tomb. Strozzi, Prior of Capua, had long aspired to the Grandmastership, and an effort was made to place him in the stead of the departed chief; but a dread that he would divert the resources and forces of the Order, to avenge himself of the house of Medici, occasioned his rejection; and Claude de la Sangle, a French knight, was elected. The knights Gagnon, Pascatore, and Bernardin, who were chiefly instrumental in bringing about this event, soon after died, under circumstances which excited a suspicion that they had been poisoned by Parpaille, one of Strozzi's domestics, at his master's instigation—a suspicion which seriously blighted the Prior's fame, and was probably not far wide of the truth. The election of a Frenchman fortu-

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nately put an end to the factious differences which had agitated the Order during the whole of D'Omedes' grandmastership. The French knights had been so long accustomed to monopolize the supreme dignity, that it was extremely difficult to reconcile them to the rule of a man, who, besides being a native of another country, was known to be devoted to the Imperial interest, and who had been exalted by partisanship, rather than by the unanimous suffrage of the Chapter. To this national rivalry may be ascribed some of the shades which darken D'Omedes' renown. It is to Frenchmen that posterity is principally indebted for the chronicles of the Order; and as these annalists were all more or less infected with the prejudices which prevailed, it becomes the impartial historian to receive with some caution their report of a chief, who would have been obnoxious to them, though he had had no other objectionable quality save that of being born in Spain.

La Sangle was at Rome when he was chosen Grandmaster. He was treated with great honour, not only in that city, but in Sicily, where he chanced to touch on his way to Malta. The Sicilian Viceroy did not leave him long in ignorance of the Emperor's object in lavishing these attentions. Tired of the trouble and expense of maintaining the city of Mehedia, which the knights had assisted him to take from Dragut, Charles, with his usual selfishness, proposed that the Order should transport itself to that place, and make it the permanent residence of the convent. The Grandmaster referred the matter to the Council; and that assembly, out of consideration to the Emperor, condescended to await the report of several commissioners whom they sent to survey Mehedia, before they returned a definite answer. This report was of such a nature as at once induced them to reject the proposal. The knights had become completely maritime in their habits; and not only were they unwilling to resign the islands, which they had exercised so much skill to render defensible, but they justly argued, that, on the coast of Barbary, they would no longer be able to give that succour to Christians traversing the Mediterranean, which was one of the grand objects of their institution. Charles professed himself satisfied with these reasons; but the Viceroy of Sicily thought proper to resent them, by interdicting the supplies of corn which the convent was in the custom of drawing from that island; and, to mollify him, the Grandmaster had to despatch the Prior of Capua with several galleys, to chase away the corsairs who infested his coasts. While employed on this service, Strozzi received a pressing invitation from his eldest brother, who had succeeded to the command of the French army in Italy, to re-enter the service of France. Suppressing his antipathies against that govern-

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ment, in order to gratify the hereditary spirit of revenge, which still whispered, that, in concert with his brother, he might yet overturn the dynasty which had driven his father to seek an asylum in a suicide's grave, he at once acceded to the proposition. But a hint of his design having been forwarded from the court of Spain to the Sicilian Viceroy, that functionary prepared to prevent the Maltese galleys from leaving the port of Palermo. By one of those stratagems, however, which intrepid and gifted men alone are able to plan and execute, Strozzi eluded the Viceroy's vigilance, and returned to Malta, from whence, after having formally resigned his command, he again sailed on what he was pleased to style a private adventure, accompanied by a number of young knights, who were delighted to make their first essay in arms under so redoubted a chief. As soon as he was fairly at sea, he disclosed to his followers the true nature of his intentions, whereupon a few Spanish and Italian knights abandoned him; but the rest declared themselves ready to share his fortune, wherever he might lead. He accordingly ran down to the coast of Tuscany, and landed at Port Ercole, where he was instructed, by the French general who occupied it, to wait the junction of a fleet of Provençal galleys. Eager to achieve some exploit in the interval, with the small force he commanded, he formed the rash project of seizing the insignificant fort of Scarlino, in the principality of Piombino, and, with his usual intrepidity, set out in person to reconnoitre it. Unfortunately, a peasant, who lay in ambush near the walls, recognised him, from his majestic stature, and mortally wounded him in the side with a musket-ball. Thus, by the hand of a peasant churl, fell one of the bravest captains of the Order—a man who would have died its chief, had his moral worth been commensurate with his valour. He was buried in the great church of Port Ercole; but a year afterwards, Cosmo de Medicis, the hereditary enemy of his house, with the rancour of an ignoble adversary, had his remains torn from the grave, and cast into the sea.

The Commander Parisot de la Valette succeeded Strozzi, as admiral of the Maltese galleys. His name soon became as terrible to the Turkish and Moorish corsairs, as that of his predecessor; and, stimulated by his repeated triumphs, the whole Mediterranean came to swarm with privateers manned by knights, who were scarcely more scrupulous as to the nature of the war they waged than the pirates whom they sought to extirpate. This maritime crusade at length excited the attention of the Sultan Solyman; and the Grandmaster, warned by the indications of his impending wrath, applied himself to replenish the arsenals and strengthen the defences of the island. At his own expense he made a considerable addition to Fort

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Saint Elmo; and so completely fortified the peninsula of Saint Michael, which, like that of the Bourg, juts into the Grand Port, that, in honour of him, it was designated the Isle de la Sangle, and has ever since borne that name.

While these works were in progress, the island was devastated by one of those terrible hurricanes, which the Greeks of the Levant call *Syphon*. It was in the evening of the 23d of September that this frightful tempest burst over the port. The waves, heaped into mountains by conflicting blasts, rolled irresistibly within the harbour, which was soon strewed with dead bodies and the fragments of shattered barks. Such was the fury of the whirlwind, that four galleys were sucked into its vortex and capsized, and their crews were either drowned, or crushed to death within them. The houses near the port were thrown down, and their inmates buried in the ruins. Even the Castle of Saint Angelo itself tottered to its foundations; and the huge flag-staff which upheld the standard of the Order, was torn up and hurled to the distance of half a mile. Fortunately this fierce gust was of short continuance. At the expiration of half an hour, the wind subsided as suddenly as it had risen; but not till upwards of six hundred persons had perished. It was not till next morning that an attempt could be made to right the capsized vessels—a service which the Grandmaster personally superintended. Hearing a noise proceed from one of these barks, he caused a hole to be made in the side of it, when a monkey instantly leaped out, delighted at its liberation; and the Chevalier de l'Escure, and several other knights who were on board the galley at the time of the disaster, were afterwards rescued through the same aperture. They had passed the night chin-deep in water, clinging to the ribs of their unfortunate vessel, with barely sufficient air to preserve them from suffocation.

While the Order was occupied in repairing these misfortunes, which the generosity of several potentates and distinguished knights enabled it to do with unexpected rapidity, the corsair Dragut, expecting to attack Malta at a vantage, appeared off the island with a considerable fleet, and, disembarking a large land force, ravaged the open country. A body of three hundred knights, however, under the Commander Louis de Lastic, repelled these pirates with great slaughter; and by way of reprisal, Francis de Lorraine, Grand Prior of France, scoured the whole coast of Barbary with a powerful squadron, and returned to port laden with spoil. In one of the maritime exploits performed by the knights at this period, a Gascon knight, hurried away by his valour, rashly leapt into a Turkish galley, and, finding escape impossible, fired a quantity of gunpowder which chanced to be within his reach, and blew up the vessel.

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The Grandmaster La Sangle died on the 17th of August, 1557. His last days were embittered by a dispute respecting one of Strozzi, Prior of Capua's galleys, which had been unjustifiably carried out of a Roman port after that knight's death, and was afterwards recaptured by an emissary of the Pope, under circumstances which compromised the independence and honour of the Maltese flag. The vexation which La Sangle experienced on this occasion, brought on the malady which terminated his life.

John de la Valette, one of the most illustrious commanders the Order ever possessed, succeeded, by a unanimous vote, to the Grandmastership. He had made Malta his constant residence from the day of his reception as a knight, and had advanced progressively from dignity to dignity, till his chivalrous virtues procured him the supreme appointment. One of his first acts was to repair the injustice of his immediate predecessors, by a reversion of the sentence which had been passed on the Marshal La Vallier, through the machinations of D'Omedes. La Sangle had merely liberated La Vallier from chains and close confinement; but La Valette relieved him, from what was infinitely more debasing to a proud spirit—unmerited disgrace. The death of the Emperor Charles the Fifth (1558), and the consequent annihilation of Spanish influence in the convent, the better enabled the Grandmaster to gratify the generous impulse of his heart by this tardy reparation. By his energy and address, he had previously reduced the commanders in the Bohemian and Venetian states, who had long pretended to exercise an independent authority, to proper subjection. The remonstrances he employed in this negotiation, enforced as they were by Charles, who had just abdicated the Imperial dignity, and his brother Ferdinand, induced the German knights to despatch a deputation to Malta, accredited by all the Priors of Germany, to announce their implicit submission, and the future payment of all their responsions—engagements which they never afterwards violated.

The thorough conviction which La Valette entertained of the innocence of La Vallier, not only induced him to remove the stigma which had been cast on the character of that knight, but incited him to enter into a project for the recovery of the fortress, the surrender of which had involved him in disgrace. Dragut, though still nominally the subject of the Sultan, ruled in Tripoli with absolute sway: and, by sparing neither labour nor expense, had rendered it one of the most defensible places in Barbary. The Duke of Medina-Celi, Viceroy of Sicily, who suggested the expedition, secured for it the approbation of his sovereign, Philip the Second of Spain. The season being unpropitious, the Grandmaster would have postponed the

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departure of the armament till the following spring; but the Viceroy, aware of the unstable tenure of his commission, and eager to earn glory while the opportunity was left him, would not be dissuaded from an immediate departure. The fleet rendezvoused at Malta (1559), where four hundred veteran knights, and upwards of fifteen hundred soldiers, besides volunteers, embarked, under the command of the Chevalier D'Urré de Tessieres, admiral of the galleys. Unfortunately, the Viceroy, with that obstinacy which often characterizes weak and pusillanimous men, and contrary to a solemn understanding between him and the Grandmaster, turned aside from Tripoli, and attacked the insignificant island of Galves. The Moors who inhabited it defended themselves with great bravery; but the Christian arms ultimately proved victorious. Inflated by this conquest, the Viceroy set about constructing a fortress for its maintenance; but insubordination and disease combined to impede the work. Several distinguished knights fell victims to the prevalent distempers; and intelligence of these proceedings being forwarded to Malta, the Grandmaster, after duly notifying his disapprobation of the Viceroy's conduct, ordered the Maltese troops to separate from the expedition, and return home. The Commander De Tessieres, before he obeyed this mandate, employed every effort to induce the Viceroy to re-embark; but, though warned that a powerful Turkish squadron, combined with all the piratical galleys that could be mustered, had put to sea with the intention of destroying him, the Duke was proof against argument. Seeing him confirmed in his obstinacy, the remnant of the Maltese forces re-embarked. Nine knights died on the homeward voyage; and the commander himself, together with the greater part of the soldiers, marines, and slaves, who composed the armament, expired shortly after their return.

Notwithstanding this mortality, the Grandmaster could not bring himself to leave the Viceroy to his fate; and three well-manned galleys, under the knight De Maldonat, were soon after despatched to his succour. This reinforcement reached Galves, only to witness the dispersion of the Christian armament. Stubborn in his belief that the Turkish squadron would not assail him, the Viceroy refused to credit the startling reports which prevailed to that effect, until he beheld the Ottoman fleet on the horizon. Disease had completely subdued the valour of the Christian forces; and, instead of marshalling to meet the enemy on the waves or on the beach, they crowded in disorder into their vessels, anxious only to escape a rencontre. The admiral, John Andrew Doria, (not the great Doria,) enervated by sickness, made his escape in a light brigantine, carrying along with him the Viceroy, who preferred an inglorious flight to death

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amid the ruins of the fortress which he had built. Twenty-eight galleys and fourteen large ships were captured by the Turks; but a handful of troops, under Alvarez de Sande, a gallant officer, held out the fort for three months, and were only subdued, when, preferring death to intolerable privation, they flung themselves, sword in hand, into the enemy's ranks. Fourteen thousand men perished in this expedition. The knight De Maldonat preserved the three galleys which he commanded, by skilfully piloting them through the shallows and sand-banks that hem the coast, after the battle was irretrievably decided against him.

It was about this time that Cosmo de Medicis, Grand Duke of Tuscany, anxious to create a powerful maritime force in his dominions, instituted a naval corps, on the officers of which he conferred the honour of knighthood, under the patronage of Saint Stephen. He at the same time assigned them the newly-founded city of Cosmopolis, in the island of Elba, as a residence.* The commanders of this new Order were instructed to avail themselves of every opportunity of co-operation with the Maltese squadron, whenever they met it at sea; for the knights of Saint John had become as famous throughout Europe for their maritime skill, as they had long been for their warlike renown. Never before had their galleys been so numerous, or so efficiently manned. The pirate flag quailed before them in every corner of the Mediterranean; and their annals abound with details of naval combats, in which the more intrepid commanders almost invariably bore away the palm of victory from the Moslems. Foremost among these ocean-warriors, fought the Commander De Romegas, otherwise L'Escure—the same knight whose life was so miraculously preserved in the memorable storm which did so much damage in the island; but his laurels were stained by the blood-thirstiness of his zeal. It would, indeed, be a breach of historical candour not to state, that the warfare was characterized on both sides by sanguinary ferocity. If the Turk and the Moor were cruel and merciless, so was the Christian knight. It was a war of reckless bloodshed and brutal spoliation—a series of legal outrages which humanity chronicles with regret.

A general council of the Catholic Church was held at Trent about this time, chiefly with a view to concert measures for checking the progress of the reformed doctrines, which assembly the Chevalier Royas de Portabrange attended, as the representative of the Order. He exerted himself to procure the restoration of such possessions and privileges as had been usurped by various potentates; but the as-

* Knolles.

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sembly, immersed in business of greater moment, treated his appeal with coldness and neglect. Considering that the Pope himself was one of the princes against whom his complaints were levelled, it is not surprising that he totally failed in his mission. Yet, at this very period, when not one among the fathers of the church had a word to advance in favour of that illustrious brotherhood which had for centuries been its chief bulwark, the knights took Pignon de Velez, a strong fortress on the coast of Barbary, which, two years before, had successfully defied the forces of Spain. Five of the Maltese galleys employed in this service soon after performed a notable exploit, by capturing a large and richly laden Turkish galleon in the mouth of the Adriatic. The battle lasted five hours, and one hundred and twenty Christians, including five knights, fell ere the Turks pulled down their flag. The knights Giou and Romegas commanded the Maltese squadron in this fight, which redounded the more to their honour, inasmuch as the loss of the galleon, which belonged to the Kislar-aga, chief of the black eunuchs of the seraglio, occasioned more dismay at Constantinople, than if the Cross had been planted in triumph on the walls of some important fortress. Solyman, regarding it as an insult offered to his own household—for some of his female favourites had shares in the argosy—was grievously incensed. Not only did the Kislar-aga and the Odalichi urge him to vengeance, but even the Imaun of the grand mosque publicly invoked him to redeem, with his sword, the many followers of the Prophet who pined in Christian chains. The populace also lifted up its potent voice; and Solyman, fanned into wrath, swore solemnly by his beard to extirpate the Order.

The Sultan, notwithstanding his indignation, did not rush into the contest without first consulting his counsellors, as became a wise and prudent prince. Several of them recommended, as a preliminary step, an expedition against the Christian settlements in Barbary; others, against Sicily and Italy; but, in the Sultan's own eyes, the subjugation of Malta alone found favour; and he steadily adhered to that project, as the most likely to spread the terror of his name far and wide. He accordingly set about equipping a mighty armament, the command of which he intrusted to the Pashas Mustapha and Piali, with the understanding that the corsair Dragut, whose naval renown was still untarnished, should be admitted to all their councils.

The knights, warned of the storm about to burst on them, by the loud and general note of warlike preparation that sounded in the East, spared no exertion to place their island in a proper state of defence. With the exception of Spain, which furnished a small body

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of troops, and the Pope, who contributed ten thousand crowns, none of the great European potentates showed a disposition, or indeed had the power, to render them any essential aid. France was rendered powerless by intestine strife; Germany trembled for her own frontier; and England no longer took an interest in the contests between the Crescent and the Cross. But the knowledge that they were left to engage single-handed in the battle, acted only as a stimulus to the valour of the knights. At the Grandmaster's summons, several hundreds of them, who were dispersed among the distant commanderies, hastened to Malta, full of noble ardour, where, in conjunction with their more experienced confreres, they employed themselves in disciplining the native population, and the stipendiaries whom the agents of the Order levied in the Italian States. Such commanders as were incapacitated, by age or infirmities, from repairing to the post of danger, remitted to the treasury greater part of their personal funds. But the bulwark of the Order was the Grandmaster himself. Equal in natural sagacity, in courage, in military skill, and in honourable zeal, to the most illustrious chiefs it had ever possessed, fortune could not, at this critical period, have devolved the supreme power on a more efficient and magnanimous commander than John de la Valette. Temporal dignities had been showered thickly upon him; but, far from alienating his heart from the stern duties of his profession, they had only rendered him the more eager to deport himself on all occasions as became a true Christian knight. To such a man, it was far easier to prepare to meet death bravely on his own bastions, than to contemplate the possibility of the banner he fought under being torn down in dishonour by the hands of an enemy. He fulfilled, at one and the same time, the duties of the hospitaller, the private soldier, the engineer, the artillerist, and the captain of the host. The one hour he was busied in the hospital, the next superintending the pioneers who were employed in constructing new defences; and, with the same hand that had traced the plan of the rising bulwarks, he frequently grasped, by way of example, the mattock and the spade. "A formidable enemy," said he, speaking in full assembly to his knights, "are coming like a thunder-cloud upon us; and if the banner of the Cross must quail to the unbeliever, let us remember, that it is a signal that heaven demands from us the lives which we have solemnly devoted to its service. He who dies in this cause dies a happy death; and, to render us worthy to meet it, let us renew at the altar those vows which ought to make us not only fearless, but invincible in the fight."

The solemn ceremonial which followed this address, was well cal-

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culated to inspire the knights with the most fervent zeal. Shriven of their sins, they partook of the eucharist, and renounced all temporal pursuits and gratifications, until such time as their redemption should be accomplished. Private animosities were abandoned—they strengthened each other by the utterance of noble sentiments—and, bending in devoted brotherhood before the symbol of their faith, they vowed to stand between it and profanation, till the last drop of their blood was drained.

A general muster of his forces showed La Valette that he might rely on the services of seven hundred knights, besides serving-brothers, and about eight thousand five hundred soldiers, composed of the crews of the galleys, foreign stipendiaries, and the militia of the island. As had been done by L'Isle Adam at the siege of Rhodes, each language was intrusted with a particular post on the fortifications. The defence of the Bourg, a most important position, was confided to the three languages of France, and part of the language of Castile. The knights of Italy, headed by the Admiral De Monte, occupied the Isle de la Sangle, and those of Arragon the quarter and platform of the Bormola gate. The languages of England and Germany, with the remnant of the knights of Castile, were posted on the Mole, and from thence as far as the ditch of Fort Saint Angelo, which was garrisoned by fifty knights and five hundred soldiers, under Garzeranos, a Catalonian knight. Romegas, with that intrepidity for which he was distinguished, undertook, with his marines, to defend the entrance of the great port; and a battery of nine guns, commanded by Guiral, a Castilian, was raised to protect the harbour of the galleys, which lay between the Bourg and the Isle de la Sangle. This port was further defended by a great iron chain, supported on casks and beams of timber, placed at regulated distances, and extending from the platform of Saint Angelo to the cape called the Spur of Saint Michael. The garrison of Fort Saint Elmo was increased to sixty knights, commanded by Desguerras, Bailiff of Negropont; and to these were added the Cavalier John de la Cerda, and a body of Spanish infantry under his command. The Cité Notabile was intrusted to Mesquita, a Portuguese knight, and the island of Goza to the Chevalier Torreglias, a Majorcan of tried valour, who only prized the appointment the more for the peril it embraced. In addition to these arrangements, Copier, Grand Marshal of the Order, was placed at the head of an ambulatory corps, with instructions to hover perpetually in the vicinity of those places most calculated to admit of a hostile descent.

It was on the 18th of May, 1565, that the Maltese sentinels stationed on the cavalier of Fort Saint Elmo, first descried the Turkish

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fleet. It consisted of one hundred and fifty-nine oared vessels, and carried thirty thousand soldiers, chiefly janizaries and spahis—troops who, on all occasions, formed the *élite* of the Ottoman battle. A squadron of store-ships accompanied this mighty armament, having on board the heavy artillery, the horses, and the necessary munitions of the army. In the course of the night, notwithstanding the vigilance of the Grandmaster, three thousand Turks landed at Saint Thomas's creek, a roadstead a few miles to the eastward of the Grand Port. On the following night, the fleet, with lanterns lighted, stood away for the more remote bay of Marsa Sirocco, where next morning the whole army disembarked. Hostilities commenced ominously for the Order. A Portuguese knight, who had been sent out to reconnoitre, was struck dead by a Turkish ball fired from ambush; and the Chevalier de la Riviere, who gallantly rushed forward to bear off his body, had his horse shot under him, and was taken. The Turkish general put the captive knight to the torture, to extort from him a description of the weakest points of the fortifications. La Riviere, affecting sincerity, named the post of Castile; but no sooner did the Pasha behold its bulwark and casemated ravelin in a bird's-eye view which he subsequently obtained of the whole defences from Mount Calcara, than he knew that his prisoner had dealt falsely with him; and, setting the example to his soldiers, they beat out the knight's brains. This cruel act, and the outrages perpetrated by the invaders in every corner of the island, were avenged however in some measure by the column under the Grand Marshal, which cut off fifteen hundred marauders who had straggled from their ranks, in which service it lost fourscore soldiers and one knight, an illustrious Florentine named D'Elbene. The Grandmaster, though he held it prudent to encourage these skirmishes at the outset, as likely to habituate the soldiers to the aspect and shouts of the enemy, soon saw that the numerical disparity was so prodigiously against him, as to render them inadvisable; and the Marshal and his corps were ultimately recalled within the walls.

Fort Saint Elmo, which, as has already been stated, occupied the extremity of the rocky peninsula called Mount Sceberras, was the first defensible point which the Turks assailed. They argued, that were that post carried, they would obtain complete possession of Port Musceit, which would afterwards serve as a secure and commodious haven for their fleet. Pioneers immediately attempted to open trenches to the landward of the fort, which was but indifferently defended on that side; but the hardness of the rock, and their complete exposure to the cannon on the walls, rendered the work impracticable. As a substitute, they raised parapets of planks and beams,

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banked with earth, which was brought from a distance with prodigious labour, and worked into clay mixed with rushes and straw. Under this cover the works rapidly advanced. Platforms were raised, bristling with cannon; and, on the 24th of May, six days after the arrival of the fleet in the offing, a battery of ten guns, each of which carried a ball weighing eighty pounds, two sixty-pound culverins, and a basilisk of enormous dimensions, which threw stone bullets that weighed one hundred and sixty pounds, opened upon the fort. Every shot told; and, seeing the works momentarily crumbling under this terrible shower, the Bailiff of Negropont despatched the Spaniard La Cerda to solicit a reinforcement from the Grandmaster, on the assumption that a stout and courageous garrison alone could maintain so exposed a post. La Cerda imprudently announced the jeopardy of the fort in presence of the assembled knights, and, with a faint-heartedness that disgusted the Grandmaster, predicted its reduction within a week. In order to set a brave example, and to protract the defence by every possible mode, in the hope that the Viceroy of Sicily, at the head of powerful succours, would ultimately arrive to his relief, La Valette instantly declared, that he himself would undertake the command of the little garrison. But the knights rose in a body, and implored him not to abandon the important duties attached to his station, to become the defender of a single post, while, at the same time, a number of the bravest voluntarily offered to repair thither, and do their endeavour to preserve it. Accordingly, a reinforcement, headed by the Chevaliers Gonzales de Medran and La Motte, was boated across the haven under cover of the guns of Saint Angelo; and afterwards, from time to time, individual knights, stimulated by more than ordinary ardour, transported themselves in skiffs to the same perilous destination. Among these brave men was La Mirande, a veteran knight, who, having arrived from Sicily at this critical juncture, voluntarily joined the garrison of Saint Elmo, and, by his noble example, greatly supported its defenders in the resistance which they subsequently made. A cannon-ball from the Castle of Saint Angelo having shattered a stone in the Turkish trenches, a fragment of which severely wounded Piali Pasha, La Valette took advantage of the consternation into which the enemy were thrown by the accident, to despatch a messenger to the Viceroy of Sicily, entreating him to hasten to his aid with what succours he could muster. The Viceroy returned for answer, that he would be with him by the middle of June,—news which so cheered the garrison of Saint Elmo, that it made a gallant sortie into the Turkish trenches, and for a time kept the enemy completely at bay. But the Osmanlis, rallying bravely, as is their wont, recovered the ground

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which they had lost, and not only repulsed the Christians, but, concealed by the smoke of the artillery, pursued them back to the counterscarp, where they effected a lodgment by means of beams and gabions, and erected a battery upon it. The garrison soon had reason to deplore this circumstance; for the Turkish harquebusiers, protected by their works, coolly shot down every man who showed his head above the parapet.

Matters were in this position when the corsair Dragut arrived in the Ottoman camp. Though he by no means approved of the operations which had preceded his arrival, he laboured not the less assiduously, now that the siege of this isolated fortress was commenced, to achieve its reduction. He might be said to live in the trenches; and several batteries, raised under his immediate direction, opened with fatal precision on the ravelin and cavalier. At his suggestion, four culverins were also planted on a headland on the other side of Port Musceit, the fire of which flanked these defences. The promontory on which this battery was erected, retains the name of Cape Dragut to this day.

Overpowered by long watching and incessant fatigue, the Christians relaxed their vigilance for a short space; and the Turks, seeing the ravelin ruined and undefended, suddenly stormed it at daybreak, and put all who opposed their entrance to the sword. From thence they would have flung themselves directly into the fort; but the garrison, roused to a knowledge of the danger, fiercely obstructed their advance. Twice in the course of six hours did the Turkish general urge his janizaries to renew the assault; and such was their stubborn bravery, that, but for the shortness of their scaling-ladders, their efforts would have been successful. This bootless strife cost the Turks three thousand chosen soldiers. The Order lost nearly a third of that number, and twenty knights. It is recorded, as an instance of knightly magnanimity, that the Chevalier de la Gardamp, being mortally wounded by a musket-ball in the heat of the battle, would not permit any of his brother knights to bear him from the walls, but, with his yet remaining strength, crawled into the chapel of the fort, and, laying himself down before the altar, there breathed his last.

The loss of the ravelin, and the number of the wounded whom the Grandmaster saw return to the Bourg, and whose place he instantly supplied with fresh troops, gave him great uneasiness; but his sorrow was mixed with indignation at beholding the Spaniard La Cerda again appear before him, with no better apology for his recreancy than a slight scar. Far different was the conduct of the Commanders Desguerras and Broglio, the joint governors of the fort which he had abandoned. Though both of them were wounded, they pertina-

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ciously refused to retire from their post, preferring, as they nobly expressed themselves, a death of honour on its battered walls.

The incessant attacks of the enemy, who kept constant possession of the ravelin, soon rendered Saint Elmo barely tenable. Seeing their cannon dismounted, their ramparts in ruins, and the fort completely commanded by the hostile batteries, the gallant men, who still attempted to defend it, deputed the Chevalier Medran, a knight of tried valour, to represent their deplorable situation to La Valette. Medran, whose courage was above suspicion, declared, in full council, that longer resistance was impracticable—and that the continued occupation of a post so dismantled would only consume forces which would speedily be required for the maintenance of more important positions; but still, he added, the brave soldiers who garrisoned it were prepared, if the Grandmaster so willed, to make it their tomb. La Valette frankly admitted that the fort could only be maintained at the most imminent peril to its defenders; but that, as its abandonment would inevitably deter the Viceroy of Sicily from sending the succours he had promised, and thereby facilitate the entire subjugation of the island, he could not, consistently with his duty, consent to their recall. It was by protracting the siege alone, that he anticipated ultimate triumph; and he therefore called upon Medran to represent, in his name, to the knights in the fort, that it depended chiefly on their conduct whether this great battle for their freedom and existence were lost or won—that by their vows they were bound, at all times, to hold death as preferable to defeat—and that, rather than suffer the fort to be evacuated, he himself would take his place among its defenders, and share their fate.

Several knights, who had grown gray in the service of the Order, no sooner heard Medran deliver this stern message, on his return to Saint Elmo, than they began to prepare for death; but their more youthful confreres, not yet disposed to resign life with similar submission to what seemed a merciless decree, instantly drew up and transmitted to the Grandmaster a written document, protesting against the policy which devoted them to certain death, and threatening that, if boats were not sent to take them away immediately, they would sally sword in hand into the trenches, and be cut to pieces there in fair fight, rather than remain to be butchered behind their own ramparts. To this desperate threat La Valette only answered, that if they really valued the renown which they affected to prize so highly, they would enhance it more by yielding due obedience to him as their commander, than by giving way to the dictates of despair; as, without yielding such obedience, no member of the Order could possibly die an honourable death.

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That he might not appear utterly to abandon them, however, the Grandmaster deputed three commissioners to visit the fort, and ascertain, from personal inspection, the exact state of the defences. Two of the commissioners admitted that the place was barely tenable; but at the same time endeavoured by judiciously eulogizing the valour with which it had been defended, to stimulate the garrison to further resistance. But the third, who was named Constantine Castriot, and who boasted of being descended from Scanderbeg, the famous Epirote chief, declared, with less temper than became the occasion, that the danger was by no means so great, and that, with due exertion, new defences might be thrown up, which would completely shield the garrison from the Turkish guns on the ravelin. The scarred and war-worn men, to whom this discourse was directed, heard it with great indignation; and when he was about to return to the Bourg along with his colleagues, a tumultuous attempt was made to detain him, in order that he might share the danger he contemned, and practise the lessons of defence which he was so forward to inculcate. Castriot framed his report to the Grandmaster in the same spirit; and to show that it was founded on conviction, offered, provided he were allowed to take with him a reinforcement of troops, to throw himself into the fort, and either maintain it, or bury himself in its ruins. La Valette affected to accept of his services; and at the same time, a fresh levy of Maltese militia gallantly volunteered to relieve the disheartened men who occupied the post. Thus supported, the Grandmaster despatched a notification to the knights in the fort, couched in cold and stately language, intimating, that ten times the number of soldiers requisite for its defence had voluntarily offered to undertake it; and that he no longer insisted on men who were confessedly plunged in despair, continuing on so perilous and important a service. "Return," his epistle concluded, "to the convent, in the same boats that convey this new force to your relief. The preservation of the island, and of the Order, depends on the nature of the defence which the garrison of Fort Saint Elmo makes; and my mind will be easier regarding it, when I know that it is in the hands of warriors on whose courage I can confidently rely."

The malecontents were cut to the heart by these contemptuous lines. They felt at once that it would require infinitely more resolution to evacuate the fort, under such circumstances, and to support the cold looks of the Grandmaster, and the sneers of their brethren, than to lay down their lives to a man on their shattered walls. They therefore unanimously entreated their commander, to despatch, without delay, a letter to La Valette, imploring pardon for their irresolu-

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tion, and pledging themselves to expiate it by an invincible and glorious resistance. As they had no boat to carry this message across the haven, an expert swimmer was intrusted with it, and accomplished the passage in safety.

La Valette, who had foreseen this reaction, consented, after a little delay, to accept their submission; and the valour of Castriot, who was probably from the beginning duly tutored by his politic chief, was not put to the test. No efforts were spared to strengthen and increase the means of defence which yet remained. Under the Grandmaster's directions, a species of fire-work was prepared, which was afterwards found of infinite service in repelling the assaults. It consisted of large hoops made of light wood, which, after being dipped in brandy, were rubbed over with boiling oil, and then covered with cotton soaked in a combustible preparation, two ingredients of which were gunpowder and saltpetre. This operation was repeated three times at different intervals, in order to allow each layer of cotton to cool before it was covered by another. When the hour of battle came, these hoops were set on fire, and thrown, with the aid of tongs, into the midst of the enemy. Hooped into clusters by girdles of unquenchable flame, the Turkish soldiers often lost all discipline; and, to prevent the flesh from being burned off their bones, flung themselves into the sea.

Vexed and ashamed at being so long kept at bay by a handful of desperate men, the Turkish leader at length made a general assault on the fortress. At daybreak on the 16th of June, the Turkish galleys commenced a furious cannonade against the seaward rampart; and at the same time the land batteries shattered into ruin the still remaining fortifications. This done, the Osmanlis entered the ditch to the sound of their proud but barbarous music; and, at the discharge of a signal-gun, rushed impetuously to the assault, covered by four thousand harquebusiers and cross-bowmen, who, from their post in the trenches, shot down every Christian soldier who showed himself in the breach. Behind that deadly gap stood the knights and their scant battalion, armed with pikes and spontoons, and forming, as it were, a living wall. Between every three soldiers stood a knight, the better to sustain the courage of those who had nothing of chivalrous renown to uphold them. In vain did the Turks dash themselves on this impenetrable phalanx. When swords and pikes were broken, the Christian soldiers grappled with their antagonists, and terminated the death-struggle with their daggers. The burning hoops were of eminent service in this combat; and the cries of the wretches whom they begirt, added greatly to the horror of the fight. It was a cheering circumstance to the defenders of the fort, that the

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conflict was maintained under the eyes of their friends in the Bourg, whom they feared had begun to doubt their bravery. Amid the thunder of the artillery, and the groans of the dying, their ears were gladdened at intervals by encouraging shouts wafted across the haven from the distant ramparts; and the guns of forts Saint Angelo and Saint Michael played incessantly, and with considerable effect, on the Turkish lines. An attempt which several of the commanders of the Turkish galleys made to storm one of the seaward bulwarks of the fort, was foiled by a single discharge from one of the batteries of Saint Angelo, which swept down twenty men. In the heat of this fierce onset, the Turks tried to possess themselves of the great cavalier which covered Fort Saint Elmo—a lofty mound of earth, so steep as to be almost unscaleable; but the Chevalier Guigno, an Italian knight who commanded the post on its summit, repelled the attempt, chiefly by means of the flaming hoops;—for even the bravest of the Ottoman host recoiled in consternation before these wheels of fire. At the end of six hours, the knights, covered with wounds, and blistered by the scorching rays of the sun, had the consolation to hear a retreat sounded from the enemy's trenches; and the Turks reluctantly retired, leaving behind them two thousand dead. The Christians raised a shout of triumph when they beheld the pride of the Turkish battle roll away in disorder from their ruined walls; and their brethren in the Bourg loudly echoed back the cheering cry. Seventeen knights fell gloriously in the breach on this occasion, and the killed and wounded soldiers exceeded three hundred. Among the slain were the Chevaliers de Medran, De Vagnon, and La Motte. De Medran had just killed a Turkish officer, and possessed himself of the standard which he carried, when he was struck down lifeless by a musket-ball. The Commander de Morgut may also be said to have fallen in the battle; for, while passing from the fort to the Bourg to have his wounds dressed, a cannon-shot from the Turkish batteries carried off his head.

The loss which the garrison had sustained was promptly repaired by fresh troops from the Bourg. All of them were volunteers; for the Grandmaster, regarding the service as one of infinite peril, would exercise no authority in the matter. The Turkish general, satisfied, from the bloody repulse he had met with, that Saint Elmo could never be carried, while reinforcements of chivalrous and devoted soldiers could be thrown into it, held a council in the trenches, when it was determined to cut off all communication with the Bourg, and subject the fort to a close blockade, both by land and water. The corsair Dragut, and a sangiack who acted as chief engineer, were present at this consultation; and, in order to settle some point rela-

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tive to the projected operations, they boldly quitted the shelter of the works, and repaired to the open ground to continue their deliberations. While thus employed, a cannon-ball from the Castle of Saint Angelo killed the sangiack on the spot, and shivered a rock close beside him; a fragment of which struck Dragut behind the right ear, who instantly fell down speechless, and bathed in his own blood. Mustapha Pasha, afraid lest the army should be discouraged by this disaster, ordered a mantle to be flung over the wounded chief while his attendants were removing him to his tent; and then, with the intrepidity of a gray-headed and redoubted commander, made a reconnoisance from the same spot on which his friend had just been wounded. In the end, he ordered a strong body of troops to occupy a promonotory at the mouth of the grand port called the Gibbet Cape, on which he erected a battery which completely commanded the entrance to that haven. The Grandmaster, aware that if the enemy once effected a permanent lodgment on the Cape, the fate of fort Saint Elmo was decided, instructed the Grand Marshal Copier to make a sortie to prevent it; and a vigorous charge made by that knight drove the Ottomans back to their camp. But this advantage proved of small moment. The contested headland was again occupied, and that, too, by a force which was not to be dislodged by any detachment the Grandmaster could send against it. Moreover, the Pasha, to render his leaguer of Fort Saint Elmo the more effectual, constructed a covered way in rear of the trench under the counterscarp, which he carried down to the sea-beach opposite the Gibbet Cape, and filled with a body of skilful harquebusiers, whose fire, crossing that of the battery on the farther shore, rendered it impossible for any vessel to pass between the Bourg and the Fort, which was now completely invested.

The defenders of Fort Saint Elmo being thus cut off from all succour, the Turkish general, on the 21st of June, marched all the chosen battalions of his army into the trenches, and once more ordered them to the assault. Thrice did the janizaries rush into the breach, and as often were they repulsed with immense slaughter. Night separated the combatants, and the knights who survived these terrible conflicts, passed it in binding up each others' wounds, and listening to the groans of the dying. Even the Bailiff of Negropont, and the knight La Mirande, whose confidence in the valour of the garrison had hitherto been proof against every reverse, could no longer deny the imminency of the danger; and an expert swimmer was despatched to the Bourg with a final intimation to the Grandmaster, that, unless he succoured them immediately, their destruction was inevitable. A stern sense of the duties incumbent on a professed

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knight, had rendered La Valette deaf to their former representations; but, when he saw them completely shut up in their battered citadel, and severed from all Christian aid, his heart smote him, and he instantly despatched five large boats, crowded with the bravest of his knights, to force a passage to their rescue. But so completely was the haven commanded by the Turkish batteries, that this flotilla, after much perilous but futile manœuvring, was obliged to return to port; and the besieged beheld their last hope of salvation defeated.

While there remained a hope of escape, many of the devoted men thus offered up at the shrine of necessity, had felt it difficult to practise the resignation of martyrs; but now, when the day of their destiny had arrived, they anticipated, with a stern and tranquil fortitude, their inevitable doom. In the course of the following night, they all took the sacrament in the chapel of the fortress; and, with fraternal tenderness, bade each other farewell. At daybreak, they repaired to their several posts, satisfied that, in a few hours, the Turks would enter the fort over their lifeless remains. Such as were incapable of supporting themselves, in consequence of their wounds, were carried in chairs to the breach, where they preferred dying with weapons in their hands, to being butchered by the victors when the battle was over.

At sunrise, on the 23d of June, the Turks quitted their trenches for a final assault. Ladders and bridges had been planted at every practicable point during the night; and thirty-two pieces of cannon opened the battle with their terrible voice. The storming bands felt confident of victory, and flung themselves into the breach with savage shouts. The bravery with which they were received fell nothing short of their own ardour. The humblest Christian soldier within the fort emulated the knights themselves in this last struggle; and, for a time, the destructive missiles which they hurled into the Turkish battalions procrastinated their advance. But, at the end of four hours, there remained only sixty persons to defend the breach, exclusive of a few soldiers who had hitherto maintained the cavalier, but who were now required to join this heroic remnant. No sooner did the Turks perceive the cavalier abandoned, than they suspended their attack to take possession of that post, from whence they instantly commenced a galling fire of musketry, singling out, with fatal precision, every knight who appeared to animate the fight. The Bailiff of Negropont and the veteran La Mirande, were among the first who fell under their deadly aim; and, one after another, the rest dropped dead beside them. At length, the breach was cleared—but only when the last of the Christian combatants was cut down by the Turkish sabres—"every man," says Knolles, "being slain in

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valiant fight." The victors entered the fort with shouts of triumph; and their fleet, at the same time, sailed into Port Musceit with all the pomp of a naval pageant. The famous Dragut lived long enough to hear, that victory had at last crowned the Ottoman arms. He was speechless when the clangour of the martial music, and the thunder of the artillery, annunciatory of the conquest, reached his ears; but he had still strength sufficient left to indicate his satisfaction to the messenger who informed him that the fort was won.

The defence of this fortress cost the Order three hundred knights and thirteen hundred soldiers; and, if the Maltese chroniclers may be credited, the Turks purchased it by the sacrifice of eight thousand men. Mustapha Pasha was so astonished at the insignificance of its fortifications, that he exclaimed, in reference to the conquest of the Bourg, "What resistance may we not look for from the parent, when it has cost us the bravest of our army to humble the child!" With the barbarous policy of his nation, he ordered the breasts of the slain knights to be gashed in the form of a cross, and their hearts torn out; after which, the lacerated and headless bodies, clothed in their battle-vests, were tied to planks and flung into the sea, to be drifted into the harbour. La Valette, when he beheld these dismal mementos of the gallant band which he had sacrificed, cast up by the surge at the base of his ramparts, could not restrain his tears; but his grief soon gave place to vengeance; and, with a barbarity still less excusable than that of the Pasha, inasmuch as it emanated from a Christian knight, he ordered, by way of reprisal, that all the Turkish prisoners in the city should be massacred. This sanguinary edict was promptly executed; and the Maltese artillerymen, loading their guns with the bleeding heads of the victims, fired them, instead of balls, into the Turkish camp.

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CHAPTER VI.

The Bourg and Isle de la Sangle regularly invested—Lascaris the deserter—Defensive preparations—Erection of a Marine stockade—Combat of swimmers—General cannonade—Arrival of Hassan, Viceroy of Algiers—Exploits of Candelissa at the Stockade and Spur of Saint Michael—Attack of the Algerines on the Bormola Gate—Heroism of individual knights—Death of the Knights Henry de la Valette and De Polastron—Desperate attacks on Fort St. Michael and the Bastion of Castile—Fall of the Sangiack of Bosnia—Jeopardy of the city—Repulse of the enemy from the Cité Notable—Arrival of succours from Sicily—The Turks driven out of the island—Conclusion of the siege.

For a short space, the tragical issue of the siege of Fort Saint Elmo spread a sort of panic throughout the convent; but the efforts of the Grandmaster, whose cheering voice was like the sound of a trumpet to his knights, quickly restored their confidence and valour. The whole of them renewed their vow to shed the last drop of their blood on the walls, rather than allow the enemy to effect a lodgment on them; and the common soldiers, animated by a conviction familiarly expressed by La Valette, that, though every knight were slain, they would still find among themselves a chief capable of leading them to victory, displayed a scarcely less chivalrous zeal. To gratify that spirit of vengeance which the barbarous conduct of the Turks had roused, and also to destroy all hope of a capitulation, he decreed that no prisoners should be taken. A Christian slave, who was sent from the Turkish camp to propose a negotiation, was instantly ordered to be hanged; but, being an abject creature, seventy years of age, was reprieved, and allowed, at his own entreaty, to return to bondage. The knight who conducted him beyond the barriers, when they arrived at the counterscarp, pointed significantly to the ditch, which was very deep, and said, "Tell the Pasha that this is the only place we can surrender. It is specially reserved for him; and here he and all his janizaries will find a grave."

This bold conduct satisfied the Turkish leader, that it was idle to waste time in courting negotiation; and he accordingly invested, without farther delay, the entire peninsulas of the Bourg and La Sangle. As the hardness of the rock defeated his attempts to open regular trenches, he constructed breastworks of stone; and his batteries being completed at every point, seventy large cannon began to batter in breach. Before the leaguer was thoroughly accomplished, however, the chevaliers Robles and De Quincy, at the head of forty knights, and a number of secular volunteers of various na-

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tions, who had landed on a retired part of the coast, managed, under cover of a thick fog, to throw themselves into the town, where they were received with joyful acclamations by all classes. La Sangle, and its principal defence, Fort Saint Michael, were the points against which the besiegers first directed their fire. Several batteries, planted on Mount Sceberras and the hill of Corradin, completely commanded these posts; and as they were esteemed the weakest, and therefore the most honourable, the *elite* of the Order undertook their defence. The inner harbour alone remained open; and to shut up this only channel by which succours had a chance of being introduced, the Turkish general resolved to make an attack by water on a position called the Spur of Saint Michael, which occupied the extremity of the peninsula of La Sangle. As it was impossible for a flotilla to pass under the batteries of Saint Angelo, on this perilous service, without risking certain destruction—the guns of that fortress commanding the whole of the outer port—he determined to adopt the notable expedient of transporting a number of boats from Port Musceit into the inner basin, across the isthmus that joined Mount Sceberras to the mainland. This he purposed to accomplish by the labour of Christian slaves, and afterwards to assail the Spur and Fort of Saint Michael simultaneously by land and water. The desertion of a Greek officer from his service, however, put the knights in timely possession of his project, and occasioned it to be materially altered. This Greek, who was named Lascaris, was descended from a family which had given several Emperors to the East. He had been made a slave in his infancy, and reared in the Moslem faith, but had never forgotten the renown of his ancestors, or become a confirmed recreant to the Cross. The Ottomans, honouring him for his illustrious descent, though they had beggared his whole race, educated him as a warrior; and, at the time of his desertion, he held a distinguished appointment among the Spahi. Ambition had hitherto rendered him insensible to the disgrace of supporting the crescent in opposition to the Christian banner; but the magnanimous defence made by the garrison of Saint Elmo—the sight of their bleeding bodies choking the breach—and the fortitude with which their brethren in the other fortresses also stood prepared to meet their doom, stirred up the latent nobility of his nature; and, scorning the renegade character which circumstances had imposed on him, he resolved to convey the Christians timely intimation of the pending attack, or lose his life in the attempt. Availing himself of an opportunity of withdrawing unobserved from his post, he hurried down to the beach opposite the Spur of Saint Michael, and made a signal, by waving his turban, that he wished to be taken into the

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island. Savoguerre, the knight who commanded at the Spur, perceiving, by his habiliments, that he was an officer of distinction, instantly notified the circumstance to the Grandmaster; but in the meanwhile, the signals made by Lascaris, having been observed by several Turks at a distance, a party of them ran down to the beach, with an intent to obstruct his flight; and knowing his death to be inevitable, if he were arrested, he instantly leapt into the sea. Though an indifferent swimmer, he was yet able to keep himself buoyant until three Maltese divers whom Savoguerre promptly despatched to his assistance came up to him, and brought him half lifeless to the shore. On his recovery, he disclosed the Pasha's project to the Grandmaster, adding, that he had come to perish, if necessary, along with the Christian knights. La Valette was so filled with gratitude for this important service, and saw so much to admire in the fugitive's character, that he generously pensioned him from the public treasury; and throughout the rest of the siege, Lascaris made it manifest, both by his candour in the council, and his valour in the fight, that principle alone had swayed him to desert the Ottoman banner, and that he had nowise degenerated from the dauntless character of his race.

Thus forewarned, the Grandmaster prepared, with his characteristic sagacity, to defeat the contemplated assault. The seaward walls of La Sangle were heightened by his orders, and the cannon on them brought to command the inner port at every point; while, at the suggestion of two Maltese pilots who enjoyed his confidence, a vast stockade, extending from Mount Corradin to the Spur, was formed by driving huge piles into shallow water, and then fixing a chain on the top of them by means of iron rings. Where the depth of the water, or hardness of the submarine rock, was such as to preclude this kind of defence from being adopted, strong booms, formed of spars and masts nailed together, were chained from pile to pile. So highly was La Valette pleased at the impracticable aspect which this stockade gradually assumed, that he subsequently ordered others to be constructed for the better protection of the seaward posts which the languages of England, Germany, and Castile were appointed to defend. These works could only be carried on after sunset, in order that the workmen might be screened from the fire of the Turkish batteries; yet so indefatigably did the pioneers labour at them, that they were completed in the course of nine nights; and the Pasha beheld a barrier, perfectly impassable to his boats, rise as if by magic from the bottom of the sea. Invincible perseverance, however, was one of the leading features of Mustapha's character. At the suggestion of a Christian renegade, a band of expert swimmers was despatched,

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under the cloud of night, with axes in their girdles, to open a passage for the flotilla through the booms and palisades. The noise which these adventurers necessarily made in the execution of this perilous duty, soon alarmed the garrison, and the guns on the walls immediately commenced a fierce cannonade. Being too elevated, however, they threw their shot over the heads of the Turks employed in demolishing the barrier; upon which the Admiral de Monte, who held the chief command in La Sangle, resorted to the daring expedient of combating these enemies with their own weapons. A party of swimmers was promptly mustered from among the Maltese, who, stripping themselves naked, and armed only with swords, pushed boldly out to the stockade, and, after a brief but sanguinary combat, completely routed the Turkish hatchet-men. A subsequent attempt was made by the Turks to break the booms and stakes, by means of cables worked by ship-capstans planted on the opposite shore; but it was also baffled by the intrepidity of the marines, who no sooner saw what was intended, than they swam out again and cut the ropes.

Enraged at being thus circumvented in a favourite project, the Pasha, on the 5th of July, orderered all his guns to open simultaneously on the two towns. Accordingly, the vast batteries on Mount Saint Margaret and the Corradin rock, commenced a furious cannonade against Fort Saint Michael, and the bulwarks of La Sangle; while those on Mount Sceberras and Mount Salvator played with equal industry on the Castle of Saint Angèlo and the Bourg. The whole island trembled with the incessant roar of the artillery, and both towns were completely belted as it were with smoke and flame. Covered by this iron shower, the besiegers ran their trenches to the verge of the fosse of Fort Saint Michael, and battered a small redoubt which obstructed their advance, with so much fury, that the knights who defended it blew it up, and retired into the fort. The cannonade did not cease until considerable breaches were made in the advanced works both of Saint Michael and the Bourg; and the Pasha was only induced to delay making an attempt to storm the former, from a desire that the Viceroy of Algiers, who was daily expected to arrive at the head of a powerful reinforcement, should share in the assault.

So closely were the two towns blockaded, that the communication between them was for a time entirely interrupted, save by means of boats, which, in their transits, were exposed to great jeopardy from the Turkish shot. At the suggestion of John Anthony Bosio, a young knight, and brother to the annalist of the Order, whose work has been frequently quoted, a bridge of planks, supported on casks

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made water-tight, was thrown across the lagoon, and afterwards proved of great service in facilitating the passage of succours to the posts which were most in danger.

The Algerine viceroy entered the Turkish camp soon afterwards, accompanied by two thousand five hundred chosen soldiers—men long trained to arms, and so formidable on the African coast, as to be known there by the portentous cognomen of the Brave Men of Algiers. Hassan, their leader, was little other than a youth; but he boasted of being the son of the famous Barbarossa, and the son-in-law of the scarcely less famous Dragut; and the same passionate love of sanguinary renown which had distinguished these chiefs, stimulated him to the combat. When he beheld the ruins of Fort Saint Elmo—the post before which his father-in-law had received his death-wound—he could not refrain from expressing his astonishment at its insignificance; and contemptuously remarked, that, in less than half the time which had been consumed before it, his *Bravos* would have planted the Ottoman banner on the walls. To show that this was no idle boast, he entreated the Pasha to allow him to head the contemplated attack on Fort Saint Michael, which he pledged himself to carry, sword in hand; and Mustapha, nowise averse that this impetuous ardour should evaporate in the van of the battle, not only consented that he should command on that occasion, but proffered him the support of six thousand men.

The young Viceroy, being thus installed in an honourable but perilous post, prepared to attack the peninsula, both by land and water at the same moment. The maritime part of the enterprise was confided to Candelissa, his lieutenant, while he himself undertook to storm the landward defences. Candelissa was a Greek renegade, celebrated for his skill in naval tactics, which he had studied under Barbarossa, and long habituated to war and blood. Under his superintendence, and in accordance with the Pasha's original project, a number of boats were dragged overland from Port Musceit, and launched into the Great Port, where he manned them with Algerines and Turkish soldiers to the number of four thousand men. Far from advancing to the assault with the silence that prudence dictated, this flotilla set sail for the stockade to the wild music of the gong, the horn, and the atabal, and preceded by a boat filled with Mohammedan priests and holy men, who, with the same breath, implored heaven to grant them the victory, and to hurl its thunderbolts on the Christian host. The prayers and imprecations of these fanatics, however, were speedily interrupted by the fire of the Maltese cannon; and the rowers, stretching vigorously to their oars, ran the whole fleet close to the stockade. Apprehensive that he might fail to break through this

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barrier, Candelissa had provided himself with a vast number of planks, by means of which he anticipated being able to form a sort of bridge between it and the shore, and so facilitate a prompt and general disembarkation. His soldiers, though galled by a murderous fire, both of round shot and musketry, sprang bravely on the stockade, and, with hammers and hatchets, tried to demolish it; but finding that impracticable, they had recourse to the planks which their leader had in reservation. These proved too short, however, to reach from the palisades to the shore; and a partial panic threatened for a moment to defeat the enterprise. But the voice of Candelissa was to his followers a sound infinitely more terrible than the thunder of the Christian battle; and, rallying in obedience to its mandate, they forced a passage to an uncovered part of the beach, at the extremity of La Sangle. This headland was defended by a battery of six guns, playing level with the water, and a strong intrenchment, within which were posted the Commander De Guimeran, an aged knight, whose name has more than once been mentioned with honour in the African wars, and a number of expert harquebusiers. Guimeran allowed the Turkish flotilla to advance close to the shore before he opened his guns;—and, if credit may be given to the annalists of the Order, several boats were sunk, and four hundred Turks slain, by his first volley. Notwithstanding this terrible reception, Candelissa and his Algerines made good their landing. Two cannon, loaded to the muzzle with small shot, poured another deadly discharge into the midst of them; but still the stern voice of Candelissa shouted, "Onward!" while, at the same moment, he peremptorily ordered the boats to push back into the deep water. This was a decisive indication to his soldiers that he had disembarked, firmly resolved to carry the post or perish; and, rendered desperate by the perils that beset them, they laid their ladders against the intrenchment, in the teeth of a destructive fire, and, after a combat of five hours, forced its defenders to retire, and planted seven Turkish ensigns on its summit.

The sight of the Moslem standard floating triumphantly on this outwork, filled the knights with shame and indignation; and a fresh body of them, headed by the Admiral, De Monte, renewed the battle. Covered by a volley of musketry, they closed with the enemy, using their half-pikes, swords, and daggers, indiscriminately in the *mêlée*. At the moment when victory seemed about to desert the Maltese banner, the shout of coming succour rose from behind them, and a reinforcement from the Bourg, headed by the Commander De Giou and the Chevaliers De Quincy and Ruiz de Medina, advanced to the rescue. The arrival of this detachment decided the conflict. The Turkish

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pennons were torn down, and their defenders driven headlong from the rampart. Even Candelissa himself, panic-struck at last, turned his back on the battle, and was among the first to leap into a boat for safety—an act that greatly dishonoured him in the eyes of his soldiers, and blasted for ever his previous renown. All the Turks who failed to reach their boats were sacrificed. Not even to those who begged quarter in the dust was mercy granted. The only answer vouchsafed to such petitioners was, that they should have Saint Elmo's pay; and, in the same moment, that it was uttered, the deadly blade cut them down. Many were shot by the harquebusiers, while trying to swim after their boats; and of the boats themselves, many were sunk by the fire of the batteries. Dead bodies and shattered limbs covered the whole harbour; and of the four thousand men who had departed so proudly in the morning from the opposite shore, scarcely five hundred survived the fight. About one hundred knights and secular gentlemen, whom a generous zeal had brought to Malta, lost their lives in repelling this attack. Among them was Frederick de Toledo, son of the Viceroy of Sicily, a young knight whom the Grandmaster, out of consideration for his father, who was extremely fond of him, had attached to his own suite. This youth no sooner heard that the Spur of Saint Michael was on the point of being taken, than, with the valour of a true Castilian, he hastened voluntarily to its rescue, and was cut asunder on the rampart by a cannon-ball. At the same moment, a splinter of his cuirass, which the ball had shattered, killed the Chevalier De Savoguerre; while another shot killed the Chevalier De Sousa, and carried away the arm of Gaspar de Pontevez. The knights, De Gordes, Mello, Cardinez, and De Quincy, though all wounded, gallantly refused to quit their posts, and only accepted of such appliances as could be administered on the spot.

The landward attack, headed by the Algerine viceroy in person, was not more successful than that of his lieutenant. At the sound of a signal-gun, his troops rushed gallantly towards the breaches on the side of the Bormola gate and castle of Saint Michael, and in a short space, a small corps of Algerines, which led the assault, displayed their ensigns on the parapet at several points. A murderous discharge, however, from the cannon of Fort Saint Michael, which the Commandant Robles, a brave and experienced soldier, had loaded with musket-cartridges, and an incessant shower of small shot, poured into the heart of the Algerine battalion, by the Castilian and Portuguese knights, posted along the flank of the Bormole, drove it backward again with frightful slaughter. Another breach, defended by the knights Carlo-Rufo and La Ricca was next stormed;

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and in a short time, these two brave men, who exposed themselves with signal intrepidity, were borne mortally wounded from the platform on which they fought. The Admiral De Monte himself took their place, and, aided by a phalanx of the same warriors who had just driven Candelissa and his followers into the sea, quickly changed the aspect of the battle. Unable to withstand their steady and destructive fire, the Viceroy at length sounded a retreat, leaving the flower of his Algerines lifeless at the foot of the rampart.

The Turkish general was neither surprised nor sorry to see the pride of his young colleague humbled by the stubborn valour of the knights; but still he was too able a commander to fail to follow up this bloody effort with a fresh attack. No sooner did the Viceroy, after a combat of five hours' duration, retire from the breach, than he ordered his janizaries, the pride of his army, to push into the deadly gap. Though almost worn out by their previous struggle, and the intolerable heat of the noonday sun, the Christians again stood to their arms, and, after pouring in one fatal volley of musketry, closed sword in hand with their adversaries. From that moment, the battle became as it were a series of single combats. Warrior grappled warrior in desperate strife, and separated only when one or both fell mortally wounded to the earth. In the heat of the conflict, a brave Osmanli, perceiving the havoc made by the sword of the Chevalier De Quincy, flung himself headlong into the heart of the Maltese battalion, and, firing his harquebuss close to the face of the knight, shot him through the head. The next moment, he was himself hewn down by a Christian sabre. The knight De Gordes did not long survive his gallant comrade. Having, at the head of a strong detachment of the citizens, dislodged the assailants from the foot of the rampart, by means of stones, fire-works, and boiling oil, he ordered a body of pioneers instantly to fence the breach with wool-packs and gabions, and strengthen it on the inner side by a trench and barricade; but while occupied in this important service, his head was carried off by a ball from the Turkish batteries. Forty other knights, and two hundred Christian soldiers, perished in the same conflict.

Undismayed by these successive repulses, the Turkish commander ordered a kind of bridge to be constructed, by means of which he anticipated his troops would be able to enter the works at a signal advantage. The Grandmaster, who regarded this contrivance with apprehension, made two attempts to burn it at night; but the sleepless vigilance of the enemy rendered them futile. He at length determined to make a final attempt to destroy it by day; and his nephew, Henry de La Valette, a young and valiant soldier, was

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intrusted with the perilous duty, principally to show the knights, that their chief was as ready to expose the life of his brother's son, as of any other man who fought under the standard of the Order. The youth accepted the appointment with pride; and the Chevalier De Polastron, his most valued friend, with the gallantry of a noble and devoted heart, voluntarily engaged to support him in the enterprise. At the head of a body of picked men, and in the teeth of a heavy fire from the Turks, who occupied the counterscarp, the two gallant youths sallied out in open day, with the intention of fastening a number of strong ropes to the principal posts and beams of the bridge, so as to enable them to drag it by main strength from its position. The aim of the Turkish harquebusiers, however, proved so deadly, that even the bravest of the Maltese soldiers, after a few ineffectual efforts to attach the ropes, fell back under screen of the fortifications. La Valette and De Polastron, intent only on setting a brave example to their followers, remained almost unsupported at the foot of the bridge; and, while engaged in attaching the ropes to it with their own hands, were both killed on the spot by the Turkish marksmen. Seeing these two heroic friends struck down side by side in their blood, the Turks, anxious to obtain the reward which their commander had offered for every knight's head that should be brought him, rushed forward in order to decapitate them; but the Christian soldiers, filled with shame at having left them to perish, burst from their covert to prevent their mutilation. A fierce struggle ensued on the spot where the youths had fallen; and, in the end, their followers had the melancholy satisfaction of bearing back their lifeless remains into the fortress.

However keenly the Grandmaster might feel the death of his nephew, he took care that nothing in his conduct should indicate that he bewailed him more than any other knight who had fallen at his post. To such commanders as ventured to condole with him on his loss, he said, mildly but firmly, "All the brotherhood are my children; and I therefore grieve equally as much for Polastron, as I do for La Valette. And, after all, where is the great reason we have to lament them? They have only sunk a few days before us into the grave!" Equally noble was his remark, when told that the Turkish general had determined, in case the city fell into his power, to save the Grandmaster from the general slaughter, and carry him to Constantinople in chains. "I shall take care," said the veteran chief, "to save myself from such humiliation; for if the siege, contrary to my hopes, terminate fatally for the Order, rather than be flung alive at the Sultan's feet, I will assume the garb of a private man-at-arms, and in that guise, and in the thickest of the battle, meet a warrior's death!"

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He followed up this speech by repairing in person to reconnoitre the spot where his nephew had been slain. By his orders, an embrasure was opened in the wall, immediately facing the bridge, through which a piece of artillery was brought to play on the whole structure. A few discharges shattered it in such a manner as to render it unserviceable; and on the following night it was set on fire, and consumed to ashes.

So greatly was the Pasha disconcerted by this event, that he debated in full council the propriety of persisting in his attacks on Fort Saint Michael, under an impression that he might have better success were he to assault the Bourg. The council recommended, that both points should be assailed at the same time; and it was accordingly decided, that, in conjunction with the Viceroy of Algiers, he should resume his operations against the peninsula of La Sangle, while Piali, the admiral of the fleet, at the head of his marines, stormed the Bourg. Candelissa was instructed, at the same time, to station himself at the mouth of the great port with eighty galleys, to intercept succour from abroad. Pursuant to this arrangement, the Turkish batteries again opened on the two towns with redoubled activity, and the contest waxed daily more bloody and desperate. The Christians, though almost invariably victorious, saw their numbers wasting away with a rapidity that prognosticated their speedy extermination. For four successive days they were engaged in incessant skirmishes on the walls of La Sangle; and at length, on the 2d of August, the Turkish horns sounded a scalade. Stimulated by an assurance that the towns should be given up to plunder, the Turks fought with extraordinary obstinacy; but at the end of six hours their ardour abated, and they retired from the breaches, leaving them choked with their dead. Five days afterwards, simultaneous attacks were made on Fort Saint Michael and the bastion of Castile. The assault on the latter post, however, was merely a feint to distract the attention of the garrison, and divide the knights. The janizaries, who led the van of the Turkish battle, advanced to Fort Saint Michael with warlike shouts. Though the ground over which they marched was strewed with their mutilated bodies, they gallantly fought their way to the top of the breach, and for four hours defied all the efforts of the knights to effect their dislodgement. But the imminency of the danger only strengthened that indomitable bravery which burned so steadily in every Christian breast. Not only did the knights, and the citizen-soldiers, whom they had banded, deport themselves as became men struggling for every thing that mankind prize, but even the women and children, actuated by conjugal and filial love, hovered on the skirts of the combat, and supplied their

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protectors with refreshments, or flung missiles and fireworks into the Ottoman ranks. The breach and castle were completely enveloped in a mantle of smoke and flame; and at those times when there was a slight intermission in the cannonade, the clash of armour, and the shouts of men grappling in mortal strife, was wafted over the city from the scene of death. The Pasha himself advanced to the very foot of the wall; and as his janizaries filed past him, cheered them in to the gap. With his scimitar he cut down two tremblers, who showed a disposition to retreat; and from that moment every Osmanli fought for victory or death. At the end of four hours, the Christians, reduced in number, and faint with fatigue, began to lose confidence in their arms, and to prepare for the worst; when suddenly, to their astonishment and joy, they heard a recall sounded along the Turkish line. This seasonable relief was occasioned by a gallant diversion on the part of the Commander Mesquita, governor of the Cité Notable, who, observing from his post the sulphurous cloud that enveloped Fort Saint Michael, hastily ordered a few squadrons of cavalry to mount, and, with a foot-soldier behind each trooper, make a dash at the nearest point of the Turkish position. The Chevaliers De Lugni and Vertura, who commanded this detachment, led it down to the fountain of La Marza, where the Turks had established an hospital, and with more consideration for the precarious situation of their brethren than the pleadings of humanity, massacred all the sick and wounded it contained. The fugitives who escaped their weapons, carried to the Turkish camp a report that succours from Europe had arrived, and that they had been set upon by the van of the Sicilian army; whereupon Mustapha hastily abandoned the assault at the very moment it promised to prove triumphant, and moved the flower of his army towards the fountain of La Marza, to check the advance of this new foe. When he ascertained that he had been betrayed into this injudicious movement by a handful of men detached from a place which he had hitherto considered below his notice, his indignation knew no bounds. He would have returned instantly to the breach, had not the harassed state of his troops, and the approach of night, conjoined with the entreaties of his principal officers, satisfied him of the absolute necessity of suspending operations at least till next morning.

Before the next sun rose, the Pasha's wrath had evaporated; and a fortnight elapsed ere he adventured a fresh assault. In the interim, his pioneers ran a number of mines into various parts of the fortifications. These, however, were in most cases skilfully countermined by the besieged, who, like the defenders of Rhodes, frequently encountered the enemy under ground, and either compelled him to

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evacuate the galleries, or by premature explosions, made them their common grave. In the course of these operations, the Camp-master Robles, who commanded at Fort Saint Michael, was killed by a musket-shot, while inspecting the ruins of the wall during the night.* On the 18th of August, the patience of the Turkish leaders became totally exhausted; and, at the head of the flower of their troops, they once more made a simultaneous attack on the castle of Saint Michael and bastion of Castile, with the resolution of continuing it day and night, by means of fresh troops, until the towns were taken. This attack was made at the hour of noon, when they expected to find the knights reposing indolently behind their intrenchments. A terrible cannonade had previously almost razed a part of the walls of Fort Saint Michael; but Mustapha Pasha, on whom the perilous duty of attacking it again devolved, though he found scarcely any thing in the shape of a regular barrier to obstruct his entrance, expended the vigour of his forces in vain against the impenetrable rampart which the besieged formed with their bodies. Piali's attack on the bastion of Castile was equally bloody and desperate. Having, as a preliminary step, sprung a mine, and thrown down a pannel of the wall, his troops, shouting their battle-cry, sprang boldly into the breach, and, for a short time, drove all before them. Brother William, a chaplain of the Order, perceiving several Turkish standards planted at the base of the parapet, and considering the town as lost, hurried to where La Valette was enjoying a transient repose, and, with uplifted hands, adjured him to retire without delay into Fort Saint Angelo, as the only place of safety. But the Grandmaster, instead of adopting this well-meant but unknightly advice, hastily caught up a light morion and pike, and, without waiting to brace on his cuirass, rushed to the shattered bastion. He was followed by a reinforcement of knights and citizens, who, hearing him protest to the Commander Mendoza, the captain of the post, that he would never quit it alive while the Turkish banners waved in triumph over it, charged desperately into the thickest of the enemy, and tore down the obnoxious flags. Thrown into disorder by this onset, the Turks recoiled, and Mendoza entreated the Grandmaster to retire to a place of safety; but the brave old man, rightly anticipating a speedy renewal of the assault, refused to comply; adding, as he did so, "Is it possible for me, at the age of seventy-one, to lay down my life more gloriously than in defence of our holy religion, and in the midst of my brethren and friends?" As he had foreseen, the assault was renewed after sunset; but the assailants, disheartened by their frequent repulses,

* Knolles.

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and unwilling to encounter the grenades and flaming hoops which the besieged were ready to hurl down on them, did nothing more than keep up an irregular tirallade from a distance, and strike their swords against their bucklers, in order to deceive their chief, by imitating the clangour of battle. These sounds, however, did not long impose on the Pasha; but he had the policy, as soon as he became aware of their nature, to suspend the attack till the following morning.

August the 19th, the assault was renewed with undiminished resolution. To facilitate the conquest of the ravelin of Fort Saint Michael, the Turks constructed a huge machine of a cylindrical shape, strongly hooped with iron, and charged with gunpowder, bullets, nails, and pieces of rusty iron. A match being introduced into it, it was fired, and flung among the Christians who crowded the ravelin. Happily several knights, aware of the destruction with which they were threatened, had the self-possession to lay hold of this infernal engine before it exploded, and to cast it back into the midst of the assailants, who were just entering the breach. It burst in the same moment that it fell, scattering death around it; and the Christians, taking advantage of the panic it occasioned, followed it up by a sally sword in hand, and once more drove the Turks back to their intrenchments.

The attack on the bastion of Castile was more successful. Having forced their way through a deadly fire, the Turks gained the parapet, and again their standards were planted in triumph within the fortifications. Warned by their shouts that they had achieved a partial advantage, the Grandmaster hastened to the point of danger; and, at the head of a body of pikemen, charged into the thickest of the battle. Death reigned on every side; and, as in former encounters, the pike and sword were often thrown aside, and the single combats which ensued decided with the knife and the dagger. A considerable number of knights fell, gallantly emulating each other in the strife. The commander of Bonneseigne had one of his eyes burned out, and his face frightfully scorched with fire, while fighting side by side with La Valette; and at length that veteran chief himself was dangerously wounded in the leg by the fragment of a grenade. Still he refused to quit the bastion; nor did he retire from it until the timely arrival of Cencio Gasconi, an experienced knight who had succeeded to the command at the Spur of Saint Michael, together with the Chevaliers Bergia Mendoza, Don John, and La Roche Pereira, with a numerous body of Maltese militia, decided the contest; and at nightfall forced the enemy to retire to their camp.

Another assault was made on the 20th; not that Mustapha ex-

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pected instantly to carry the place, but that he calculated on exterminating the knights by piecemeal, as it were, and so reducing it, as he had done Fort Saint Elmo, by the gradual annihilation of its defenders. To shield his soldiers from the musketry of the besieged, he invented morions or head-pieces, made of light wood and bullet-proof, which reached as low as their shoulders. Eight thousand infantry were furnished with these grotesque casques; and, with their heads encased in them, advanced to the breach of Saint Michael. But no sooner did they come into action, than they found their wooden helmets an incumbrance not to be borne; whereupon, casting them away, they moved on bare-headed to the assault. Cheder, sangiack or governor of Bosnia, led the storm. He was a gray-haired warrior of established renown, and had pledged himself to carry the post or perish. With the pride of one who had returned victor from many a red field, he came to the battle clothed in a superb vest, and decorated with all the gorgeous trappings incidental to his rank and station. As he advanced to the parapet, he ordered his standard-bearer to keep his ensign constantly displayed; but in a few minutes that officer, who instantly became a marked man, was killed by a musket-shot, and the banner dashed from his grasp. It was immediately relifted; and several Turks in succession were struck down in the same honourable capacity. Seeing his last subaltern slain, the sangiack himself raised the fallen pennon, holding it with one hand, while, with his scimitar in the other, he pierced into the thickest of the fight. His valiant bearing, his magnificent vestments, and, above all, the fatal standard that waved over him, rendered him so conspicuous, that twenty muskets were at once levelled at him from the breach, and a bullet, fired by the Chevalier Pessoa, one of the Grandmaster's pages, terminated his life. Still his standard found a supporter; and the officer who, for the last time, relifted it, so far encouraged his followers by a brave example, that a succession of single combats took place over the sangiack's body. The Turks at length succeeded in bearing his remains back to their lines, together with the pennon, about which he had been so careful, tattered and drenched with blood. In this struggle fell the commander La Cerda—the knight whose conduct was considered so reprehensible during the early part of the siege of Fort Saint Elmo. Unable to bear the stain that had fallen on his reputation, he had latterly sought every opportunity of effacing it by an honourable death; and, like a true knight, fell shouting his war-cry on the breach.

Three days elapsed before the Pasha found it advisable to renew the attacks. But on the 23d, Fort Saint Michael and the bastion of Castile, were again assaulted with the same fury that had charac-

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terized the former storms. A letter, containing merely the word "Thursday," had previously been shot into the city from the Turkish lines, and, benefiting by the hint it conveyed, La Valette stood prepared for a desperate struggle on the day named. So persuaded were the whole garrison that the crisis of their fate had arrived, that the wounded knights in hospital, like their brethren who had perished so bravely in the breach of Fort Saint Elmo, were, in accordance with their own entreaties, allowed to repair to the threatened posts. But, though the Pasha conducted this fresh attack with the skill of a great commander, and though his troops fought with their usual obstinacy, the deadly fire from the fortifications rendered both alike unavailing. At the bastion of Castile, however, the Admiral Piali, after sweeping the breach for some time with a furious cannonade, promptly raised a platform close to the wall, and of such an elevation as completely to command the parapet, which was speedily cleared of its defenders by the fire of a body of Turkish musketeers. This new work no sooner attracted the attention of the Grandmaster than he saw at once how fatally it might obstruct his operations; and when the Council assembled on the following night, to take into consideration the distressed state of the city, the apprehension it occasioned materially influenced the debate. The majority of the grand crosses, after pointing out that the fortifications were mined in every quarter, the walls ruined, and the outworks taken, declared the town untenable; and recommended, that those defences which yet remained should be blown up, the city abandoned to its fate, and the whole garrison drawn into Fort Saint Angelo. But La Valette sternly rejected this counsel. He argued, that neither could the Castle of Saint Angelo contain the vast number of people who would in that case be entitled to claim shelter within it, nor could the cistern with which it was provided furnish the necessary supply of water for such a multitude, even for a few days; and, satisfied by his representations that both La Sangle and the Bourg must be defended to the last extremity, the Council entreated him at least to retire in person into the citadel, and carry with him the relics and archives of the Order; but the brave old man spurned this proposal with greater indignation, than he had done the other. "Never," said he, "will I follow such advice. On the battered walls, which you propose me to abandon, we must triumph together, or perish!"

To show that this indifference to his personal safety was unaffected, and that his resolution was really immutable, he reduced the garrison of Saint Angelo to a few soldiers, and used every exertion to accelerate the formation of retirades and intrenchments, in rear of the ruined works. By the advice of the Commander De Claramont, an

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Arragonian knight of great capacity, an aperture was made in the wall, in the quietest manner possible, from whence, in the course of the following night, a body of Spanish knights silently sallied, and crept along the base of the fortification, till they reached the platform which occasioned so much annoyance. The Turkish guards, to whom Piali had confided it, were ignorant of their danger until the Christians made their onset, and, consequently, were so completely taken by surprise as to be incapable of resistance. At the first shout of their assailants, they fled towards their lines; and Claramont, who headed the sortie, instead of destroying the platform, proceeded to refortify it in such a manner as to turn it into an important defensive position.

No fresh assault was made till the 1st of September, when the anizaries, stimulated by the hope of plunder, fought their way through an unintermitting shower of deadly missiles to the summit of the breach of Saint Michael, and established themselves for a momemt in several important posts. A wooden barricade alone separated them from the besieged, and their muskets were levelled across each other through the interstices. Still the fortitude of the knights opposed an insuperable barrier to the courage of their adversaries; and again, after a dreadful carnage, did the Turks retire despairingly from the conflict.

Meanwhile the Pasha, persuaded that the place could be reduced by famine alone, and startled at the prospect of a scarcity of provisions in his own camp, made a diversion in the direction of the *Cité Notable*, under an impression that he would shortly be compelled to raise the siege, and that the conquest of that position would palliate the failure of the grand enterprise, in the estimation of his sovereign. This expedition, which consisted of four thousand chosen men, was led by himself in person. It left the camp on the last day of August, and on arriving before the Cité, which was but indifferently fortified, prepared to carry it by scalade. Mesquita the governor, who had timely notice of the enemy's approach, pressed even women and children into his ranks, and made such a gallant display of muskets, pikes and standards, along the curtain, that the Turkish engineers, who were sent forward to ascertain the most pregnable points, returned to their leader with a report, that the town was defended by a garrison so numerous as to defy any attempt to enter it by a coup-de-main. Intimidated by this statement, the Pasha, after cannonading the place for a short time, retreated in great despondency to his former quarters. Trembling lest his head should be struck off on his return to Constantinople, as an atonement for his want of success, he convened his council, and entreated any

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man who had a new project or stratagem to suggest, to make it known to him. A proposition was made to employ a wooden tower, such as had been often successfully used in sieges in former times; and one being constructed, it was pushed on rollers close to the breach of Fort Saint Michael. This structure was divided into several stories. The highest story was filled with musketeers, and was so ingeniously contrived, that no sooner had its occupants discharged a volley, than, by means of machinery, it sank down below the level of the parapet, and allowed them to reload with safety. By means of this invention, the Turks spread slaughter along the whole wall; but at length, at the suggestion of a Maltese carpenter named Andrew Cassar, an aperture, of sufficient size to serve as an embrasure for a piece of artillery, was made in the fortifications, directly opposite to where the tower was planted. A culverin charged with chain-shot was then brought to bear on the machinery, which raised and lowered the summit of the tower; and a single discharge shattered it to pieces, and dashed the marksmen that were stationed upon it to the earth. This success infused a new spirit into the Christians. Though their walls were breached in various places, and every bulwark honeycombed with mines, they no longer stood on the defensive, but began to make sallies with the confidence of men certain that their resistance was to have a glorious termination.

At this period, when the battle was almost won—when the Order, by its own indomitable valour, had all but beaten the Osmanli back in disgrace to his ships—the long listened for cry of rescue came cheerily over the waters from the Sicilian shore. A powerful armament had for some time been assembled at Syracuse, ready to embark for the relief of Malta; but the vacillating policy of Philip of Spain, conjoined with the natural indecision of his Viceroy, had deferred its departure from day to day, till the Grandmaster, whose remonstrances, through the medium of his envoy, had been urgent and incessant, began to despair of it ever putting to sea. Among the forces assembled were two hundred Maltese knights, whom the jeopardy of their convent had called from the remotest parts of Christendom to its relief. These men, indignant at the Viceroy's irresolution, wearied him with entreaties to embark; and there was scarcely a soldier in his army who did not ardently desire to hasten to the aid of the handful of brave men, whose efforts to defend themselves had become the theme of universal sympathy and admiration. Overcome at length by popular clamour, the Viceroy repaired to Syracuse; and, after a general muster of his forces, which amounted to nearly eight thousand men, mostly veteran troops, unfurled sail amid salvos of artillery, and the shouts of his whole army.

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The fleet, after being driven far and wide of its course by a tempestuous easterly gale, rendezvoused at the small island of Linosa, where the Viceroy found letters from La Valette, instructing him to disembark in the commodious and retired creek of Melecha; but now that he was so near the scene of strife, his resolution again failed him; and, instead of effecting a landing at the point recommended, he sailed leisurely along the Maltese coast, and allowed his fleet to be descried by two Turkish cruisers stationed off Port Siroc. In the course of the following night, the weather again became so tempestuous as to occasion a second dispersion of the fleet; on which he put his helm about and stood back for Sicily, where he relanded his troops at Passal. This pusillanimous proceeding filled the whole army with indignation. Instigated by the knights attached to the expedition, who loudly expressed their contempt and dissatisfaction, the soldiers became mutinous; and, while the general officers were closeted with the Viceroy in council, crowded round the house in which it was held, and tumultuously demanded to be re-embarked. The Viceroy, reading in the countenances of his counsellors that they sympathized with the ardour of the malecontents, yielded to the clamour he had not the nerve to contemn. On the 6th of September, the fleet again unmoored for its original destination, and the same night anchored in the channel of Goza, under the islets of Cumin and Cuminot. Next morning it ran into port Melecha, where the whole army and military stores were promptly landed. The Viceroy, in accordance with his instructions from Spain, remained no longer with the expedition than to see the disembarkation effected. Immediately afterwards, on pretence that his personal presence was necessary at Messina to hasten the departure of a strong reinforcement, he sailed for that port, leaving a leader of distinction named Ascanio della Corna in the chief command.

Though the discovery of the Sicilian fleet by the cruisers stationed off Port Siroc, had given the Turks timely warning of the descent that was impending, they lulled themselves into the belief, that nothing more would be tried than to force the entrance of the Grand Port, and there decide the war by a great naval engagement. Under this impression, they blocked the entrance with stakes and booms, and held themselves in readiness to weigh their last anchor to defend it. Their consternation, consequently, was extreme, when their scouts announced that a Christian army had actually landed, and was in full march, with the evident intent of attacking the Ottoman camp. Rumour magnified the Sicilian troops into an overwhelming force; and, without waiting to ascertain their real strength, the Turkish general instantly drew his garrison out of Fort Saint Elmo,

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abandoned all his heavy ordnance, and hurried on board his fleet with disorderly precipitation. Scarcely, however, had he accomplished this sudden movement, when he obtained authentic information as to the number of new enemies whom he had to contend with; and filled with shame, that six thousand Christians should have put him to rout without firing a musket, he summoned a council of war, and, with the concurrence of a small majority of its members, issued orders for the whole army to be relanded. But in the few hours that he had been afloat, the labour of months had been rendered futile. The Maltese had already levelled all his lines and intrenchments, and the standard of Saint John once more waved victorious on the cavalier of Fort Saint Elmo. The Turkish soldiers, sick of the war, were dragged almost by violence from their ships to the shore. About seven thousand were relanded in the creek of Saint Paul, fifteen hundred of whom, commanded by the Viceroy of Algiers, were left on the beach to secure a safe re-embarkation, while the main body under Mustapha himself advanced into the interior of the island in search of the Sicilian succours. He found them intrenched on a hill, flanked by narrow defiles, and consequently difficult of access. Della Corna, their generalissimo, was disposed to remain in this exceedingly defensible position; but Alvarez de Sande, commandant of the Neapolitan contingent, the same officer whose name is honourably mentioned in the expedition to the island of Galves, eager to remove an impression unfavourable to his renown which his complaisant concurrence in the tardy proceedings of the Viceroy had engendered, gave his advice, that the whole army should advance down the hill to meet the enemy. This counsel was supported by a declaration on the part of the two hundred Maltese knights who had arrived from Sicily with the fleet, each of whom had brought with him two or three armed friends and attendants, forming altogether one of the most efficient battalions of the army, that unless some such movement were made, they would try to cut their way singly through the Turkish legions, and either join their friends in the city or perish. De Sande's proposition was consequently adopted; and in the teeth of a protestation from Della Corna, the whole army moved down the hill in order of battle, still headed, however, by their general, who, though prudent in council, was not a man to remain in the rear when the vanguard was entering the battle. The conflict that ensued was short and decisive. At the first onset of the Maltese battalion, the Turkish line began to waver; and a furious charge in flank by Vincent Vitelli, a valiant Italian captain, at the head of a band of volunteers, completed their discomfiture. Deserted by his soldiers, the Pasha reluctantly turned

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his bridle away from the field. Such was his perplexity and despair, that, in his flight, he twice dropped off his horse, and would have fallen into the hands of the Christians, had not several of his officers, at great personal risk, promptly reseated him in his saddle. In the heat of pursuit, many of the knights, finding their mail an intolerable incumbrance under a burning sun, unbraced their cuirasses, and, thus unharnessed, chased the fugitives pell-mell to the beach, transfixing with their short spears, as they rushed onward, every panting wretch who dropped down exhausted in their path. But no sooner did the fleetest of them touch the strand, than Hassan of Algiers, who, with his troops, lay in ambush among the rocks, dashed headlong into the battle, and for a time nicely balanced the chances of victory. Several knights were slain, and others taken prisoners; and had not De Sande, at the head of a considerable force, arrived in good time at the scene of action, and made a decisive charge, the flower of the Maltese battalion would have been sacrificed. By this timely succour, the captive knights were rescued, and the Turks compelled to re-embark. Such was the ardour of the Christians, that they pursued them far into the sea—contemning, in their chivalrous excitement, alike the dashing of the waves and the terrible fire of musketry and round shot which the Pasha Piali opened on them from his shallops and galleys. This was the last effort of the Turkish leader to retrieve a long series of reverses. In the same hour that the remnant of his once formidable army re-embarked, he ordered the anchor to be weighed for Constantinople; and a day or two afterwards, the Viceroy of Sicily beheld, from the castle of Syracuse, the whole of the Ottoman fleet standing away for the Eastern sea.

Thus ended this memorable siege, in which twenty-five thousand Turkish soldiers perished. On the other side, the loss was also great, amounting, including two hundred and sixty knights, to between seven and eight thousand soldiers and citizens;—in fact, so prodigiously was the garrison reduced, that, at the time the Turks abandoned their lines, it numbered barely six hundred effective men. A nobler resistance was never made by a besieged fortress; and it had this advantage over the scarcely less glorious defence of Rhodes, that it was triumphant. "If a man do well consider," says Knolles, "the difficulties and dangers the besieged passed through in this five months' siege, the manifold labours and perils they endured in so many and so terrible assaults, the small relief to them sent in so great distress, with the desperate obstinacy of so puissant an enemy, he shall hardly find any place these many years more mightily impugned, or with greater valour and resolution defended." It were

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futile to deny, that the energies of the besiegers were cramped by the paltry jealousies and conflicting counsels of the Ottoman leaders; but still, even with this admission, the indomitable fortitude of the besieged, under circumstances the most appalling and disastrous, confers on their struggle a renown unsurpassed either in ancient or in modern times. Had the puissant Solyman commanded his army in person, as he did at the siege of Rhodes, Malta would, in all probability, have been taken; but no man who forms a correct estimate of the chivalrous zeal that animated the champions of the Cross, will question that he would have found it only a mighty grave.

The 8th of September, the anniversary of the raising of the siege, continued to be celebrated as a high festival, as long as the knights retained the jurisdiction of the island. On that day, the church of Saint John, in which a chapel was assigned to each language, and the pavement of which was entirely composed of sepulchral flags of the finest marble, porphyry, lapis lazuli, and other valuable stones, representing, in a most expensive kind of Mosaic, the arms and insignia of departed Grandmasters and Commanders,* was superbly decorated; and a knight, habited in a suit of armour such as was worn during the crusades, and attended on one side by a page bearing a superb sword and poniard, presented to La Valette by Philip of Spain, in token of his esteem, and on the other by the Grand Marshal, carried the standard of the Order to the holy fane, where, amid bursts of martial music, and salvos of artillery, its victorious folds were spread in grateful humiliation over the high altar.

CHAPTER VII.

Increased renown of the Order—Death of Solyman—Foundation of Valetta—Death of La Valette—Battle of Lepanto—Grandmastership of La Cassiere—Revolt in the Convent—Degeneracy of the Order—Predatory enterprises—Arrogance of the ecclesiastical functionaries—More domestic troubles—Maritime exploits—Expedition to Candia—The Island of Saint Christopher purchased by the Order—Exploits of Hocquincourt—Termination of the war in Candia.

The Sicilian auxiliaries, and the knights who accompanied them, were welcomed as deliverers by the Grandmaster and his brave associates. They found the veteran encompassed by shattered walls and ruined bulwarks, and with a mere remnant of scar-covered men around him; but the pride of victory animated every ghastly coun-

* Brydone—Tour through Sicily and Malta.

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tenance, and lit up every wearied and long-sleepless eye. In the midst of their exultation, they forgot not the gallant spirits whose blood had dewed their impregnable ramparts; and, now that the thunder of the battle had rolled away, and given them time for lamentation, fraternal tears watered their graves. To perpetuate the memory of a deliverance so signal and triumphant, the Bourg received the name of the Victorious City, (*Citta Vittoriosa*), which it bears to this day.

The Princes of Christendom had looked on almost with arms folded, while the knights, cooped up in a single stronghold, were struggling for existence with an overwhelming host; but no sooner did the rumour of their redemption spread far and wide, than Europe celebrated it by solemn thanksgivings and festal fires. The name of La Valette was hailed as illustrious wherever the Church of Rome had a settlement, or the Order of Saint John a manor. The Pope, boundless in his acknowledgments of the services the Grandmaster had rendered to Christianity, formally proffered him a cardinal's hat; but, gifted with more self-denial than D'Aubusson, the defender of Rhodes, who accepted a like dignity, La Valette rejected it as incompatible with his official duties. Philip the Second of Spain, sent him, in token of admiration, a magnificent sword and poniard, the hilts of which were of gold, enriched with diamonds, and at the same time recognised him as one of the greatest captains of the age; while the Viceroy of Sicily, on the contrary, was visited with the Royal displeasure, for no other reason, it would appear, than that he had adhered too strictly to his instructions. He was removed from his government, and ended his days in obscurity, universally execrated and contemned.

The flattering assurances conveyed to the Grandmaster by these complimentary embassies, were qualified, however, by rumours from the East, of a new descent on the island being in contemplation at Constantinople. Solyman, though exceedingly wroth with his generals at the manner in which they had been repulsed, had still sufficient policy to spare their heads, in order to conceal from his people the reverse his arms had sustained; nay, he even stooped to propagate a statement, that the island had been reduced, and the forts destroyed; but he pledged himself privately to his council, that next spring he would repair to Malta in person, and at once rase its fortifications, and depopulate it. La Valette knew too well, that if this threatened expedition took place, the extinction of the Order would be the result; for, with a half empty convent, a beggared treasury, a ruined and defenceless town, and a ravaged island, where could he look for means to repel a fresh inroad? In this critical

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situation, those old commanders whom he admitted to his confidence, recommended the entire abandonment of the island, as a place totally incapable of further resistance; and called upon him to retire, at the head of his knights, to Sicily, or some other Christian country. But La Valette, remembering the cruel persecutions which had overtaken the Templars when they abandoned the shores of Palestine for their European preceptories, and elated, it may have been, by the proud association of the *Citta Vittoriosa* with his own fame, steadfastly refused to entertain such counsel. In preference, he had recourse to an expedient which some historians scruple to justify, but on grounds not perfectly evident, when the extreme peril in which he was placed is taken into consideration. At his instigation, the arsenal at Constantinople was set on fire by emissaries bribed for the purpose; and a vast number of the galleys destined against Malta were destroyed by the conflagration. This disaster compelled Solyman to postpone the expedition; and, before he could equip another fleet, war called him to his Hungarian frontier, in which campaign he died (1566). He was in his seventy-second year at the time of his death, and had been seated forty-six years on the Ottoman throne, not one of which, say his biographers, passed over his head without being rendered memorable by some glorious action —the proudest panegyric ever passed on any sovereign of his line.

The death of Solyman left the Grandmaster leisure and tranquillity to raise his capital from its ruins, and also to carry into effect a project which he had long cherished, well worthy of his enlarged and princely mind. This was the extension of Fort Saint Elmo, the foundation of a new city on the peninsula of Mount Sceberras, and the removal of the convent to that commanding position. To accomplish such magnificent works, however, large funds were requisite, and the treasury was drained almost to the last ducat. But the reputation of the Order had never stood higher in the estimation of the Christian world; and to that he made a prompt and well-timed appeal. The Pope pledged himself to contribute fifteen thousand crowns; the King of France one hundred and forty thousand livres; the King of Spain ninety thousand livres; and the King of Portugal thirty thousand crusadoes. In addition, the commanders of the Order rivalled each other in the extent of their voluntary contributions, and, in many cases, greatly circumscribed their private fortunes. Thus encouraged, La Valette invited engineers and artificers from Italy, and the foundations of the New City were traced with magnificent ceremonials, after a plan drawn by himself, but long ascribed to the captain Francisco Laparelli. The first stone was laid on the point of Saint John's bulwark, and the Grandmaster

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spread the mortar on it with his own hand. Under it were deposited a great number of gold and silver medals, on which was represented the new city, with the legend, "MELITA RENASCENS;" and on the exergue, the day and year of the foundation. The stone bore a Latin inscription, to the effect that the Grandmaster La Valette, taking into consideration the perilous siege which had recently terminated, had determined to build a town on Mount Sceberras, the better to check any future descents of the barbarians; and had founded it with profound solemnity on the 28th of March, 1566. His arms (a Lion, Or, in a field gules) were carved on the first stone, and the new city was named by acclamation the City of La Valette; to which, in accordance with a custom prevalent in Sicily, the epithet "*Umilissima*" was appended, as indicative of the humility of the Order.

This pageant over, the work proceeded with great rapidity, knight and burgher labouring with equal enthusiasm to facilitate its advancement. The Commander De la Fontaine, a knight famed for his skill in fortification, had the chief superintendence of the engineer department; and, for nearly two years, he and the Grandmaster spent almost the whole of their time amid the masons and artificers on Mount Sceberras. A scarcity of money occurring, in consequence of some commanders being dilatory in forwarding their responsions, La Valette had recourse to the critical expedient of coining brass moneys of various sizes, and issuing them at a nominal value. These coins bore on one side two hands joined, and on the other the arms of La Valette, quartered with those of the Order, and encircled by the legend, "*Non æs, sed Fides.*" The punctuality with which this depreciated coin was withdrawn from circulation, whenever remittances arrived from Europe, prevented the public confidence from being diminished, and enabled the Grandmaster to reissue it again from time to time as he saw occasion, without at all weakening his government.

The last days of La Valette, like those of L'Isle Adam, the hero of Rhodes, were disturbed by intestine divisions among his knights, and unpleasant disputes with the Pope and other potentates, who evinced a startling eagerness to encroach on the possessions and privileges of the Order. Inflated by the brilliant defence which the brotherhood had made, several young Spanish knights gave themselves up to a freer course of life than was compatible with their vows, and, becoming roisterers, wits, and song-makers, made even the bravest and most venerable of their brethren, and the noblest ladies in Malta, the objects of their irony and slander. A prosecution being instituted against these libellers, they entered the council-

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hall in a tumultuous manner, dashed the pen from the vice-chancellor's hand as he was recording their sentence, and then, hurrying to the sea-side, seized a scampavia, and escaped to Sicily. For this rebellious proceeding, they were formally deprived of the habit of the Order, and emissaries were despatched to apprehend them; but, aware of the stern character of the Grandmaster, they continued their flight to their own country, and effectually eluded pursuit. About the same time, a Florentine named Bonaccursi, who had been long settled in Malta, and had married a lady of great beauty, a descendant of one of those noble Rhodian families who had followed the fortunes of the Order, in a transport of jealousy poniarded his wife, and escaped to Italy, greatly to the Grandmaster's vexation, who spared no effort to bring him to justice.

The differences with the Pope, Pius the Fifth, originated from that prelate usurping the Grandmaster's patronage so far, notwithstanding the pompous professions of admiration and respect which he had so recently bestowed on the Grandmaster, as to confer the dignity of Grand Prior of Rome on Cardinal Alexandrino, his own nephew, whom he relieved at the same time from the responsions which had been paid by his predecessors. The ambassador of the Order at the Court of Rome, represented the injustice of this proceeding in such forcible language, that the Pontiff, though confessing himself to blame, chose to take offence at what he considered the disrespectful conduct of the envoy, and dismissed him in disgrace.

All these circumstances conjoined, preyed deeply on the mind of the Grandmaster; and, to relieve the melancholy thoughts that oppressed him, he made an excursion with his falcons, for the purpose of enjoying his favourite amusement of hawking, to a part of the island bordering on the creek of Saint Paul. It being the middle of July, the weather proved excessively hot; and, while engaged in the noble sport in which he delighted, he was struck by a *coup-de-soleil*, and, after an illness of three weeks, which he bore with the resignation of a martyr, terminated his glorious life (21st August, 1568.)

The funeral obsequies of this illustrious knight were celebrated with great magnificence. His remains were first deposited in the chapel of Saint Mary de Philerme in the Bourg, but were afterwards, in accordance with his dying wish, removed to the church of Saint Mary of Victory, which he had built in the new city. The Admiral's galley, stripped of its masts and cannon, carried the hero's ashes across the port to their final resting-place. The two galleys which towed the funeral barge were hung with black cloth, and several Turkish standards trailed behind them in the waves. After

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these came two other galleys, which had been the special property of the departed chief, covered with sepulchral ornaments, and crowded with the principal dignitaries of the Order. In this solemn array the funeral procession quitted the harbour, and, slowly coasting Mount Sceberras, entered Port Musceit, where the coffin was relanded. The household of the deceased, clothed in deep mourning, and carrying each a torch, then headed the train; and the corpse was borne by a band of priests, chanting the service of the church, to the sepulchre appointed to receive it, while the bloody and tattered banners that had been torn from the Infidels were suspended over the grave.

Peter de Monte, Grand Prior of Capua, whose name is so often mentioned with honour in the defence of La Sangle, succeeded to the Grandmastership in the stead of the magnanimous La Valette. On his deathbed, the latter had recommended Antonio de Toledo, Grand Prior of Castile, as the knight most capable of supporting the dignity of the Order; but a cabal, in which De Monte, however, had small personal concern, secured the vote in his favour, thereby elevating a scarcely less worthy candidate. It was not till three years after the death of La Valette (1571,) that the new city was finished, and made the seat of government. In the preceding year, several Maltese cruisers having captured a number of Turkish vessels off the mouths of the Nile, Ucchiali, a famous corsair, by way of reprisal, attacked the squadron of the Order at an advantage, with a superior force. Three Maltese galleys were taken, and the Admiral's galley was driven ashore off the town of Monchiaro in Sicily—an event which was followed by the death of the Chevalier Saint Clement, its commander.

Before this disaster could be repaired, the banner of Saint John was again unfurled in war against the Ottoman, as a party to a powerful Christian league. The Emperor Selim the Second having invaded Cyprus, which, in common with many of the Greek islands, and a great part of the Morea and Dalmatia, still acknowledged the dominion of the Venetian republic, took the cities of Nicosia and Famagusta (1569), and prosecuted the war with so much vigour, that the proud princes of the Adriatic, trembling for their supremacy in the Levant, were compelled to implore assistance from the Pope, the King of Spain, and several of the minor Italian potentates. After a great deal of diplomatic trifling, a common circumstance in these times, when statesmen held hypocrisy to be a cardinal virtue, a confederation was agreed to; and in the summer of 1571, a mighty Christian armament rendezvoused at Messina, and sailed for the Moreote coast. This expedition consisted of two hundred and ten

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galleys, twenty-eight large transport ships, and six "galeasses" armed with heavy guns, and was commanded in chief by Don John of Austria, natural brother to Philip the Second of Spain; "a man," says Knolles, "then about four-and-twenty years old, in whom wanted no honourable parts, his mother's blemish only excepted." The Pope's galleys were commanded by Mark Anthony Colonna, the Venetian by John Venieri, and the Maltese, which were only three in number, by the knight Pietro Justiniani. The flower of the young chivalry of Spain and Italy served under the flags of their respective countries as volunteers; and the land troops alone amounted to twenty thousand men, many of whom had grown gray in camps and battles. The Ottoman fleet, against which this vast armament was despatched, was commanded by Ali Pasha, and consisted of two hundred galleys, and seventy frigates and brigantines. The Christians encountered it in the Gulf of Corinth or Lepanto, where it had anchored, laden with the spoils of the whole Dalmatian coast, having recently ravaged the shores of the Adriatic to within cannon-shot of the very batteries of Venice. Prudence dictated to the Turkish commander to keep within the Gulf; but, inflated by his late achievements, and encouraged by rash counsel, he no sooner learnt that the Christian fleet was in the offing, than he ordered his squadron to unmoor, and stand into the open sea. Flushed with the hope of victory, the Turkish galleys were dashing gallantly onward before a favourable breeze, through the channel of Lepanto, when they descried, off Cape Skropha, and outside the islets called the Kursolares (the ancient Echinades), the Christian armament, formed in line-of-battle. It was divided into four squadrons; commanded, on the right, by John Andrew Doria; on the left, by the Venetian Captain Augustine Barbarigo; and in the centre, by Don John, with Colonna and Venieri for his lieutenants. The Maltese galleys were stationed on the extreme left of the line. Sixty ships, under the Marquis of Santa Cruz, were formed into a reserve; and a squadron of eight galleys, under John de Cordova, with the six Venetian galeasses, which, armed with ponderous ordnance, and crowded with chosen soldiers, looked like floating castles, led the van of battle. The Turks formed in nearly similar order, save that they had no reserve, and that their line was wider and crescent-shaped. Ali the Capitan, with Pertan a celebrated corsair as his lieutenant, commanded the centre, which was opposed to Don John, while Ucchiali and Siroc, two distinguished officers, were opposed to Doria and Barbarigo.

It was about sunrise (7th October, 1571) when a signal-gun from the Grand Admiral's galley told the Christians to prepare for battle. Instantly the banner of the confederation, which had the image of

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Christ crucified embroidered upon it, and had been presented by the Pope, was unfurled, and, after a brief prostration and prayer on beholding it, each man grasped his arms ready for the fight. Don John, clothed in glittering armour, visited the several squadrons in person, spreading confidence every where by his cheerful and martial voice; and shouts of "Victory! Victory!" followed him over the waves. Favoured by the wind, and burning with an ardour nothing inferior to that which animated their adversaries, the Turks held bravely on their course; but just as they were on the point of joining battle, the breeze flagged, and chopped round in such a manner that the first broadside from the galeasses, which were anchored like floating bulwarks a mile ahead of the Christian fleet, enveloped them in the smoke of the guns. Though staggered by the discharge, which sunk several of their galleys, the Turks continued to rush into the battle, and, amid the clangour of cymbals, drums, and other martial instruments, blended with wild shouts, opened their fire on the Christian line. A furious conflict instantly commenced. The Capitan Pasha, singling out the Christian Admiral's galley, bore down on it with such violence, that the beaks of both vessels were demolished by the shock. Both were manned with the choicest soldiers and mariners in their respective fleets, and thrice they boarded and repulsed each other with prodigious slaughter. Venieri, seeing the High Admiral hard pressed, was preparing to give him support by pooping the Turkish galley, when he was intercepted by Pertan Pasha, and compelled to look to his own safety. Though seventy years of age, the noble Venetian deported himself with all the courage of a youthful warrior; and, inspired with a generous emulation at the sight of his white hairs streaming in the van of the battle, his men displayed a resolution worthy of their commander. Still the numerical superiority of the Turks enabled them to fight their way over the prow of the galley; and, almost swept of her defenders, she was on the point of being captured, when the Venetian captains, Malipetra and Loredano, hastened with their vessels to her relief. This timely succour again turned the tide of battle; and, though both Malipetra and Loredano were speedily slain, their fall only rendered the valour of their followers more irresistible. Two Turkish galleys at length struck their flags; and Pertan, seeing himself in danger of being captured, leapt into a boat, and, passing through the Christian fleet unmolested, abandoned the combat, and escaped.

Meanwhile, Siroc Bey had led the right wing of the Turkish battle against the left of the Christian line—hemmed in on the one side by a dangerous bank, formed by the discharge of the Aspropotamos (the ancient Achelous), and on the other by the Venetian

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galeasses, which shattered many of his vessels with their terrible fire. To create a diversion he despatched a small squadron under a Genoese renegade, with orders to stand close in shore, and endeavour to outflank and fall upon the rear of the Christian fleet. This manœuvre, however, came to the knowledge of the Venetian captain, Barbarigo, in time to enable him to receive the onset, both fore and aft, with equal resolution and sagacity. Amid a murderous shower of round and small shot, darts and arrows, the contending galleys grappled each other, and every man was brought foot to foot with his adversary. Two Christian galleys, the one commanded by Barbarigo in person, the other by Mark Ciconia, were beset, the one by six, the other by five, Turkish vessels; and while gallantly contending against this overwhelming force, an arrow entered the left eye of Barbarigo, and, piercing his brain, laid him mortally wounded on the deck. Ciconia was also severely wounded, and frightfully scorched with Greek fire about the face and breast; but he managed to defend himself, till the arrival of two powerful Venetian galleys changed the aspect of the fight, and enabled him not only to repulse the enemy with great slaughter, but to capture several of their vessels, together with a superb ensign, which had been the pride of the Ottoman fleet. The fall of Siroc Bey himself, who had grappled with the galley commanded by John Contarini, and was struck down lifeless in the thickest of the battle, completed the discomfiture of his squadron. From that moment, despair pervaded it, and every man tried only how he could best reach the neighbouring coast; but so closely did the Christians pursue them, that scarcely one escaped.

In the centre, however, the battle still raged with unabated fury. The galleys commanded by Don John and the Capitan Pasha had been engaged nearly three hours, and, as yet, neither could boast of victory. But no sooner did the Christian Admiral hear the shout of triumph raised by the Venetians on the left, than, afraid that the conqueror's meed was to be torn from him by one of his own lieutenants, he liberated four hundred chosen soldiers, whom he had hitherto kept as a reserve under hatches, who, with loud cries, and full of ardour, sprang cheerfully on the enemy's deck. This fresh onset decided the conflict, and the galley surrendered; but not till its commander, his head shattered by a musket-shot, was stretched mortally wounded among the slain. He was carried, bathed in his own blood, but still breathing, to the presence of Don John, who commanded his armour to be unbraced, and his head to be struck off and displayed on the point of a spear, to intimidate the combatants in such of the Turkish galleys as yet maintained the battle. His

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two sons, nephews of the Emperor, were both captured alive in another galley.

But though the left and centre of the Christian line had achieved a complete triumph, the right had as yet barely joined battle. Doria, who was opposed to the corsair Ucchiali in that quarter, with a shyness unworthy of his name, and which has given rise to a diversity of opinions regarding his motives, instead of rushing at once to close combat, spent the time in futile manœuvres, as if he aspired more to ensnare his enemy than to conquer him in fair fight. Some of his traducers have even gone so far as to charge him with an intention of abandoning the Christian fleet, in case he saw the day likely to end disastrously; but the most rational inference is, considering his reputed sagacity and bravery, that his purpose was to countervail, by stratagem, what he wanted in strength. In these circumstances, Ucchiali, after following him out to sea, extended his line with a view to encompass the Spanish squadron; by which manœuvre, he captured twelve Venetian galleys, which had imprudently withdrawn from their appointed station. Many knights of Saint Stephen (the Florentine Order of knighthood, instituted, in 1561, by Cosmo de Medicis, in imitation of that of Malta) lost their lives on board of these galleys; and one was blown up by its commander, rather than surrender. Doria, seeing a part of his squadron thus annihilated before his eyes, could no longer remain at a distance, but at length stood fairly into the fight. At the same time, the left wing and centre having mastered all the vessels opposed to them, despatched a number of galleys to share in this new combat; and, among others, Justiniani, with the Maltese squadron, was detached from the left, where he had assisted to defeat Siroc. The Maltese galleys were the first that reached the scene of combat; and Justiniani saw himself suddenly beset by six Turkish galleys, who pressed him so desperately, that fifty of his best knights were slain, and one of his ensigns was torn from the mast. With three arrows sticking in his body, he, however, maintained his vessel till such time as the other two galleys were able to shake off the enemies by whom they were surrounded, and hasten to his rescue. At one period, during this sanguinary conflict, his vessel was all but captured—the Bailiff de Spar, commander of the land forces of the Order, lay slain on her deck, and the Infidels were actually towing her away in triumph, when the other galleys arrived to her relief. It was not till Ucchiali was informed of the death of Caragiali, his lieutenant, and beheld the bravest of his men lifeless around him, that he abandoned the combat. Fifteen Turkish captains gallantly covered his retreat; and, though forced to fly at last, he made his

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escape with forty galleys, and carried away with him the Maltese standard, which he afterwards laid as a testimony of his valour at the Emperor's feet.*

In this great naval engagement, which completely decided the supremacy of the Christian flag in the Grecian waters, the Turks lost their general-in-chief, and, according to some historians, five thousand officers, and thirty thousand men. One hundred and forty galleys were captured, independent of those destroyed, and twenty thousand Christians were liberated from slavery. The Capitan Pasha's galley, which was among those taken, was a vessel of surpassing beauty. The deck, says Knolles, was of walnut-wood, dark as ebony, "chequered and wrought marveilous fair, with divers lively colours, and variety of histories;" and her cabin glittered with ornaments of gold, rich hangings, and precious gems. In the Pasha's casket were found six thousand ducats, which were conferred, together with a yearly pension, and the honour of knighthood, on the Macedonian Greek who had slain him. The loss of the Christians was computed at fourteen captains of galleys, and seven thousand six hundred men. No less than thirteen noble Venetians, of the class of Senators, perished. One of these, the valiant Barbarigo, who was mortally wounded in command of the left wing, survived the battle, and, like another Epaminondas, thanked heaven with his dying breath, that he had lived long enough to know that victory had smiled on the Christian arms.†

To return to Malta. The Grandmaster De Monte, who was upwards of seventy years of age, died in the following year (1572), and was succeeded by John L'Evesque de la Cassiere, of the language of Auvergne—the same knight who deported himself so gallantly as standard-bearer in the attack on Zoara in 1552. Though a brave and sagacious commander, a natural violence and obstinacy of temper, which frequently betrayed him into discourteous language, in some measure disqualified him for so responsible an office; and he soon found himself involved in painful and troublesome disputes, not only within, but without the convent. He had enjoyed the dignity only two years, when a dispute having arisen between him and the Bishop of Malta as to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, Pope Gregory the Thirteenth, to whom he appealed, despatched an accre-

* Gratiani, Hist. de Cypre.

† Cervantes, the author of Don Quixote, served on board one of the Papal galleys in this expedition. As he himself says, (in the preface to the second part of Don Quixote), he considered the loss of his left hand (which was struck off in the course of the action by a blow of a scimitar), as "a trifling price to pay for the honour of partaking in the first great action, in which the naval supremacy of the Ottoman was successfully disputed by Christian arms."

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dited member of the Holy Inquisition, that most sanguinary and atrocious of all judicial institutions, to decide between them. This official fixed his head-quarters permanently at Valetta, where, under pretence of protecting the interests of the Holy See, and in direct violation of the arrangements on which such mediation was originally accepted, he and his successors secured a degree of ascendency which frequently occasioned serious divisions, and even sometimes threatened to subvert the government of the Order. This ascendency was achieved by the disposal of what were called brevets, or patents of independence, to the native Maltese, by which the holder and his family were taken under the immediate protection of the Holy See, as "patentees of the Inquisition," and virtually absolved from their allegiance to the Grandmaster. The Bishop, moreover, assumed a similar independency of jurisdiction, by right of which the bestowal of a simple tonsure freed the wearer from subjection to the tribunals of the Order; and Gargalla, who then held the See, having, along with Cressin, the prior of the church, another restless and turbulent man, been denied the privilege of paying inquisitorial visits to the Hospital in the Cité Notable, excommunicated its directors. This occasioned tumults among the people, who, as usual in such disputes, sided with the priests; and forcible measures were necessarily adopted, to preserve tranquillity. The schism even extended to the convent itself; and three of the inquisitorial functionaries having been apprehended on a charge of traitorous designs, they not only confessed that they had conspired to poison the Grandmaster, but inculpated many Spanish and Italian knights as their accomplices. This charge, which seems to have been altogether false, greatly excited the indignation of the accused; and, forgetting the respect due to La Cassiere as their head, they entered the council-chamber tumultuously in a body, and called upon him, in insolent terms, not only to divulge the proofs he had against them, but to submit the case to the Pope's decision. Time, however, mollified their wrath, and the appeal was forgotten.

In the midst of these intestine broils, La Cassiere had also several foreign disputes and cares to harass him. Every year brought with it threats of a new attack from the Turks; and though these ultimately evaporated in the conquest of Goletta and Tunis, which the Emperor Selim wrested from Spain, they yet sufficed to keep the Council in a constant state of excitement. For a time, too, a point of maritime right with the republic of Venice was debated with great acrimony, and with difficulty brought to a satisfactory termination. Moreover, the Grand Priory of Castile having, in consonance with the wish of the King of Spain, been bestowed by the

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Grandmaster and Council on an Austrian archduke, on condition of his entering the Order, the Castilian knights took the arrangement so much amiss, that their discontent assumed a rebellious aspect; and, to subdue them, it was necessary to resort to Papal intimidation. As a penance for their insubordinate conduct, they appeared before the Council in full assembly, carrying each a wax taper, to entreat pardon; which was granted, accompanied by a severe reprimand. About the same time (1578,) six Portuguese knights, who entertained a bloodthirsty spirit of revenge against one of their countrymen, the Chevalier Carreras, entered his apartment masked, and wearing false beards, and barbarously assassinated him; for which crime they were tried, condemned, and, in terms of their sentence, sown up in sacks, and thrown alive into the sea. The only gleam of glory shed over this dark era, was the honourable death of several commanders of the Order, who fell gallantly supporting the Christian banner against the Moors in the fatal battle of Alcazar, in which Sebastian, King of Portugal—the hero of many a wild Lusitanian legend—lost his army and his life.

These disturbances were only a prelude to greater troubles. The Spanish knights, who formed a closely united and influential body, and whose main objection to La Cassiere was his being a Frenchman, determined, as the green old age he enjoyed left them no hopes of his speedy demise, to compass his deposition by a regular conspiracy against him. As a preliminary step, they gained over the languages of Italy and Germany, and even some of the French knights; and, among them, the Commander Romegas, Prior of Toulouse and Ireland, was seduced into the sedition. Romegas, whose name has already been noticed with honour, but who combined a sanguinary and ill-regulated ambition, with great valour and personal prowess, was won upon to join the conspiracy, by the prospect of succeeding to the Grandmastership,—self-conceit blinding him to the improbability, that the malecontents, who were so eager to depose one Frenchman, would elevate another to the vacant dignity. To the dishonour of the Order, which had begun to exhibit a lamentable and profligate laxity of discipline, one cause of complaint against La Cassiere was, his having expelled all courtesans from the city and suburbs of Valetta to the remote casals. The Maltese annalists record this gross dereliction from one of the cardinal rules by which the institution was originally regulated, with shame and sorrow; and, from that date (1581), the efficiency and renown of the Order may be said to have rapidly declined.

Encouraged by the knowledge that they were countenanced in their lawless proceedings by the court of Spain, and by the arrival

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of three Sicilian galleys, ostensibly fitted out against the Turks, but in reality sent to support them, the malecontents availed themselves of an opportunity of impugning the decision of the Grandmaster in a question respecting the watchword which had arisen between the language of Auvergne, and the knights of Italy and Spain. He was openly charged by the rebels in tumultuous assembly, with having shown an undue partiality to his own nation—with having dissipated the revenues of the Order—with neglect of its affairs—with gross inattention to the defence of the island—with incapacity and immorality—and, as a climax, with a treasonable correspondence with the sworn enemies of the Christian faith. To remedy the defects of his government, they called upon him to appoint a lieutenant; and when La Cassiere indignantly rejected the insolent proposition, nominated Romegas to that office on their own authority. This was followed by a still more audacious edict, by virtue of which, and on pretence that the Grandmaster's person was in danger, they forcibly arrested him, and imprisoned him in the tower of Saint Angelo. He was carried thither in an open chair, hooted by the younger portion of the rebellious knights, and reviled by crowds of Cyprians, who had returned to the city the moment his authority was subverted; but he bore these indignities with the fortitude of a man who regarded them not as insults, but as honours.

He had been two days in this humiliating situation, when Chabrillan, general of the galleys, entered the port with his squadron. That knight, after communing with him in his captivity—a privilege the rebels dared not refuse—offered to reinstate him at once in his former dignity, and carry him back to his palace in triumph at the head of his marines; but La Cassiere nobly answered, that he would rather end his days in prison, than deluge the convent with blood; and that he left it for the Pope to punish or recognise his deposition. Appeals were accordingly made to Rome by both parties; and so important was the revolt esteemed there, that the whole city was agitated by it. This popular sensation was increased by a duel between two Italian knights, Bosio and Guimarva. The latter having reproached the former with being a time-serving abettor of the Grandmaster, Bosio attacked and slew his antagonist in presence of the Papal guards in Saint Peter's Square; after which he contrived to escape, and was never apprehended.

Enraged at the conduct of the rebels, the Pope instantly despatched an accredited agent to Malta to inquire into the matter, and to act as lieutenant of the Order until a final adjustment. On the arrival of this officer, La Cassiere, who had previously been entreated by the rebels, who had begun to tremble for the consequences of their

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usurpation, to accept of liberty, was reconducted to his palace, and informed that it was the Pope's pleasure that he should repair to Rome, where a gracious reception awaited him. He accordingly embarked for Italy, and entered the Eternal City with the suite of a conqueror, three hundred knights being in attendance. Romegas, and several other ringleaders of the malecontents, also repaired, by citation, to the Papal tribunal; and, in terms of a peremptory edict, the Spanish galleys, after some demur on the part of their commander, who argued that the King of Spain was the legitimate protector of the Order, withdrew from the island. Harassed and dispirited by the discreditable circumstances in which he stood, and humiliated to perceive, that while La Cassiere was hailed with every mark of distinction at the court of Rome, he was left to pine in neglect as a turbulent rebel, the proud heart of Romegas gave way —a fever seized him, and at the end of seven days he died. His partisans were directed to make a formal and public submission to the Grandmaster; and it is told of one of them, the Commander De Sacquenville, that when he would have confined himself to kissing La Cassiere's hand, the Cardinal de Montalto exclaimed, "Down on your knees, rebellious knight; had it not been for the clemency of your chief, your head would have fallen many days ago by the executioner's axe!"

La Cassiere did not live to return to Malta, and behold the full re-establishment of his authority. He died at Rome in the beginning of 1582; and the Pope, availing himself of the circumstance, to influence the election of his successor, forwarded a brief to Malta, restricting the chapter to the choice of three candidates, though a formal deputation from the convent had previously entreated him not to infringe the freedom of the election. This led to the elevation of Hugh de Loubeux de Verdale, who had long been in high favour at the court of Rome. Verdale was a man of a gentle and pacific character, and exercised his patronage with strict partiality; yet he failed to secure the confidence of the Order. Finding his authority continually contemned, he paid a visit to Rome (1587), where he was received by the Pope, Sixtus the Fifth, with great honour, and sent back to Malta with a cardinal's hat, in the hope that this new dignity would overawe the malecontents. This however, it failed to do. Sedition continued to reign throughout the convent; and, assailed by incessant complaints on all sides, he once more repaired to Rome, where he soon after died of a broken heart (1595). The troubles of his reign were aggravated, moreover, by a visitation of the plague, which, in 1592, almost depopulated the island. In the same year, through the influence of the Bishop Gargalla, the Jesuits

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were introduced into Malta, where they speedily gained a great ascendency. It was during his Grandmastership that materials collected by the commander, John Anthony Fossan, for a history of the Order, were confided to James Bosio, with instructions to complete the work.

Don Martin Garzez, of the language of Arragon, succeeded De Verdale. Having neither favourites nor prejudices, he came into power as it were by popular acclaim, and the six years he held the reins of government were marked by tranquillity and subordination. He died in 1601; and Alof de Vignacourt, Grand Hospitaller of France, was elected to the vacant dignity. He was a man of great talents, and enjoyed both a long and brilliant reign, though the records left of it are comparatively scant and unsatisfactory. The year succeeding his election, the galleys of the Order attacked and carried in a very gallant manner the town of Mahometa in Barbary; and descents were also made against Patras and Lepanto on the coast of Greece. Two years afterwards (1604), a predatory expedition was made to the island of Lango, which was hallowed in the estimation of the Order by ancient associations, when the ravagers, with more intrepidity than humanity, dragged away a hundred and sixty-five of the natives as slaves. In 1610, the knights, Fresnet, Mauros, and Gaucourt, made an attack on the Turkish fortress of Laiazzo, on the Cilician coast. Having burst open the gate by means of a petard, they entered it in triumph, and, after razing the works, retired to their vessels, carrying with them abundance of booty, and upwards of three hundred captives. Next year, a similar attack was made on Corinth, which was also taken and sacked—a circumstance which so greatly enraged the Turks, that four years afterwards (1615), they made a fresh descent on Malta by way of reprisal. Sixty galleys appeared before the island on this occasion, and landed five thousand men, with the intention of sweeping the inhabitants into slavery; but the Maltese, having timely notice of their approach, retired with their property into the different strongholds, and the Ottomans, unable to attempt a siege, had to re-embark without capturing a single man. These advantages, however, were counterbalanced by the loss which the Order sustained before Suza, on the coast of Barbary, in 1619, while co-operating with the forces of the Catholic league, in an attack on that place. Twenty knights fell in this expedition, which ended in the Christians being repulsed. An enterprise, undertaken by the galleys of the Order singly, in the following year, against the Castle of Torneza, the grand depôt of the Morea, was more successful. The assailants, headed by the Com-

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mander Saint Pierre, burst open the gates of the fortress as they had done that of Laiazzo, by means of petards; but the knowledge that four thousand Turks were advancing to relieve it, induced them to make a hasty retreat to their ships, carrying with them, however, all the booty and prisoners they had taken.

Though these exploits are narrated in terms of high commendation by the annalists of the Order, they were, in reality, nothing else than piratical descents, made more for the purpose of plunder, than from that generous spirit of religious and martial zeal which distinguished the knights of Saint John at an earlier era. The political importance of the Order was sensibly on the decline; and though the knights continued to be respected throughout Christendom, as valiant and experienced soldiers, while their services were eagerly coveted in every fleet and army of Europe, the fraternity, as an independent body, was no longer regarded as a puissant and indispensable ally in the terrible struggles between the Cross and the Crescent, which almost annually deluged the countries bordering on the Danube, with blood. In point of discipline, too, a marked and humiliating change had taken place. The statutes still existed in all their rigour; but many of them were become in a great measure obsolete, and crimes began to disgrace the Order, which had never before stained its archives. Those statutes, however, which were framed to support the temporal dignity of the institution, had nowise lost their immutability in the estimation of many of the knights;—in proof of which, it may be mentioned, that Charles de Brie, a natural son of Henry Duke of Lorraine, having been admitted into the language of Germany through the influence of the Princes of the Empire, the German knights rose in a body to express their dissent, and, in their indignation, tore the armorial ensigns of the Grandmaster and Order from the gates of their inn, leaving only those of the Emperor standing.

Though the Mastership of De Vignacourt was, on the whole, prosperous and brilliant, he did not entirely escape those domestic cares which had harassed and even brought to the grave several of his predecessors. Both the Grand Inquisitor and the Bishop of Malta, supported by the Pope, Clement the Eighth, exerted themselves to subvert his authority; and, on one occasion, the brotherhood were so exasperated at the meddling and arrogant habits of the Bishop, that a number of the younger knights surrounded his palace, and openly threatened to throw him into the sea. The Grandmaster succeeded in suppressing the tumult, however, before the prelate had sustained any injury, and afterwards sent him off to

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Rome, in the hope that the Pope would punish him for his insolence. But his Holiness, on the contrary, was so incensed at the treatment which the Bishop had received, that he threatened the Grandmaster with the anathemas of the church; and De Vignacourt had to make ample concession before the wrath of the Papal tyrant could be stayed. Notwithstanding these vexations, the Grandmaster was able to complete one of the noblest monuments, in the shape of a public work, which remains to attest the grandeur of the Order—namely, an aqueduct for the conveyance of a large spring of water into the city of Valetta from the southern part of the island. This canal, which is still in repair, is upwards of nine and a half English miles in length. The water is carried into every street by subterranean ducts, which connect the public and private cisterns, and furnish a supply of that indispensable element to the inhabitants, when the rains, on which they chiefly depend, are not sufficiently abundant. De Vignacourt, also, added to the defences of the island, by erecting strong works at the havens of Saint Paul, Marza Sirocco, and Marza Scala, and on the island of Cumin. In the midst of these honourable cares, while enjoying the pastime of hare-hunting in the heats of August, he was seized with apoplexy, exactly as had happened fifty-four years before to the illustrious La Valette, and died a few weeks afterwards (14th September, 1622), at the age of seventy-five.

Mendez de Vasconcellos, of the language of Portugal, succeeded De Vignacourt; but being four score years of age at the time of his election, he enjoyed the dignity scarcely six months. Anthony de Paule, his successor, was also far advanced in life when called to the supreme command; for, as always happened in tranquil times, the ambition of the younger knights instigated them to favour the candidate whose term of days was, as far as age went, nearest a close. De Paule's reign began by two severe but imperative acts of justice. Juan de Fonseca, a Portuguese novice, was convicted of robbery and murder, and had his head struck off by the common executioner in the great piazza of the palace; and Faulcon, Prior of Capua, having been found guilty of embezzling public moneys to a large amount, was condemned to perpetual imprisonment, in which he died. Scarcely had the Grandmaster confirmed the sentence of this false knight, when he was called upon to vindicate his own character—his enemies having denounced him to the Pope as a man of loose morals, and guilty of simony, inasmuch as he had attained the supreme dignity by bribery and corruption. The Pope, Urban the Eighth, sustained his defence; but shortly afterwards, in imitation of his predecessors, Paul the Fifth and Gregory the Fourteenth,

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usurped the patronage of the Italian commanderies, several of which he conferred on his nephews and favourites, in direct subversion of the statutes of the Order. Indignant at this proceeding, the Italian knights refused to take their turn of service on board the galleys; and many of them quitted Malta and returned to their paternal homes. The Grandmaster not only remonstrated with the Pontiff on the occasion, but carried his complaints to the feet of the principal sovereigns of Christendom; but, as has already been said, the influence of the Order was on the wane. The Pope continued to bestow the Italian benefices on his creatures as they fell vacant, and the kings of Europe left him to act entirely as he thought proper in the matter. He also took upon himself to reform the mode of electing the Grandmaster, and altered the ancient usage of the general chapters so far, as to empower the Grand Inquisitor to preside over them. De Paule, with the imbecility of a dotard, tamely submitted to this humiliating arrangement; and, to obviate opposition from the higher spirited and more impetuous knights, they were sent to sea with the galleys when the next Chapter was convened—at which the Inquisitor, but with somewhat restricted powers, took his seat accordingly.

The Grandmastership of De Paule, like that of De Vignacourt, was characterized by a piratical and sanguinary, but less successful warfare, against the Ottoman flag. In 1625, twelve knights lost their lives, and several were wounded, in an unfortunate descent on the island of Santa Maura; and the same year two Maltese galleys were captured by the Infidels, after a long and obstinate engagement. These reverses, however, were counterbalanced by several rich prizes taken on the Moreote and Barbary coasts. At this period (1632), the population of Malta, which, seventy-five years before, at the raising of the famous siege, did not greatly exceed ten thousand, amounted, exclusive of the members of the Order, and familiars of the Inquisition, to upwards of fifty-one thousand souls—the best proof that can be given of the paternal care of the administration.*

Paul Lascaris Castelard, a descendant of the Counts of Vintimiglia, and of the Greek Emperors of Constantinople, succeeded the Grandmaster De Paule, who died in 1636, at an advanced age. The war which raged between France and Spain at the time of the election, and in which many of the knights, particularly those of France, contrary to the strict letter of their statutes, which prohibited them from taking up arms against any Christian power whatever, were personally engaged, involved him, at the outset of his reign, in much intricate and troublesome negotiation; and while the matters in dis-

* Vertot et Boisgelin.

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pute were pending, the Viceroy of Sicily, warmly espousing the Spanish side of the question, almost starved Malta, by refusing the customary supplies of grain. The Grandmaster, however, having, in terms of an official edict, opened his batteries on a French vessel commanded by the knight De la Carte, which had beaten a Spanish ship in the channel of Goza, and then attempted to anchor in Port Siroc, so far propitiated the Spaniards, and satisfied them of his neutrality, as to induce them to re-establish a free intercourse between the island and the Sicilian coast. It was now the turn of France to be offended; and to punish the Grandmaster for the insult offered to his flag, the French king seized all the possessions of the Order in his dominions, with a view to annex them to the crown lands. Through the agency, however, of M. de Lomenie, secretary of state, one of whose sons had just entered the Order, this quarrel was amicably adjusted, and the commandery of La Rochelle was given to the young Chevalier, in acknowledgment of his father's services.

In 1638, a bloody action was fought between the galleys of the Order, commanded by the knight De Charolt, and three large ships of war, employed in convoying a considerable fleet of Turkish merchant vessels from Tripoli to the East. The Maltese admiral, without expending a single broadside, ran his six galleys directly aboard the corsairs, two galleys grappling each ship. The Infidels made a gallant resistance—especially their admiral's vessel, which was commanded by Ibrahim Rais or La Becasse, a renegade of Marseilles, who had at one time acted as pilot to the Maltese squadron, but having been captured by the pirates of Tripoli, had turned Mohammedan, and, by his valour, raised himself to the highest post. The galley called the Saint Peter, commanded by the Chevalier de Gallean Chateauneuf, and supported by the Admiral's galley, engaged Ibrahim's vessel, which had on board four hundred and fifty Turkish soldiers, all chosen men. Mariel de Chateauneuf, the Chevalier's brother, was the first of the Christians that leapt on the corsair's deck, whither he was instantly followed, sabre in hand, by a number of knights, who cut all who offered resistance to pieces; and their leader had the honour of dragging Ibrahim to his brother's feet. The whole Turkish flotilla was taken; and, rich in slaves and booty, the victors returned in triumph to the harbour of La Valette. The victory, however, was purchased by the death of several distinguished knights—among whom were the Chevaliers de Viontessancourt, De Malmaison, D'Isnard, De Piccolomini, and De Sousa—all knights bearing names illustrious in their respective countries.

In 1640, the Prince of Hesse Darmstadt, then general of the galleys, cut out six Barbary rovers from the harbour of Goletta;

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and four years afterwards, these galleys, commanded by the knight De Piancourt, performed a still more memorable achievement, by capturing, after a sanguinary conflict of seven hours, a large and formidably equipped Turkish galleon. Nine knights fell in this engagement, among whom were the Chevaliers de Piancourt and Boisbaudran. Two brave young novices, Robert and Nicholas de Boufflers, were also among the slain. The Turks, on their part, lost six hundred men; and among the captives was a Sultana, from the Sultan's own harem, who was bound on a pilgrimage to Mecca, accompanied by her infant son, reputed to be a prince of the Imperial line. This boy was brought up a Christian, and afterwards became a monk of the Order of Saint Dominic, in which he was known by the name of Father Ottoman.

The capture of this galleon threatened for a time to bring a serious reprisal on the Maltese territory. The Sultan Ibrahim, furious at his loss, formally declared war against the Order; and the Grandmaster found it necessary to implore succours from all quarters, so as to enable him to make ample preparation to repel the threatened invasion. Chivalry no longer monopolized the admiration of the Lords of the West; yet, as a proof that it had still a few enthusiastic votaries, it may be mentioned, that on this occasion, Louis, Count D'Arpajon, a French nobleman, raised two thousand of his vassals, and, accompanied by a knightly retinue of kinsmen and friends, repaired to Malta to offer his services, together with an abundant supply of provisions and munitions of war, to the Grandmaster. Happily, however, the Sultan was induced to abandon his contemplated descent, and turn his arms against Candia; and D'Arpajon, together with the brothers Giles and John Francis de Fay, Counts de Maulevrier, highborn Norman gentlemen, and a Neapolitan lord, who had all been equally forward to take up arms in defence of the banner of Saint John, were dismissed with various honorary privileges, one of which was permission to wear the golden cross of the Order.

Notwithstanding the rigour with which the republic of Venice had several times treated the Order, by sequestrating its possessions on what the knights considered frivolous pretences, the fact of Candia being attacked no sooner became known to the Grandmaster, than he despatched the Maltese squadron to its relief; and during the time the fate of that island remained undetermined, the galleys constantly contributed more or less to its defence. This service, however, the Candiotes were fully entitled to, as the Sultan had been provoked to invade the island chiefly on account of the Venetian authorities having given shelter to the Maltese squadron after the capture of the

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galleon. To a maritime state like Venice, jealous of its commercial privileges, and proud of its supremacy at sea, the knights, better skilled in warlike enterprises than in nice international distinctions, doubtless often gave legitimate cause of offence; and when it is considered that they were bound, by their vows, to pass their lives struggling for the exaltation of the Cross, and that, where the battle-shafts flew thickest, there they were likeliest to meet with spoil, it does not become even their most partial annalists to ascribe their alacrity in this instance to an extraordinarily magnanimous impulse. One of the most memorable actions they performed in the war, was at the siege of Candia in 1650.* That city being closely pressed by Hussein Pasha, at the head of a formidable army, Balbiano, Admiral of the Maltese galleys, threw himself into the place, along with sixty knights and six hundred men, and undertook to defend Fort Martiningo, a post of great danger. The Turks having established themselves in a demi-lune at the bastion of Bethlem, Balbiano volunteered to the Venetian general to recover the work; and his offer being gratefully accepted, he entered it, sword in hand, at the head of thirty knights, and one hundred of his bravest marines. It was at night that this small but resolute band made the assault. Shrouded in darkness, they silently mounted the ravelin; and the Turks who occupied it, taken by surprise, were either cut down before they could grasp their weapons, or else driven headlong over the parapet, and forced to abandon the post to its fate. Next day, however, a mine was sprung under it with such fatal effect, that several knights were destroyed. The Chevalier De Sales, nephew of the famous Saint, Francis De Sales, Bishop of Geneva, was one of those who were blown up. Falling back into the mine, he was buried to the waist in the ruins. Notwithstanding this disaster, the survivors retained possession of the post; and by one means or other, the besiegers were kept at bay for a considerable time, and finally repulsed. Seven years afterwards (1657), the Maltese squadron, combined with that of Venice, gained a signal victory over the Turkish fleet at the Dardanelles, which the Venetian admiral chiefly attributed to the excellent seamanship and valour of his allies.

While the flag of Saint John was thus upholding its ancient glory in the Eastern sea, Lascaris the Grandmaster was harassed by various domestic cares, inseparable from the supreme office. The chief of these arose from the overweening insolence of the Pope, Urban the Eighth, and his minions, the Inquisitor and Bishop; and from the

* Rycaut's continuation of Knolles' Turkish History. Vertot and Boisgelin say 1649.

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refusal of the Viceroy of Sicily to allow the exportation of the necessary supplies of corn to Malta. The Grandmaster succeeded in a great measure in checking the arrogance of the inferior ecclesiastical functionaries; but he was so far won upon by the Pontiff individually, that he consented to violate one of the most sacred statutes of the Order, by sending the Maltese galleys to co-operate with the forces of the Church, against certain Italian princes who had entered into a league for the purpose of humbling his Holiness. This indiscreet and highly culpable act brought the Order under the ban of the allied sovereigns, who sequestrated its domains in their respective states; and it cost Lascaris much difficult negotiation to obtain a reversal of these attainders. On a point of minor importance, the Grandmaster showed much more scrupulosity—a proof that trifles sometimes exercise a greater influence over the minds of men than matters involving a great principle. This was in refusing the grand cross of the Order to the son of the king of Tunis, a Moorish prince, who had been converted to the Christian faith—though the application in his behalf was backed by the Pontiff, and all the influence of the court of Spain.

In 1650, the foundation of a library for the benefit of the Order was laid at Malta; and a law was passed, that the books of the knights should not be sold after their death like their other effects, but forwarded as public property to the convent. Two years afterwards, the Grandmaster made a still more novel addition to the possessions of the Order. The attention of the civilized world was at that time intensely directed towards the western hemisphere; and through the agency of the Chevalier De Poincy, commandant of Saint Christopher's in the West Indies, who acted as representative of a company of French merchants who held large grants there under the French crown, Lascaris was induced to make a purchase, not only of that island, but of the neighbouring islands of Saint Bartholomew, Saint Martin, and Saint Croix, to which he would have added Guadaloupe and Martinico, had it been practicable. The fee-simple of these possessions, with all the plantations, slaves, and stores upon them, was purchased for about five thousand pounds sterling;* but the Grandmaster engaged besides to liquidate the debts due by the former proprietors to the inhabitants. The transaction, however, completely disappointed his expectations; and on the death of De Poincy, it was discovered that he had, from selfish motives, betrayed the Order into a most unprofitable speculation. Twelve years afterwards, in the Grandmastership of Nicholas Cotoner, these transat-

* 120,000 livres.

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lantic dependencies were resold to other French merchants; and such is the marvellous change which industry and commercial enterprise can produce, that, little more than a century subsequent to the date of these transferences, English proprietors were to be found in the same islands, who, from one year's revenue of a single plantation, could have paid the whole purchase-money which the Maltese knights had given for them.

Several incidents, military and domestic, of a less important complexion, which occurred in the Grandmastership of Lascaris, are purposely passed over as inconsequent to a narrative professing only to embrace the nobler achievements of the Order. Lascaris died in 1657; and the Inquisitor, fortified by a Papal brief framed to regulate the succession, formally interdicted the election of the Bailiff Martin de Redin, one of the candidates to the vacant dignity, charging him at the same time with simony and immorality. Faction ran high in the convent; but Redin's partisans, piqued at the restriction attempted to be imposed upon them, supported him so staunchly, that he was declared duly elected. The Inquisitor carried a protest against his election to Rome; but the Pope, considering it impolitic to display direct hostility towards a knight who enjoyed the special favour of the court of Spain, not only acknowledged him as regularly chosen, but compelled the appellant to be the herald of his own discomfiture. There is ample room for suspicion, however, that the charge of simony was not wholly groundless; for the Grandmaster showed his gratitude to his Holiness, by conferring a rich commandery, and a diamond cross valued at twelve hundred crowns, on the Prior de Bichi, the prelate's favourite nephew; and various other commanderies were subsequently bestowed on other members of the Pontiff's family, in gross violation of the statutes of the Order, and to the unqualified disgust of all the unprejudiced members. It is more painful to the conscientious annalist to record these mean infractions of honest principle, than to chronicle great crimes.

Redin died in 1660—leaving behind him no honourable monument of his reign, save a chain of watch-towers with which he had fenced the coast. He was succeeded by Annet de Clermont de Chattes Gessan, who survived his election only three months—the opening of a severe wound which he had received at the taking of Mahometa in Barbary, hurrying him suddenly to the grave. Raphael Cotoner, a Spanish knight, was next advanced to the supreme dignity; and, shortly after his election, the galleys of the Order, combined with powerful succours from Louis the Fourteenth of France, the Pope, and the Duke of Savoy, again sailed to aid the Venetians in the defence of Candia. A Genoese squadron would

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have joined the armament, had not the ancient pride and rivalry that subsisted between the two republics thrown obstacles in the way, and induced the Venetians to reject the succour, by which, had it been frankly accepted, the island would in all probability have been saved.

The Christian leaders, the chief of whom was a prince of the house of D'Este, who commanded the French troops, with the Maltese knight De Gremonville for his lieutenant, first thought of making an effort to recover the town of Canea; but their force being too small to besiege it in form, they directed their operations against some Turkish forts in the neighbourhood of Suda. Several of them were taken by storm, partly through the bravery of the Maltese battalion; but the campaign terminated without either side gaining any decisive advantage. The Senate of Venice manifested its consideration for the services of the Order, by passing a decree that the knights should be permitted to appear armed in every place within the territories of the Republic—a privilege withheld even from its own subjects.

A malignant fever, which scourged the whole of Malta, cut short the life of the Grandmaster, Raphael Cotoner, in 1663. His prudence, piety, and munificence, had won him the admiration and affection of the whole convent; and, by the unanimous voice of the Chapter, his brother, Nicholas Cotoner, a knight equally distinguished for the qualities that constitute a great commander, was elected his successor—being the only instance, save that of the Villarets, of two brothers having successively enjoyed the Grandmastership. This knight had scarcely entered on the duties of his high office, when he was invited by Louis the Fourteenth to engage in a new enterprise against the piratical States on the Barbary coast. That puissant monarch, fretted by the constant depredations committed on his commerce by the African corsairs, resolved to repress their insolence, by establishing a colony in the heart of their territories; and the Knights of Malta were entreated to aid him in his undertaking. The Maltese squadron, accordingly, joined a French armament under the Duke de Beaufort at Port Mahon, from whence the whole expedition set sail for the African shore (1664). The site which the French monarch had pitched upon for his chief position in the hostile country, was the village of Gigeri, a place between Algiers and Bugia, exactly fifteen leagues from each. It lay close to the sea; and, in its immediate vicinity stood an old castle, situated on the top of an almost inaccessible mountain. The Christians disembarked without opposition; but no sooner did the Moors discover that they were bent on constructing defensive works, than they made several bold attempts

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to dislodge them; and, after some sharp fighting, compelled the troops to return on shipboard, with the loss, in killed and prisoners, of four hundred men. The unsuccessful result of this expedition was rendered the more galling to Louis, by the loss of one of the ships of war which made part of it, with several troops of horse on board. As to his knightly allies, they soon lost the recollection of the share they had in his disappointment, in the achievement of fresh triumphs. In the following year (1665), the knights, Crainville and Tremicourt, two devoted friends, the one commanding a forty gun ship, the other a frigate of twenty-two guns, encountered in the Channel of Samos, a Turkish caravan, or convoy, consisting of ten ships and twelve saicks, on the voyage from Alexandria to Constantinople. Notwithstanding the great disparity of force, the two knights intrepidly bore down into the midst of the enemy, captured four of the richest vessels, and either sunk or dispersed the rest. About the same time, the knight D'Hocquincourt, while moored off Dolphin Island, was suddenly beset by a fleet of Turkish galleys, carrying troops to Candia, part of whom were promptly disembarked, and assailed him with musketry from the shore, while the flotilla opened a cannonade from the sea. Having crippled the Maltese vessel by their fire, the Infidels attempted to carry her by boarding, but were repeatedly repulsed. Hocquincourt fought like a lion, at the head of his crew; and the Turkish leader, enraged at his obstinacy, ordered a clear passage to be made for his own galley, and his rowers vigorously plying their oars, ran her fiercely against the Maltese ship. This manœuvre enabled Hocquincourt to take advantage of a breeze which had just sprung up, and clear the land, leaving behind him sanguinary evidence of his bravery in almost every Turkish galley. He himself carried away with him an honourable wound, and forty of his men were slain.* This illustrious knight did not long survive this gallant action. Shortly afterwards, his ship was cast away in a gale, on a rock near the island of Scarpanto; and he perished in the wreck, along with the knight De Grilles, his friend, and one hundred and seventy mariners. Equally disastrous was the fate of the elder Tremicourt, brother of the knight of the same name recently mentioned, who, having attacked two rich Turkish merchantmen off the coast of Egypt, was mortally wounded in the head by a musket-shot on his own deck, and lived only long enough to hear that his comrades were victorious. His brother, filled with grief at his fate, seemed afterwards to have no object in life but to avenge it. But while on a successful cruise,

* Rycaut.

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his vessel was hurled by a tempest on the African coast, when he unhappily fell into the hands of the Moors, who, proud of having captured so redoubted a commander, forwarded him to the Sultan at Adrianople. Mohammed the Fourth, who then occupied the Ottoman throne, was so captivated by his noble presence and bearing, his youth, for he was only twenty-two years of age, and the fame of his exploits, that he spared no persuasions to induce him to become an apostate, and enter his service. He even tempted him with the offer of the hand of a princess of the imperial line, and the rank of Capitan Pasha; and when he found persuasion of no avail, had recourse to menaces and tortures. But the fortitude of the Christian knight was equally proof against temptation and cruelty; and he purchased the crown of martyrdom, as nobly as ever had done any of his confreres, when their zeal burned the brightest in the olden time. Mutilated in every limb, his head was at length struck off, and the bleeding trunk cast into the Maritza, as unworthy of a grave.

In 1667, the Turks made another desperate effort to bring the war in Candia to a conclusion. The Grand Vizier Achmet repaired in person to the island, at the head of a large body of fresh troops, and laid siege to the capital, which had long defied every attempt to take it. The Venetians, on their part, again appealed to several Christian princes for aid; and a Maltese armament, which was soon after followed by powerful succours from France, Germany, and the Papal States, was accordingly despatched to their assistance. A dispute as to precedence arising between the knights and the Venetians, the Maltese squadron stood homeward again without firing a gun.* Two years afterwards, however, the knights again unfurled their banner on the Candian coast; and, about the same time, there came from Germany a company of one hundred and fifty chosen and well-armed soldiers, furnished by the Teutonic knights, who once more appeared in the front of battle, side by side, with their ancient rivals in renown, the chevaliers of Saint John. The Maltese battalion employed in Candia at this time, numbered four hundred men, and it suffered so severely in the memorable defence of the capital, where it had a very perilous post to defend, that its commander, the knight Hector De Fay la Tour Maubourg, seeing the desperate situation of affairs, conceived himself justified in directing his attention solely to the safety of the remnant. He did not re-embark, however, till the French, and many of the German auxilaries, had also abandoned the devoted city, and till every hope of

* Rycaut.

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longer maintaining it was extinguished, and it had become one vast and pestilent grave. The departure of this small but valiant band of knights led to an immediate capitulation (1669); and thus, after a war of unexampled ferocity, which lasted twenty-five years, and in which many illustrious commanders from various countries of Christendom perished, did one of the most impregnable fortresses in the world, and the whole island in which it was situated, pass into the hands of the conquering Ottoman. Had not other quarrels conspired to distract the Sultan's attention, and divide his army for the greater part of that time, not even the generous valour which animated the many gallant adventurers who fought in behalf of the Republic could have saved Candia from an earlier fate. The details of the siege of the capital are in a great measure foreign to this narrative, otherwise they would form a striking parallel to the sieges of Rhodes and Malta. A more resolute resistance, or a series of more heroic deeds, the historian has rarely chronicled.*

The capitulation of Candia led to a permanent treaty of peace between Turkey and the Venetian republic. This event gave the Grandmaster considerable uneasiness; for, conscious how indefatigably he had laboured to circumvent the Turk in all his projects for the subjugation of the island, and how incessantly he had harassed his coasts with hostile inroads, he felt the greatest apprehension that the next exploit of the Ottoman arms would be an attack on Malta. To baffle such an attempt, he invited an eminent Italian engineer, named Valperga, to visit the island; and, under his superintendence, an enclosure called the Cotoner was added to the fortifications (1670). This immense work was little short of three miles in length, and consisted of nine bastions and two demi-bastions, connecting the Isle de la Sangle with the Bourg, and embracing all the heights which commanded the ancient defences of both places; while the area within was sufficiently extensive to contain the whole population of the island, with their cattle and effects. The Grandmaster was generally blamed for the magnitude of the undertaking, as incompatible with the means of the Order; but he boldly commenced the work, and continued to carry it on unintermittingly for ten years. At the end of that period, the total exhaustion of the treasury occasioned it to be discontinued; and thirty years elapsed before any further measures were adopted for its completion. Additions were

* Sir Paul Rycaut states, in his continuation of Knolles' Turkish History, that a Captain Scot, a native of Scotland, was taken prisoner by the Turks in this war, and ransomed by the English factory at Smyrna. The same historian also mentioned with honour an English captain, called Anand. A part of the fortifications of Candia was styled the Scottish Fort.

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also made to La Floriana, an advanced work commenced in the Grandmastership of Lascaris, for the defence of Valetta; and a new fort, called Ricasoli, was erected on the headland which commanded the entrance of the grand port. At the same time, a lazaretto, which has ever since retained a high reputation, was built on the island in Port Musceit. This institution, however, did not preserve the island from a visitation from the plague, a few years afterwards, which swept off thousands, and almost unmanned the galleys.

The suppression of the Order in England, in the reign of Henry the Eighth, has been mentioned in its proper place. From that time forward, the intercourse between the convent and that country suffered a permanent interruption, and the knights could scarcely be expected to entertain any friendship towards a nation which had treated them with severity and injustice; yet, in 1675, when Charles the Second declared war against Tripoli, and sent an expedition to chastise that piratical state for a succession of depredations on his commerce, the ports of Malta were thrown open for the reception of his fleet, and supplies of all kinds were promptly tendered. The English monarch afterwards gratefully acknowledged this hospitality.

CHAPTER VIII.

Expedition to the Morea—Embassy from Russia—The fortifications of Malta greatly strengthened—Revolt of the slaves—Ignoble subserviency of the Order—The Maltese galleys—Grandmastership of De Rohan—Earthquake in Sicily—Effects of the French Revolution—Rapacity of the Republican Government—Munificence of the Russian Czar.

The Grandmaster Nicholas Cotoner, died in 1680, and was succeeded by Gregory Caraffa a Neapolitan—the only Italian knight who had been elected to the supreme dignity for one hundred and twenty-eight years. In the course of the nine years during which he held the reins of government, the flag of Saint John was repeatedly triumphant on the Turkish coast. Austria and Turkey were at that time engaged in a sanguinary and desperate conflict, which had led to the invasion of the Imperial territories, and the investment of Vienna itself, by a formidable Turkish army. With the aid, however, of the illustrious John Sobieski, the hero of Poland, the Infidels were repulsed from its gates with prodigious slaughter, which encouraged several Christian states to confederate, for the purpose of

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carrying the war direct into the Ottoman territories (1684). The Maltese knights, the Pope, and the Venetians, were parties to this league; and their respective squadrons soon spread consternation along the shores of Barbary and the Morea. Prevesa and the island of Santa Maura were taken by the knights; and the combined fleets afterwards attacked Coron, and carried it after a stout resistance. Old and New Navarino, Modon, and Napoli de Romania, were successively besieged and taken; but the last named place did not open its gates till after it had been besieged a whole month. The Seraskier made repeated attempts to relieve it, but was thrice routed under its walls. Nineteen knights, and a great number of Maltese soldiers, perished in these combats. In 1687, the confederates made a descent on the Dalmatian coast, and took Castel Nuovo, a position which gave to Venice the command of the commerce of the Adriatic. In this service the Maltese knights deported themselves so gallantly, that the Pope, Innocent the Eleventh, publicly congratulated the Grandmaster on their conduct. These triumphs, however, were counterbalanced by a bloody check which they sustained, in common with their allies, before the fortress of Negropont, in 1689. Twenty-nine of the bravest knights fell there in an unsuccessful assault; and the Grandmaster was so deeply afflicted by their loss, that distress of mind, combined with severe bodily ailments, hurried him to the tomb (1690).

Caraffa was succeeded by Adrian de Vignacourt, a kinsman of that Alof de Vignacourt, who, nearly a century before, had enjoyed the same dignity, with much honour to himself and glory to the Order. The sanguinary conflicts in which the Order had been engaged under his predecessor, had swept off a large portion of the male population of the islands, which were, in consequence, filled with widows and orphans, who had to suffer the miseries of destitution in addition to their irreparable loss. Through the instrumentality of the Grandmaster, a fund was subscribed for their support—an incident more honourable to his memory than if he had died the victor of a hundred fights.

In 1692, the Maltese squadron, in combination with the Papal galleys and a Venetian armament, made a descent on Candia, and laid siege to the important fortress of Canea; but at the end of twenty-four days, the besiegers were forced to abandon the enterprise and the island. In the following year (11th January, 1693), Malta was shaken by an earthquake, the oscillations of which continued with more or less violence for three days, and laid several buildings in ruins. The same shocks were felt in Sicily with still greater violence, and the town of Augusta was almost wholly destroyed.

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No sooner was intimation of this disaster received at Malta, than a squadron was despatched with supplies to the houseless inhabitants —a proof that the spirit of benevolence and mercy still had its residence in the convent, and that the title of Hospitaller was not yet become an unmerited designation.

Adrian de Vignacourt died in 1697, and Raymond Perellos de Roccaful, an Arragonian knight, was elected Grandmaster in his stead. In the second year of his administration, the Order was gratified by friendly overtures from Peter the First, Emperor of Russia, tendered through the medium of an ambassador, who visited the island in a style of princely magnificence, and was received with marked distinction by the convent. This Boyard was named Kzeremetz;* and in a Latin harangue addressed to the Grandmaster and the knights, described himself as arrived from the hyperborean pole, to pay homage to the heroes of the church-militant—the Maltese knights. The acute mind of Peter had discovered the policy of forming a friendly alliance with a fraternity, which, for five centuries, had been in a state of constant warfare with the Turks—his hereditary adversaries; and he hoped, by this mission, to lay the foundation of an intercourse which should render the knights his staunch auxiliaries, whenever he and the Sultan were at variance. There is even room for suspicion that he contemplated a league with the knights, as likely to secure him a stronghold in the Mediterranean; and that, blended with the admiration of their renown, which he could not fail to entertain, was a deep and mighty scheme of self-aggrandizement. Be this as it may, the knights felt exceedingly flattered by his condescension. His envoy was loaded with honours while he remained on the island; and when he quitted it, his departure was celebrated with all the pomp and circumstance becoming the farewell of the accredited messenger of a puissant prince.

The Grandmastership of Perellos, like that of several of his immediate predecessors, was disturbed by the factious intrigues of the ambitious churchmen, who, as inquisitors, found means to establish themselves within his territories. They bore with impatience the supremacy of the knights, and spared neither the arts of perfidy, nor of superstition, to achieve their ends. The arrogance of the Grand Inquisitor Delci at length became so intolerable, that, finding his authority openly contemned and usurped, the Grandmaster appealed to the Pope, and the decision of his Holiness restored something like tranquillity; but the presumptuous priest was permitted to escape un-

* Voltaire calls him Sheremeto. In his credentials, as printed in the *Codex Diplom.* of Sebastian Paolo, he is named as above.

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punished. During the twenty-two years Perellos remained in power, no event of great historic importance was recorded in the archives of the Order. No year passed, it is true, without being marked by some naval triumph; but these were principally conflicts between single ships; and, though highly honourable to the Maltese flag, and disastrous to its enemies, were not of the same significance as those grand combats and expeditions in which whole fleets had been engaged. But though the flag of Saint John was almost invariably victorious, it could not in every instance command fortune. On one occasion, the Bailiff de Spinola, general of the galleys, a veteran knight, after seeing his brother mortally wounded at his side, was run foul of by a Turkish vessel with which he had engaged, when his galley sustained such injury, that she was cast away in a fierce gale which unluckily sprung up at the moment. Spinola himself was saved through the intrepidity of the Commander De Javon, captain of another galley; but his brave deliverer, along with three knights and seventy of his crew, unfortunately perished.*

For nearly a century, the Maltese navy had been declining in magnitude; and anxious to restore it to its former strength, the Grandmaster Perellos successfully exerted himself to provide a squadron of decked war-ships, of a size greatly superior to the galleys, the command of which was given to the Chevalier de Saint Pierre, a gallant Norman knight.† This squadron afterwards emulated that of the galleys in the wake of glory; and in 1710, its commander, the Chevalier De Langon, fell in the arms of victory, after having gallantly defeated the Admiral of Algiers.

The Grandmaster Perellos died in 1720, leaving behind him various useful public works as monuments of his tranquil and honourable reign. He was succeeded by Mark Anthony Zondodari, a Siennese knight of illustrious birth, and in every respect worthy of the supreme dignity, which he assumed amid the acclamations of the whole convent. Two large corsairs were brought into the port as prizes in the midst of the rejoicings that followed his election; and the happy omen was soon after strengthened by the capture of an Algerine ship of war, carrying eighty guns and five hundred men. But Zondodari did not long enjoy a station which he was so well qualified to adorn. He was cut off by gangrene in the third year of

* Vertot and Boisgelin differ in regard to this disaster. The former says that it was Javon's galley that was cast away and that he was drowned; the latter, that it was the Admiral who was wrecked, and that 22 knights and 500 men perished in the battle and in the storm together. I have followed Vertot, as far as respects the death of Javon, and the extent of the disaster.

† He was brother of the celebrated Abbé de Saint Pierre, and author of *Le project pour extirper les Corsaires de Barbarie*, published along with that author's works.

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his Grandmastership; and Anthony Manuel de Villena, a Portuguese knight of the language of Castile, was elected in his stead (1722).

Villena came into office under circumstances scarcely less auspicious than his immediate predecessor. He had filled various subordinate posts with honour, and had repeatedly proved his valour, and shed his blood in upholding the flag of the Order. During the Grandmastership of Perellos, the convent had, more than once, been alarmed by a report that an immense armament was equipping at Constantinople, for the purpose of making an attack on Malta; and both that Grandmaster, and his successor Zondodari, had strengthened the weaker parts of the fortifications, to guard against the threatened descent. Villena, forewarned by a repetition of the rumour, adopted similar precautions. At his suggestion, a considerable fort was erected on the little islet of Marza Musceit, which the Turks had found a most advantageous position at the time of the great siege, while a magnificent series of works were added to the landward defences of the new city. The fort in Port Musceit is still called Fort Manuel, in honour of its founder; for, like most of his predecessors, Villena could not resist the desire of securing historical immortality by means of stone and mortar; but, though one of his names was also bestowed on the other superb bulwarks which rose up under his superintendence, that of the engineer who planned them speedily superseded it, and the whole enclosure is now known only as the Floriana. The good effects of these precautions were soon obvious; for a Turkish fleet of ten ships, which appeared off the port, was so intimidated by the impregnable aspect of the whole island, that, after firing a few guns, and indulging in some empty gasconade, its commander held it prudent to abandon the enterprise. This bravado led to a correspondence between the Grandmaster and the Marquis de Bonnac, the French ambassador at the Porte, which brought on a negotiation that ultimately ended in a formal truce between the Sultan and the Order (1723). The principal stipulations of the treaty were, that the slaves on both sides should be exchanged —that the truce should last twenty years—that the piratical States of Barbary should not be included in it—that the Maltese should enjoy the same privileges as the French in the Sultan's dominions—and that the treaty should be null the moment any Christian potentate went to war with him. The knights defended this arrangement, on the argument, that it would enable them the better to suppress the corsairs who swarmed on the African coast; but, though the treaty was popular at Constantinople, the machinations of several of the principal officers of the Turkish navy, rendered it void, and it never was ratified.

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The Grandmaster died in 1736, and was succeeded by Raymond Despuig, a Majorcan knight, whose short reign of little more than four years, embraced no event worthy of being chronicled. Emanuel Pinto de Fonseca, his successor, was descended from one of the most illustrious families in Portugal; and, though his Grandmastership was distinguished by no memorable military exploits, the annals of the Order, nevertheless, describe it as long, prosperous, and glorious. By the Maltese, he was regarded as a wise and beneficent prince; and such was the estimation in which he was held by foreign states, that the Genoese, finding the island of Corsica a troublesome appanage, in consequence of the inhabitants pertinaciously refusing to submit to their laws, contemplated at one time ceding it to the Order. France, however, had long cherished the project of uniting Corsica to her dominions; and the machinations of her statesmen, conjoined with prudential considerations on the part of the knights, who foresaw that such an acquisition would rather weaken than strengthen their influence, and inevitably embroil them in European politics, prevented the completion of any such arrangement.

But, though venerated both at home and abroad, Pinto, like all his predecessors, had his own share of public cares to harass him; and, strange to say, they originated in that very amenity of disposition which made his subjects bless his yoke. The mildness of his government extended even to the Mohammedan slaves, whom the Order held in bondage, and who amounted to about four thousand. Of these, only a very small number were subjected to confinement. By far the greater portion enjoyed almost perfect liberty, and were received as confidential domestics into the households of the knights, the Grandmaster not excepted, who treated them with the greatest indulgence, and generally found them serviceable and faithful. But slavery is abhorrent to the nature of man; and the bondsman, though the chain that fetters him may be almost invisible, longs not the less ardently to burst it asunder. It happened that a Turkish galley was brought into Malta by the Christian slaves who manned her, who had risen upon their Moslem officers while at sea, and subverted their authority. Among the Turks thus captured was the Pasha of Rhodes, a man of great influence in his own country; and the Grandmaster, anxious to propitiate the French, who were on friendly terms with the Sultan, immediately consigned this distinguished prisoner to the French minister at his court. This insured the Pasha the treatment befitting a man of his high station. He was lodged in a palace situated in a beautiful garden in the Floriana—his domestics were restored to him—a princely allowance was made to liquidate his expenses—and, as a proof of generous confidence,

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he was permitted to receive the homage of the Turkish slaves. Among these was a negro—the very man whose treachery had reduced the Pasha to a state of bondage. This wretch, conceiving himself indifferently rewarded for his former treason, and stimulated by that love of desperate emprise, which either leads to the highest dignities, or to a dishonoured grave, formed the daring project of subverting the government of the knights, and of rendering the Sultan for ever his debtor, by putting him in possession of Malta.

The Pasha eagerly agreed to promote the scheme, and, assisted by one or two active auxiliaries, gradually concocted a most formidable conspiracy; and that, too, in so secret a manner, that no Christian on the island had even a suspicion of its existence. The conspirators fixed on the festival of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, as the fittest time to carry their designs into execution. On that day, it was customary for the population of Valetta to repair in crowds to the *Cité Notable;* and it was arranged, that, at the hour of the *siesta*, when all who remained within the walls were likely to be overcome with heat and sleep, the principal posts should be stormed, and a massacre commenced. A slave, who held a confidential situation near the Grandmaster's person, was instructed to enter Pinto's chamber, decapitate him in his slumber, and instantly exhibit the bleeding head in the grand balcony of the palace, as a signal for the slaves of the other knights to follow his example. The leaders of the insurrection felt secure, that, in the midst of the panic which these murders would inevitably create, they would carry the gates, the arsenal, the cavaliers, and Fort St. Elmo; and, once in possession of these, they did not despair of holding out till a fleet from Barbary, which they knew to be at sea, and aware of their project, should appear off the harbour. This deep-laid plot was discovered just in time to prevent its explosion. In a moment of ungovernable passion, aggravated by the fumes of wine and opium, the negro quarrelled with a young Persian, a soldier in the Grandmaster's guard, who was in his confidence, and attempted to poniard him; but the youth fortunately escaped the deadly steel, and, trembling at the danger he had encountered, lost not a moment in disclosing the whole conspiracy. A Jew, in whose house the quarrel had originated, and who was also a party to the plot, instigated by his wife, who had overheard part of the altercation, likewise came forward to secure his own safety, by denouncing the negro; and the latter, being promptly apprehended, a tribunal was summoned to take cognizance of his treason. The sable ruffian not only boldly confessed his crime, but impeached several accomplices, who, in their turn, implicated others. At first, the Pasha's name was held sacred by

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the whole body of conspirators; but, in the end, he was accused as the lever of the plot; and, had it not been that he was under the protection of France, he would have been torn to pieces by the infuriated populace. He was kept in strict confinement during the remainder of his stay on the island, and between fifty and sixty, some accounts say one hundred and twenty-five, of his accomplices expiated their crime by death. The modes of their death were truly terrible. Some were burned alive, some were broken on the wheel, and some were torn to pieces by four galleys rowing different ways, and each bringing off a limb.* The annals of Malta state, that several of them, and, among others, the negro and the Pasha's secretary, became converts to the Christian faith immediately before they were delivered over to the executioner, and that they died with manifest signs of penitence; while those who clung to the faith of their ancestors, met the mortal blow as the wolf does, without a quiver or a groan.

The Grandmastership of Pinto, whom an English traveller of the day described as a clear-headed, sensible, little old man of ninety, was lengthened to thirty-two years. Tranquil and prosperous as his reign was, it was fatal to the independence of the Order, which lapsed gradually under the supremacy of France, and was contented to owe to the diplomatic artifices of that power, the immunity from Turkish aggression, which, in former days, its own good swords had won.

The indolence of the Moslems, their natural enemies, had been more fatal to them than the bolts and scimitars of Turkish war. "The struggle," says Sonnini, speaking of a somewhat later date, "had dwindled into a phantom, of which some pitiful expeditions of corsairs kept up the shadow. The caravans or cruises of the galleys were now nothing but parties of pleasure to and from the delicious havens of Sicily; the defence of those superb ramparts, the monuments of the glory of the Order, and of their enemy's shame, was confided to foreign and mercenary soldiers; and that social energy, which had made one of the greatest empires of the universe to tremble, was no longer exemplified except in the sparks of courage struck from a few individuals."†

In gratitude for the services of France, in averting invasion from their island, the Maltese galleys made an expedition to the coast of Africa along with the French fleet, and assisted to bombard several piratical ports, but to small purpose. This was the only military exploit that distinguished Pinto's reign; and it may be said to have

* Brydone—Tour through Sicily and Malta. † Trav. in Egypt.

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also been the last enterprise the Maltese squadron was ever engaged in. From that date, its feats were confined to the cruises of a few privateers; but still, such is the force of old impressions, the Maltese name continued so formidable in the Turkish seas, that the appearance of the smallest felucca carrying the flag of the Order, diffused terror along the African and Asiatic coasts. Of the galleys, as they existed at this date, Sonnini, who beheld them in port, has furnished the following superb description. "They were armed, or rather embarrassed, with an incredible number of hands; the general alone had eight hundred men on board. They were superbly ornamented; gold blazed on the numerous basso-relievos and sculptures on the stern; enormous sails, striped with blue and white, carried on their middle a great cross of Malta, painted red. Their elegant flags floated majestically. In a word, every thing concurred, when they were under sail, to render it a magnificent spectacle. But their construction was little adapted either for fighting, or for standing foul weather. The Order kept them up rather as an image of its ancient splendour, than for their utility. It was one of those ancient institutions which had once served to render the brotherhood illustrious, but now only attested its selfishness and decay."*

Pinto died in 1773, and was succeeded by Francis Ximenes de Taxada, an aged and superannuated knight. During the two years that he survived his election, his peace was broken by seditious cabals, fomented by the priests, who were incessantly plotting to subvert his authority, and who, at last, supported by a body of Maltese, most of them men of a turbulent and infamous character, and, as some writers assert, by the secret agents of Catherine the Second of Russia,† who, like her predecessor Peter the Great, had an anxious desire to establish herself in the Mediterranean, broke out into open rovolt. Four hundred rebels suddenly possessed themselves of Fort Saint Elmo; but the knights, led by the Bailiff de Rohan, promptly retook it, and the ringleaders were delivered over to justice. The Grandmaster, however, never recovered the shock which he sustained on this occasion, and soon after died.

The Bailiff Emanuel de Rohan, of the language of France, succeeded Ximenes as Grandmaster (1775). He was descended from one of the most ancient and most illustrious families of that country,‡

* Trav. in Egypt. † Mirabeau.

‡ M. Chateaubriand (the author of Atala) is descended from this great house of Bretagne, if the *Dictionnaire Veridique* may be relied on. The Rohans claimed descent from the ancient sovereigns of that province; and *Henri Quatre* had, through his grandmother, the wife of the Duke d'Albert, a dash of their blood in his veins.

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and had passed his youth in honourable service at the courts of Spain and Parma, which career he ultimately abandoned, from a love of independence, to become a simple Maltese knight. One of his first acts after his elevation was to strengthen the executive government, by the formation of a regular battalion of infantry, composed promiscuously of Maltese and foreigners, but officered exclusively by knights. This step had been strenuously recommended by several friendly powers, as the only mode by which the Grandmaster could preserve his authority; and as it was accompanied by a hint, that, if the Order did not look to its own security, the royal counsellors would take the island under their own protection, the suggestion was promptly adopted. This corps was intrusted with the keeping of La Valette, and the other important forts; while a considerable local force was enrolled to guard the open coast. An effort was also made to improve the financial statutes, and revive the ancient discipline of the Order; and judicious alterations were carried into effect in the courts of judicature, and additional facilities given to public education. Nor, while thus busied in improving the internal administration, did the Grandmaster neglect the foreign policy of the Order. In Poland he obtained the restitution of some ancient possessions—in Russia he acquired new ones. In Germany the circle of Bavaria created for him a new language (1782), which received the name of the Anglo-Bavarian, and was endowed with the confiscated property of the Jesuits to the extent of 170,000 florins—a sum equal to 15,000*l.*; and in France he succeeded to the possessions of the Order of Saint Anthony—a pious association scarcely less ancient than that of Saint John itself.*

The year 1783—the eighth of Rohan's grandmastership—was rendered memorable by an event which filled Europe with consternation, and furnished the knights with an opportunity of exercising, in their fullest significance, those charitable duties which their vows imposed on them. A frightful earthquake ravaged Sicily and Calabria; and, in particular, the towns of Messina and Reggio were laid in ruins; while such of the inhabitants as escaped being buried in their shattered dwellings, were forced to bivouac in the open country, destitute alike of shelter and subsistence. The Maltese galleys were laid up in ordinary at the time intelligence of this disaster reached the island; but such was the activity displayed in equipping them, that they were made ready for sea in a single night, and instantly set sail for the scene of desolation, under the command

* Instituted in 1095, for the relief of persons afflicted with leprosy, and virtually abolished by an edict of the French government, forbidding it to receive any more novices, issued in 1768.

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of the Bailiff Frelon de la Frelonniere, a noble Breton knight, carrying with them medicines, beds and tents, for the relief of the sufferers. On their arrival off Reggio, they found the earth still oscillating at intervals, and the whole face of the country changed. Mountains had disappeared in one place, and risen up in another; the channels of ancient rivers had become dry, while impassable streams watered plains which had never before boasted of a brook. The inhabitants of one unhappy village, Sylla, had been one and all engulfed by a sudden and marvellous reflux of the ocean; and the whole coast was covered with houseless multitudes, wan, worn, and half naked. The knights landed half their stores for their relief, and then stood away with the remainder for the Sicilian shore. They found Messina a vast pile of ruins—its superb edifices rent or overthrown—its noble quay silent and deserted—and the surviving population wandering, in hopeless despondency, over the adjacent fields. Yet, in the midst of this misery, surrounded by the dead and the dying, the knights found the Neapolitan commandant well lodged in a temporary barrack stored with delicate refreshments, and regaling himself with the music of a military band. Conceiving it a point of etiquette that he should accept of no succours from the knights on behalf of the suffering people, until he had consulted the authorities at Naples, he politely declined their benevolent offers to erect an hospital; and their labours, during the three weeks they remained in the port, were confined to surgical aid, and a generous distribution of the provisions which they had on board. Having retouched at Reggio, and landed there the supplies which the commandant of Messina would not condescend to accept, the galleys returned home, followed by the blessings of the thousands whose distresses they had been so prompt to relieve. This is one of the noblest incidents in the later annals of the Hospitaller Knights. It proves that the Christian virtues which shed such a lustre on the Order in the olden time, were not totally extirpated; and that a munificent spirit of hospitality continued to adorn it even in the last years of its decline.

The narrative of the warlike achievements of the Chevaliers of Saint John is now ended—there is not another valorous exploit to record—but it still remains for the historian to detail the cruel circumstances under which the sanctity of the Maltese territory was violated, and which led to the illustrious fraternity of soldier-monks which had, for upwards of two hundred years, exercised over it a clement domination, being subverted, plundered and dispersed, homeless and penniless, over the world. France, the country which had been, from the days of Raymond Du Puis, the grand nursery and

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munificent benefactress of the Order, after a series of vicissitudes, unnecessary to be enumerated in this narrative, lapsed into a state of anarchy unparalleled in the history of the world. Ancient institutions were overthrown, the landmarks of hereditary right were annihilated ;—blood, innocent blood, deluged the land, and crime alone triumphed.

In a revolution specially directed against the overweening ascendency of aristocratical distinctions, and alike subversive of religious impressions and feudal rights, an establishment, biassed, like that of Malta, on heraldic fame, was not likely long to escape denunciation. The judicious economy with which the possessions of the Order in France were superintended, aggravated the danger, by pointing them out to democratic rapacity as a productive source of plunder. "Scarcely any land in France," says Boisgelin, "was better cultivated than the estates of the Order; they were, indeed, in many parts complete models of rural economy; neither the idle nor the poor appeared in the neighbourhood, the greatest attention being given to employ the former, and relieve the latter." The farms not only embellished the districts in which they were situated, but were a sort of local seminaries, in which the neighbouring peasantry acquired the best practical rules of agriculture. It was not in the nature of events that spoil so tempting should escape confiscation, in a convulsion which shook the land like an earthquake, and dashed down, after fourteen centuries of supremacy, an ancient throne; nor was it possible that the knights themselves, however aware of their jeopardy, and inclined to temporize with the faction ready to lap their blood, should altogether steer a strictly neutral course in so general a commotion. When a voluntary contribution of the third part of the revenue of every proprietor in France was demanded by Neckar, the great financier of the day, to relieve the exigencies of the government, the knights were the first to give in their recognizances, and make the requisite payments; and, subsequently, when the unfortunate Louis the Sixteenth was reduced to a state of beggary, and solicited the Order to mortgage its credit in his behalf, it cheerfully advanced him five thousand livres—thus showing itself as eager to ransom the most unfortunate of the Bourbons from the brutality of his own subjects, as it had been to redeem Saint Louis from the thrall of the Infidels, and Francis the First from the bonds of Spain. The fate of Louis, however, was not to be averted by foreign aid; and the Grandmaster, aware that he stood committed with the dominant factions by his sympathy for the unfortunate king, endeavoured, by manifesting a bustling eagerness to protect the French commerce in the Mediterranean, to deprecate the wrath of those

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who had compassed his death. But this wavering policy availed him nothing. First, a decree was passed subjecting the possessions of the Order to all the taxes imposed on other property—next it was enacted, that every Frenchman who was a member of any Order of knighthood which required proofs of nobility, should cease to be regarded as a citizen of France—and lastly, by an edict dated the 19th of September, 1792, the Order of Malta was declared to be extinct within the French territories, while its possessions were annexed to the national domains. This last decree was passed into a law without one dissentient voice. Terror either rendered the former advocates of the Order dumb, or stimulated them to stand forward among its persecutors. A pledge was given that the knights should be indemnified by being made pensioners of the nation; but this was burdened with a reservation, that every one enjoying such a stipend should reside in France, a clause tantamount to complete proscription, considering that, to have any title to patrician descent, was, in those days of blood, a sure and speedy passport to the scaffold.

The moment the edict of spoliation was promulgated, the estates of the Order were sequestrated and ravaged. The knights resident at the various commanderies were forced to fly for safety. Those who fell into the hands of the revolutionary authorities were thrown into the state prisons, to wait the pleasure of their persecutors; and it was subsequently proposed, that those who had retired to Malta and other countries, should be outlawed as traitors to their country, on the argument, that they ought rather to have starved in France, than have gone abroad to look for subsistence. The Bailiff de la Brilhane, the Maltese ambassador, repeatedly interposed in defence of his Order; and at last rendered himself so conspicuous, that he was warned that his life was in danger. "I fear nothing," said he, with the magnanimity of an ancient chevalier; "the time is arrived when it is as honourable to die on the scaffold as on the field of battle." A natural cause soon after terminated the life of this intrepid knight, and, in all likelihood, deprived the guillotine of a victim. He was the last Maltese ambassador ever sent to France. To aggravate the indignities heaped on the Order, the Temple, the principal residence of the knights in Paris, was degraded into a prison, and the discrowned Louis and his unhappy family were incarcerated within its walls.

Sensible of their inability to oppose such a puissant enemy as revolutionary France, the knights abstained from aggravating the antipathy of their persecutors by a formal declaration of war, and tried, rather by acts of courtesy towards the national marine, to

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deprecate what they could not resist. On one occasion, sixty French vessels, richly laden, wintered in the port of Malta, and the Grandmaster was urged to seize them, by way of reprisal; but he only answered, "that the Order was instituted to suffer injustice, not to revenge it."* Had this humility been genuine, it would have been worthy of the successor of the meek Hospitallers of the Founder's time; but the luxurious habits and love of ease which pervaded the convent in the last years of its existence, leave no doubt that an ignoble policy dictated the Grandmaster's reply. He was aware, that the lazy and debauched lives of many of his knights had degraded the establishment in the eyes of Europe; and trembled therefore to provoke, by open complaints, the ruin that threatened to overwhelm him.

But, though the knights affected to maintain the strictest neutrality in the war in which France and the principal states of Europe were ultimately involved, the French Directory soon saw reason to argue, that they were indirectly parties to the mighty league formed against it. The English and Spanish fleets were permitted to recruit sailors in Malta, the mariners of which were reduced to beggary by the inability of the Order to support them; and the Directory instantly denounced the proceeding as tantamount to an act of direct hostility, and in due time prepared to revenge it. Meanwhile, the Bourbon dynasty was completely subverted; and the ancient *Oriflamme* of France, after fluttering for a short space in the van of the foreign armies, which tried in vain to stem the torrents of republican steel that poured incessantly over the Alps and the Rhine, disappeared from the field. Many Maltese knights shared in this war under the allied banners; and when they found their services no longer of avail against the common enemy in the plains of Italy and Germany, they hurried homeward to their own insular territory, under the impression that all the chivalry of the Order would soon be requisite to man its bulwarks. The Grandmaster received them with open arms, though the impoverished state of the treasury rendered it difficult to make a provision for their maintenance; and it is said, that, with the simplicity of a true hospitaller, he voluntarily reduced the daily expenses of his own table to a single Maltese crown.†

In 1797, the cloud that hung over the prospects of the Order was partially dispelled, by a new patron, who suddenly started up in the person of the Russian Czar. Negotiations had been pending for several years between the Maltese and Russian governments, rela-

* Boisgelin.

† Two shillings. Boisgelin.

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tive to the possessions of the Order in Volhynia, which province had fallen to the share of Russia on the partition of Poland; but, before they could be brought to a termination, the Empress, Catherine the Second, who commenced them, closed her reign, and Paul the First succeeded to the diadem. A passionate admiration of chivalrous renown was one of the characteristics of this eccentric, and, in many respects, unamiable monarch; and, on his accession, the negotiations were resumed under the most flattering auspices. Not only were the claims of the Order to the Volhynian estates fully recognised and confirmed, but various munificent grants were added, to increase their value; while a new priory, called the Grand Priory of Russia, was created, and incorporated with the ancient English or Anglo-Bavarian language. The courier intrusted with the despatches announcing these gratifying events was arrested by the French in his passage through Italy, and his papers taken from him. Their contents were subsequently published by order of the Directory, by which means they were first made known in Malta. The Grandmaster Rohan was on his deathbed when they arrived, and he died without the consolation of knowing the success of his exertions. He was a simple, generous-hearted, and learned man; and, had the government of the Order fallen to his share in better times, his talents and virtues would have strengthened and adorned it.

CHAPTER IX.

Grandmastership of Hompesch—Paul, Emperor of Russia, declared Protector of the Order—Penury of the state—Invasion of Malta by the French under Bonaparte—Disgraceful supineness of the Knights—Tumults in the city—Treachery of Ransijat—The capitulation—Severity of the conquerors—The Grandmaster Hompesch quits the island—His death—A remnant of the knights retire to Russia—The Emperor Paul elected Grandmaster—Blockade of Malta by the English—Frightful situation of the inhabitants—Surrender of the island to the British—Conclusion.

The Bailiff Ferdinand de Hompesch, a German knight, succeeded Rohan in the Grandmastership (1797). He was the first Grandmaster ever chosen from the German language, and was destined to be the last genuine Maltese knight who enjoyed that distinction. It is stated by Boisgelin, that he was by no means ambitious of the supreme dignity; but it is certain that he came forward as a candidate for it, and contracted large debts to defray the expenses of his

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election, the success of which was attributable more to the circumstance of his holding the influential office of minister from the court of Vienna, than to any superior personal qualifications. In fact, matters had arrived at such a crisis, that the French knights, always the dominant party, were one and all anxious to avoid being advanced to a dignity which had become specially obnoxious in the eyes of their republican countrymen. Bonaparte, who anticipated the vacancy, had, with his characteristic eagerness to regulate the internal affairs of neighbouring states, formed the project, if report be true, of filling it up with the Spanish Prince of Peace; but, ere the intelligence of the death of Rohan reached Madrid, that adventurer had contracted an alliance with a Princess of the blood-royal, and the Grandmastership of Saint John of Jerusalem was no longer regarded as an object worthy of his ambition.

The first act of Hompesch after his installation, was to ratify the convention which the ambassador of the Order at Saint Petersburgh had entered into with the Russian Emperor. An envoy extraordinary was despatched to the Imperial court, where he was honoured by Paul with a public audience. On this occasion, the cross of the redoubted La Valette, which had been preserved in the treasury as a sacred memorial, and several other ancient and sanctified relics, were laid at the Emperor's feet; and the ambassador, in a studied harangue, full of gratitude and laudation, implored his Imperial auditor, in the name of the whole fraternity, to become chief of their establishment, under the title of "Protector of the Order." The Emperor was pleased to accept of the investiture, and allowed the ambassador to brace on him a superb coat of mail which had been brought from Malta for the purpose, and to suspend from his neck the cross of La Valette. The Empress and the heir-apparent were honoured at the same time with the grand cross of the Order, as were the other branches of the Imperial family—a piece of complimentary policy suggested by the critical situation in which the knights found themselves placed. At the same audience, the Emperor, in virtue of his office of Protector, invested the Prince of Condé, an exiled scion of the Royal Family of France, with the grand cross, and named him Grand Prior of Russia.

There exists not a doubt that Paul, though in many respects an unamiable prince, was sincere in his friendly professions towards the knights; for he not only proclaimed himself their advocate at every European court, but declared, that every favour conferred on them should be regarded as a mark of personal deference and respect towards himself. Meanwhile, it had been proposed in the famous Congress of Rastadt, where the rights of the Maltese Knights were

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stiffly debated, that the Order of Saint John should be consolidated with the Teutonic Order. The Knights of Malta were rather favourable than averse to this proposition—indeed, they solicited it as the only means of preservation; for, in their misfortunes, they saw not how they could better defend the few rights they yet possessed, than by a union with a puissant and independent establishment, nearly as ancient, and constituted on the same principles, as their own. It is more than probable, however, that, had the negotiations proceeded, the conjunction would have been defeated by the aversion of both Orders to sink their own specific name; and certainly it could scarcely have been expected by the Teutonic Knights, that a fraternity so illustrious as that of Saint John should willingly agree, whatever might be the difficulties that oppressed it, to merge in the title of a strange Order, that proud historic designation under which it had gained all its glory.

Though the French republic was contented in the outset with confiscating the possessions of the Order immediately within its reach, and persecuting such knights as lingered within its jurisdiction, it nourished a steady and determined intent to pounce upon, and rifle, sooner or later, the insular stronghold in which they had fixed their government. In proportion as the influence of France was extended by military triumphs and political baseness, that of the Maltese knights was crippled and contracted. The state of their treasury became truly deplorable; and, to crown their misfortunes, they made the startling discovery that sedition was busy within their convent, and learned that a formidable French armament was mustering at Toulon. To show the dilapidated state of the revenue, it need only be mentioned, that the receipts, which were in 1788 upwards of three millions of livres, were, in 1797, reduced to one million. Not only were the possessions of the three French languages confiscated, but the German and Arragonian commanderies situated in Alsace, Rousillon, and French Navarre, had also fallen a prey to republican rapacity. In Helvetia, and the Ligurian and Cisalpine States, a similar system of spoliation had taken place; and even in Spain, Portugal, Naples, and Sicily, new and oppressive burdens had been imposed by the respective governments. It was found necessary to melt and coin the plate of the galleys, and afterwards part of that belonging to the Grandmaster and the Hospitals. To aggravate the pressure of this deficiency, there was a public debt to the amount of six millions of French livres; and so low was the credit of the Order, that no person would advance a single crown to relieve it.

The first division of the French fleet, the destination of which had, for several months, kept the whole of Europe in suspense,

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arrived before the Port of Malta on the 6th of June, 1798. It consisted of seventy transports and several frigates, and made a formidable display—greatly to the disquietude of the knights and islanders, among whom incendiaries disseminated startling and treasonable rumours with marvellous activity. Commodore Sidoux, the commander, seeing the batteries ready to salute him with a shower of balls the moment he ventured within their range, sent a message on shore, expressive of his wish to preserve the strictest neutrality, and merely entreating, that several small vessels might be admitted into the port, to undergo some trifling repairs, prior to prosecuting their voyage to Egypt—the ultimate destination of the fleet. This request was of course complied with, and no efforts were spared, on the part of the French leaders, to inspire the knights and people with false confidence in their amicable intentions. On the evening of the 9th of June, the grand division of the squadron also furled sail in the offing, having on board General Bonaparte, the commander-in-chief of the expedition. The arrival of this redoubted soldier, whose victories and vicissitudes have since filled the world with wonder, was the signal for terminating the hollow and indecisive intercourse that had arisen between his vanguard and the Maltese authorities. He instantly instructed the French consul to demand free and immediate access to all the ports for the whole fleet, with liberty to debark; and though the Grandmaster summoned resolution to reply, that such a request could not be conplied with, the city was thrown into a state of indescribable agitation. The French consul, Caruson, who carried this answer to the General, did not return, which left the designs of his countrymen no longer doubtful. Hitherto a fatal lethargy had pervaded the convent; but now when the hoslile intents of the French General were explicitly indicated, a feeble effort was made to prepare for resistance. The militia were instructed to arm —palisades were formed at several points—and the contents of the powder-magazine in the enclosure of the Cotoner were ordered to be removed into the city. The seditious reports industriously propagated among the troops and citizens, prevented this transference from being satisfactorily accomplished. Neither mules nor wagons were to be found, and latterly a few knights had to perform the duty. Next day, the French troops were observed crowding into long boats in order to land; and at this perilous juncture, the knight Bosredon de Ransijat, secretary to the treasury, sent a letter to the Grandmaster, requesting that the keys of his office might be intrusted to another keeper, and that he might have a place appointed for him to remain in during the action, as neither his duty nor his inclination would allow him to fight against the French. Happily this open defection

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was not imitated by any other knight. Ransijat was immediately arrested, and confined in the castle of Saint Angelo, and the rest of the knights hurried with seeming alacrity to their different posts.

The French debarked at Magdalen Creek, towards evening on the 9th of June. The small but important tower of Saint George, in the vicinity of the landing-place, was carried without the loss of a single life—one cannon-shot only being fired by the false knight who commanded it. Throughout the whole of the following night, the firmament was brightened with the signal-rockets sent up incessantly from the fleet, which extended along the whole north-eastern coast of the island, from Goza to Marza Sirocco. At day-break on the 10th, fresh bodies of troops were thrown ashore at seven different points; and at none of them did the invaders encounter any thing like resistance, save at Goza, where the knight De Megrigny commanded. Considering that the French men-of-war kept so far out at sea as to be unable to cover the landing by their fire, under an impression that the Maltese were prepared to receive them with red-hot shot, and showers of stones fired from the *fougaces*, or rock-mortars by which the weak parts of the coast were defended, there is no other way of accounting for the non-resistance of the islanders than by ascribing it to the foulest treason. The force on the island was by no means despicable. There were 200 French knights, 90 Italian, 25 Spanish, 8 Portuguese, 4 German, and 5 Anglo-Bavarian—in all 332, fifty of whom, however, were incapacitated, by age and infirmities, from active service. The regular troops amounted only to about 3300; but the Maltese militia might easily have been brought to muster ten thousand men. The *fougaces*, of themselves, were sufficient to have done murderous execution on the invaders. They were a kind of mortars hollowed in the solid rock, and calculated to range so as to throw their charge on the spot likeliest to be selected for debarkation. It required a barrel of gunpowder to load one of them, and stones were crammed over the charge till they quite filled the piece. The mortars, fired by a match, threw this marble hail many hundred fathoms; and men, boats, and even ships within their range, were exposed to certain destruction. Their immovability of course rendered them less effective; but still their very magnitude and novelty were calculated to excite dread in the breasts of the invaders, had the islanders had resolution to employ them.*

From the moment the French vanguard touched the beach, no man, knight, servitor, or slave, thought of resistance. The renown

* Brydone et Boisgelin.

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of the republican arms—those arms which had been reddened with the bravest blood of Italy and Germany—was known in every corner of the island; and the warrior monks, whose mailed predecessors had, for seven centuries, kept at bay the savage chivalry of Syria and Turkistan, were panic-stricken, or suborned, and simultaneously abandoned their forts and batteries. Some of Bonaparte's biographers go so far as to assert, that the few shotted cannon that were fired, were fired only for formsake, to save, forsooth, the honour of the knights.* Alas! that the last relics of chivalry in Christendom should stoop to so mean a subterfuge for salvation!

The French soldiers, with their usual license, instantly began to lay waste the island; and it was only then that the native militia, seeing their hearths violated, took courage from despair, and slew several of the marauders. The brigades of Generals Lannes and Marmont first arrived within cannon-range of the city of La Valette, into which the country people were flocking by thousands, filled with suspicion and despair. Rumours of treason among the knights were inculcated and credited by the populace, who manifested their indignation by menacing cries, and general insubordination—a spirit which rapidly extended to the troops, and became more and more developed as unfavourable reports poured in from the distant posts. News first arrived that the Nasciar intrenchment, a work of considerable importance in the interior, had been abandoned by the battalion appointed to defend it; and next, that the Cité Notable, into which the fugitives had retired, had surrendered to the French General Vaubois—the *Hakem Testaferrata* or governor having voluntarily delivered up the keys, before he was even summoned to open his gates. The abandonment of the Nasciar intrenchment cut off all communication between the country and Valetta; and the inhabitants beheld the French leaguer established under their very walls. A trifling diversion was made at the mouth of the Grand Port by a small squadron commanded by the Chevalier De Soubiras, and a sally was also attempted to the landward with nine hundred chosen men; but neither mariner nor soldier deported himself with his wonted bravery, and both enterprises failed.

At midday on the 10th, every fortified post in the country, except the tower of Marza Sirocco, had the French flag floating over it. Eighteen French knights, who had fallen into the hands of the enemy, were carried before General Bonaparte, who, with that abrupt arrogance which formed so remarkable a feature in his character, exclaimed, "What! am I constantly to meet knights in arms against

* Bourienne. Memoirs of Napoleon.

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their country? I will not accept of you as prisoners, but have given orders to have you all shot." This menace, however, was not carried into effect; on the contrary, the prisoners had no reason to complain of the treatment they afterwards met with.

Meanwhile, the tumults which prevailed within the city became hourly more appalling. Stirred into revolt by the reports of treason, which the emissaries of the French indefatigably propagated, the people proceeded to open acts of violence, and many knights fell victims to their reckless indignation. The palace of the Grandmaster itself was stained with knightly blood; and those whom the assassin's dagger did not deprive of life, were exposed to the grossest insults. The troops ultimately interfered, and restored some degree of tranquillity; but, from that moment, the influence of the Order became totally ineffective, and resistance ceased to be contemplated.

The besieged passed the night of the 10th agitated by insurrectionary alarms, and by the sound of their own cannon, which continued to fire on the advanced posts of the enemy after the sun had set. On the morning of the 11th, the disorders of the preceding day were renewed—groups of desperate men traversed the city, vociferously demanding the lives of those knights whom the French incendiaries had taught them to regard as traitors; and these, unhappily, were the very men in whom the only remnant of public virtue was now to be found. To increase the general consternation, two Greek vessels, which had been permitted to enter the port as friendly traders, at the time the French fleet first appeared in the offing, were discovered to be filled with republican soldiers and arms, which were intended to be put into the hands of the disaffected. The detection of this treachery drove the populace to fury; a number of the false sailors were massacred, while the remainder were made prisoners, and the military stores on board the vessels were seized as fair spoil.

It was at this alarming epoch, when all public confidence was at an end, when confusion and disorder triumphed in every quarter, and when the militia, suborned from their duty, lawlessly shot each other in the streets, that a few of the better order of citizens, heading a body of their more pacifically disposed brethren, repaired to the palace of the Grandmaster, and, again acknowledging him as their sovereign, implored him to put an end to the anarchy that prevailed, and instruct them how the city might best be defended. Had a L'Isle Adam, or a La Valette, held the supreme dignity—had the feeble-minded Hompesch himself but had the resolution to brace on the armour in which the latter had battled so victoriously against the Ottoman host, and show himself thus harnessed to the multitude,

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Malta would not have been lost without one honourable effort for its redemption. But he answered the deputies evasively and distrustfully, that he would take the advice of his council as to suppressing the outrages of the soldiery; and the hour of generous reaction passed away, never more to return.

The sun went down, leaving the city a prey to tumult and despair. Fire-arms were discharged momentarily in different parts, and bands of desperadoes congregated, ready for deeds of violence, in every street. The Grandmaster ordered the armed patroles to be strengthened, but this only filled the populace with greater indignation; and from listening to the complaints shouted around them, the soldiers gradually came to sympathize with the disaffected. Next day, a vast multitude, including men of all grades, from the noble to the humblest artisan, bent on annihilating the Grandmaster's sovereignty, forcibly invaded his palace; and, after reproaching him with the treason of his knights, the inefficiency of his orders, and all the evils that the general insurrection had brought upon them, boldly announced, that they had subscribed a paper in presence of the Dutch Consul, delivering the city into the hands of the French; and they held the authority of the knights as terminated. The Grandmaster had not the power of resenting this audacious usurpation of his rights; for the rebels walked fearlessly and triumphantly through the apartments of his palace. He could only agree to summon a Council; and the malecontents, disposed the one moment to surrender, and the next to repose on their ancient government, and die on the ramparts, departed, to be betrayed by the seditious into new crimes.

While the Council was assembling, the tumults recommenced. The knights, on their way to the palace, were grossly insulted, and their lives endangered; and, among others, the Chevalier O'Hara, the Russian envoy, whom a generous impulse had hurried into the midst of the insurgents, with the hope of persuading them to return to their duty, narrowly escaped falling a martyr to his honourable zeal. The Grandmaster intimated, that he had at length resolved to try the effect of haranguing the people in person, and of taking his station at the advanced post of the Floriana; but the parasites, who clung round him, basely opposed this proposition, on the argument, that his life was too valuable to be rashly hazarded—an argument which, in such circumstances, none but a craven could have entertained. In the midst of these deliberations, a tumult was heard rolling onward to the palace. The air resounded with shouts of "Liberty!"—"Equality!"—and "Long life to Ransijat!" and that false knight, forcibly liberated by the populace, was borne on their shoulders to the doors of the council-chamber, where a formal de-

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mand for admittance was made; as also, for a sight of a letter, which, it was known, the Council was employed in framing to the French commander, soliciting an armistice of twenty-four hours. Both the demands were granted, as was a third, that several Maltese deputies should accompany those of the Order, commissioned by the Council to repair to the French head-quarters.

The application for an armistice was so framed as to be virtually a surrender at discretion. General Bonaparte answered it briefly, that he would enter the city on the following day, and would then condescend upon the manner in which he was to treat the Grandmaster and his brethren. The Maltese deputies brought back with them several French officers, who began, without ceremony, to prepare for their General's entrance. Better than his word, Bonaparte entered the same evening. As he passed through the formidable works which defended the landward side, General Caffarelli, one of his suite, significantly remarked to him, "It is well, General, that there was some within to open these gates to us. We should have had some trouble in entering if the place had been altogether empty." The Grandmaster expected that the victor would at least pay him the compliment of a visit; but the French General held that the compliment should be reversed, and at the end of several days, Hompesch so far subdued his pride, as to show him that deference, by which he subjected himself to an interview, characterized only by cold formality and stately neglect.

By the articles of capitulation, the knights renounced, in favour of France, the sovereignty of Malta, and its dependencies. In lieu, the French republic pledged itself to exercise its influence to secure the Order another principality; and in the meanwhile, it bound itself to pay the Grandmaster an annual pension of 300,000 livres, and each French knight resident in Malta, a similar yearly allowance of 700 livres, with three hundred livres additional to every knight who exceeded sixty years of age. It also engaged to use its influence with the Cisalpine, Ligurian, Roman, and Helvetian republics, to grant like pensions to the knights in their respective territories; and further to employ its credit with the other European powers to secure to the knights of each nation their right over the property of the Order, situated beyond the French jurisdiction. The knights were, moreover, permitted to retain their private estates; and the Maltese were assured that their religion, their privileges, and their property, should be held inviolable, and that no extraordinary taxes should be imposed. The commander, Bosredon de Ransijat, stood at the head of the subscribers of this humiliating capitulation. Four influential citizens, all Maltese, with the Bailiff de Turin Frisani, a Sicilian, and

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the Chevalier Philip Amat, the Spanish charge-d'affaires, also appended their names. Thus was the dissolution of the Order consummated.

The French no sooner found themselves uncontrolled masters of the island, than they proceeded to regenerate it in the true spirit of republican fraternization. A provisional government and municipality were formed, and the laws of the Directory introduced. The Commander de Ransijat received, as the reward of his perfidy to the Order, the appointment of president of the new administration; but he exercised his functions under the surveillance of a commissary of the Directory, who exacted the most servile submission to his will. At the conquest of Rhodes, the Turks, filled with respect for the valour of the warriors who had so bravely resisted them, spared the armorial sculptures, commemorative of Christian chivalry, with which that city was adorned, and many of them remain undefaced to this day. The chivalry of republican France, more barbarous than the legions of the Ottoman, tore down or obliterated every record of patrician ancestry and heroic exploit—an act of vandalism almost incredible on the part of an army which carried with it to the land of the Ptolemies and Cleopatras, a chosen band of literati and artists, professedly pledged to fling a shield over the remains of antiquity, and to atone to the world, by their scientific labours, for the blood and tears which their expedition was likely to cause to be shed.

One of the first acts of the new government, was to enjoin all the knights to quit the island within three days. The Chevalier O'Hara was only allowed three hours to prepare for his departure, while the Portuguese knights were restricted to forty-eight. The impossibility of this harsh edict being complied with, rendered it necessary to modify it, particularly in regard to the aged and infirm. About ten pounds sterling (240 livres) was advanced to each knight for the expenses of his journey, but he was not permitted to depart until he had torn the cross, the emblem of his Order, from his breast, and mounted the tricoloured cockade. The citizens also were speedily made to feel the oppressive yoke under which they had fallen. The French fleet being in want of sailors, a general press was ordered, and the whole able-bodied mariners on the island, together with the Grandmaster's guard, and all the enrolled soldiers, were swept away. Promises were made that their wives and families, who were naturally filled with despair at their seizure, should be supported during their absence; but these were speedily violated and forgotten.

Humbled to the earth by these proceedings, the Grandmaster made haste to quit a residence which republican insolence had rendered intolerable; but, no sooner were his intentions promulgated,

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than he was beset by his creditors, all clamorous for the settlement of their demands. In these circumstances, he claimed the plate of his palace, and of the different inns, together with the jewels preserved in the treasury of the Order; but Ransijat and his coadjutors answered that the whole had become public property, and that all that could be granted to him was a pecuniary equivalent. To facilitate the degraded chief's departure, six hundred thousand French livres were accordingly advanced, as an indemnification—three hundred of which were handed over to his creditors. He was not even allowed to carry with him the archives of his Order. All that republican rapacity consented to spare, were a part of the true cross, which the knights had brought with them from the Holy Land, the hand of Saint John, presented by the Sultan Bajazet to the Grandmaster D'Aubusson, and a miraculous image of the Holy Virgin of Philerme. Even these relics, regarding the genuineness of which, it were idle to institute an inquiry, were not given up until they had been completely stripped of the valuable ornaments with which chivalrous superstition had surrounded them.

Hompesch embarked on the night of the 17th of June. He took his passage on board a merchant-ship bound for Trieste, and a French frigate convoyed him, more from policy than from respect, as far as Meleda, on the Dalmatian coast. Twelve knights, the majority of them commanders, and two servants-at-arms, accompanied him into exile. The voyage lasted thirty-nine days; and so heartly sickened were the party of each other's society, that the Grandmaster resigned his office the moment he landed, and separated himself for ever from the companions of his flight. Of this weak man, who died in obscurity at Montpellier in 1804, aged sixty-two, nothing further need be said. He had forced himself into an office for which nature had not qualified him; and he expiated his vainglorious error, by being obliged to acknowledge it in times of difficulty and disgrace.

The French expedition, with General Bonaparte at its head, weighed anchor from Malta on the 19th June, two days after the Grandmaster's departure. Four thousand men under General Vaubois were left on the island. The rarities found in the public treasury and in the churches, together with the standards and trophies of the Order, were all carried away by the spoilers; but these relics never reached the country for which they were destined. Part of them perished in the *Orient*, the French flag-ship, which was blown up in the memorable naval battle of Aboukir; and the rest were captured by the English in the *Sensible* frigate, which shortly after fell into their hands. Considering the hopeless debasement of the

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Order—so lamentably indicated by the treason and total absence of public magnanimity that pervaded all ranks—it is not surprising that many of the knights readily enlisted under the French banner—some to perish, as many of their predecessors had done, on the sands of Egypt; others to close their eyes before the walls of Saint John D'Acre—that city which the valour of the ancient Hospitallers had immortalized—and which, on that occasion, the valour of a single British knight, Sir Sidney Smith, may be said to have saved. The fate of those who, on the faith of the capitulation, sought an asylum in France, was still more deplorable. They were refused entrance into the ports where they wished to land; and many of them, reduced to the condition of beggarly wanderers, died from actual privation. Nor did Ransijat himself escape the contumely and destitution that perfidy and apostacy almost invariably bring in their train. Treated with neglect by the republic, though he had bartered his honour to serve it, and scouted even by his own kindred for his notorious want of faith, his last solace was taking up the chronicler's pen, and venting, in futile recriminations, the bitterness of spirit which disappointed ambition had engendered.*

The knights who followed the most prosperous course at the general dispersion, were those who took refuge in the Russian dominions, under the wing of their Imperial protector. Filled with boundless gratitude for the benefactions he heaped upon them, and eager at once to gratify him, and to place a broader shield between themselves and their oppressors, they constituted themselves a regular chapter, and declared Paul to be their "most Eminent Master," "their sovereign Prince." Paul, who had long entertained a keen anxiety to obtain this now almost nominal dignity, graciously acknowledged the tender; and he was solemnly inaugurated as the seventieth Grandmaster of the Order (1798). At the same time, the standard of Saint John was hoisted permanently on the bastions of the Admiralty at Saint Petersburg, where it continues unfurled to this day.

An election, which placed a prince bound by matrimonial ties, and beyond the pale of the Catholic church, at the head of the Order, shattered at once the very basis on which it was founded—indeed, as the act of a few refugee knights, who, in their despair, grasped at a reed, in the hope that it would support them, some writers argue, that it ought to form no part or parcel of the legal proceedings of the Order.† Be this as it may, the election was

* Journal du Siege et Blocus de Malthe.

† This was not the first instance, however, in which the statutes were set aside in favour of schismatics. So far back as the grandmastership of Fulk de Villaret (1309),

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bitterly reprobated by the Pope; and the Elector of Bavaria, to get rid of the disputes in which it involved him, abolished the Order in his dominions. Paul entered on his duties with alacrity, by instantly creating a new Russian priory for his Greek nobles, which he provided abundantly with rules and statutes, and generously endowed. His election was formally notified to all the Courts of Europe; and the whole nobility of Christendom were invited to become knights of the regenerated Order, on production of the requisite gentilitial proofs. Paul also, at first, contemplated sending a military force to co-operate with the English and Neapolitans in the reconquest of Malta; but events, over which he had no control, defeated the project; and, by one of those sudden mutations in policy, for which modern times have been so remarkable, the troops who were to have acted as the auxiliaries of England in the expedition, were ordered to hold themselves in readiness to traverse the wastes of Central Asia, and assail the British possessions in the East—an enterprise, however, which was wisely abandoned.

Meanwhile, England, single-handed, prepared to wrest from republican France the storied rock on which the tricolour had been so easily planted. Three months of bondage were sufficient to convince the Maltese, that they had exchanged an enfeebled despotism for a yoke of extreme rigour. A licentious soldiery harassed the inhabitants, whose complaints procured no redress—the wives and

the knights of the bailiwick of Brandenburg, instigated by ambitious views, separated themselves from the Order, and, taking advantage of the disputes which had broken out in the convent, in consequence of the irregular election of Maurice de Pagnac, declared themselves independent, and chose a superior of their own, to whom they gave the title of Master. This schism was not settled till 1382, when, by a formal treaty, the Brandenburgers were allowed to retain the nomination of their chief. But, at the Reformation, they adopted the new mode of worship, which again embroiled them with the convent; and, by the peace of Augsburg, they were exempted from the payment of all future taxes to Malta, on the simple arrangement, that they should remit thither 2400 golden florins in a slump sum. The royal family of Prussia subsequently took the bailiwick under its protection, and afterwards some prince of that house constantly held the superiority. It was not till the reign of Frederic the Great that the bailiwick resumed its amicable relations with Malta. In 1763, through the instrumentality of that monarch, it was arranged, that the intercourse with Malta should be renewed, and that the Brandenburgers should pay their responsions into the treasury in the same manner as the Catholic commanders. From that date, the Protestant knights were treated as brethren. By the statutes of the bailiwick, the postulant must be a native of Germany, and a Protestant—though this rule has not been strictly adhered to. Sonneburg, a small town thirteen German miles from Berlin, is the principal place of residence. The knights wear a scarlet uniform, with white lapels, cuffs, and collar, and metal buttons, bearing a cross with eight points. The golden cross differs from that worn by the Catholic knights, having the Prussian eagle in the four angles, of white enamel, instead of the *fleur de lis*. The bailiff takes his oath of allegiance to the King of Prussia. He is the first prelate in the electorate, and his revenue amounts to about 30,000 crowns.—Vide Boisgelin. Hist. Malta.

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children of those Maltese soldiers and mariners, who had been pressed into the French service, were left without the subsistence guaranteed them—bands of disorderly malecontents, many of them sailors out of employment, wandered up and down, to the terror of all who had property to lose, or who loved tranquillity—faith was violated with the public creditor—all pensions were provisionally suspended—and the charitable benefactions to the indigent, which the knights had continued till the hour of their surrender, and which, in loaves alone, amounted to four hundred daily, were entirely withheld.

Moreover, the regulations of the *Monte de Pieté*, or public pawnbrokery, were remodelled in a manner that acted oppressively on the people—and copyholds, which had formerly been held for three generations, were declared extinct at the expiration of one hundred years, by which law many were brought to an immediate termination. So obnoxious was the latter regulation, that it had not been promulgated many days when the authorities found it prudent to modify it. Many minor acts of injustice and oppression, contributed to inspire the subjugated islanders with an invincible antipathy to the government of their conquerors; and, at length, the sacrilegious rapacity of the French agents produced a sudden burst of popular vengeance. An attempt was made to despoil a church in the Cité Notable, in order that its decorations might be sold for the public service; whereupon the inhabitants, rendered furious by a proceeding so opposed to their religious prepossessions, congregated in a body to prevent the sale. The French commandant Masson, succeeded in partially suppressing the tumult; but he regarded it as so serious that he lost no time in despatching a messenger to Valetta for fresh troops. Before these could arrive, however, a second insurrection took place; and the inhabitants, reinforced by the population of the casal Zebug, suddenly rose on the French detachment, which amounted only to sixty men, and massacred it along with its commander. This was the signal for a general revolt. In twenty-four hours, every casal in the island was in arms, together with the whole population of Goza.

General Vaubois was not long in ascertaining the full extent of the insurrection. Two hundred men, whom he sent to reinforce the massacred garrison, were driven back with loss; and several French partisans of distinction were slain, while endeavouring to reach Valetta. The inhabitants of the Bormola, the fortified suburb which connected the Bourg and the Isle de la Sangle, caught the infection; and a conflict, not unattended with bloodshed, took place within the walls. From that moment, all communication ceased between the

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city and the interior; and Valetta assumed the aspect of a place reduced to a state of blockade.

Five days after this revolt became known, the *Guillaume Tell*, French man-of-war, and two frigates, arrived from Egypt with intelligence, that a mighty naval battle had been fought with the British squadron under Lord Nelson, in the Bay of Aboukir, and that the French fleet was destroyed. Thus forewarned, the French commander proceeded to replenish his stores, and prepare for the blockade which he saw at once would follow an event which gave the English entire possession of the Mediterranean. An attempt was made to conciliate the insurgents; but the individuals employed to conciliate them never returned. The resolution of the Maltese was taken; and the promise of a general pardon could not win them to swerve from it.

Matters were in this state, when the English fleet furled sail in the offing; and, in combination with a Portuguese squadron, held a parley, in which it was demanded that the island should be instantly evacuated. The answer returned was one of defiance; and a rigorous blockade was forthwith commenced. Exasperated at being thus imprisoned, and deprived by the vigilance of the islanders of fresh provisions, the French made a fierce sally as far as the casal Zabbar, with the intention of laying it waste, but were repulsed, and forced to seek safety within the fortifications. It was at this time that the Maltese, looking back with regret to the government of the knights, despatched an invitation to Hompesch to return and resume the sovereignty. That feeble-minded man, however, declined placing himself in so perilous a situation; and though several knights, less careful of their personal safety, re-embarked for Malta with the intention of heading the insurgents, their ardour cooled in the course of the voyage, as did the anxiety of the Maltese for their arrival, and the enterprise was abandoned.

The Portuguese admiral, who was left to maintain the blockade singly during the transient absence of the English squadron, having threatened to bombard the city, many of the inhabitants were permitted to quit it at their own request—the garrison being glad to get rid of them, in order that the demands on the provision stores might be lessened. On the return of the English admiral, he a second time summoned the place to surrender, with a pledge that the garrison should have a safe convoy to France; but Vaubois again returned a laconic and positive defiance. From that day the city was so closely invested, that in the course of three months only three small barks from Sardinia, and an advice boat from Toulon, succeeded in entering the harbour. Early in December a third summons of surrender, accompanied by a threat of bombardment, was intimated; and again laconically and firmly contemned. Hitherto,

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the city had been only partially cannonaded by a few guns; but on the night succeeding this refusal, several new batteries were unmasked, and some balls happening to fall within the works, the inhabitants believed that the menace of bombardment was about being put in execution. Famine, moreover, began to stare them in the face; and many who were previously loth to depart, now gladly availed themselves of the commandant's permission to escape into the country from the horrors of a siege, and the insatiability of military rapacity, which, as the aspect of affairs waxed more and more desperate, became cruelly ingenious in its operations. At the end of four months, the countenances of many "bore marks," says Ransijat, "of the cruel privations to which they were subjected;" and even the most zealous partisans of the French felt their sympathy excited by the general misery and despair. In these circumstances, the self-emancipated bands who held the interior of the island, planned an enterprise of a rather extraordinary description, by which, knowing the garrison to be too weak to defend the city at all points, they hoped to carry it at midnight by a coup-de-main. A strong body of the citizens were involved in the plot, and prepared to rise in arms against their foreign tyrants, the moment they heard the clangour of arms on the battlements. Favoured by the night, two hundred Maltese from the country crept into the ditches and along the seashore, close under the city walls; but, while lying in ambush ready to plant the scaling ladders with which they were provided, two French officers, who had remained till a late hour in Valetta, in passing to Fort Manuel, in which they were quartered, discovered the skulkers, and instantly gave the alarm. Thirty-four conspirators were apprehended, and, among others, Gulielmo, a Corsican, renowned for his intrepidity, who had concerted the attack. This man and forty-three others were condemned and shot by the French authorities. They were all men of mean condition, not so much as one Maltese noble having sufficient hardihood to join in the plot, though the hatred they secretly nourished against their oppressors was deep and implacable.

In order to cheer the drooping spirits of the Maltese, and convince them of the sincerity of his sympathy, the English commodore took them under his immediate protection. Encouraged by his support, the besiegers planned an attack on the Cotoner; but it proved abortive. The blockade had now lasted for six months, and the city exhibited scenes of frightful privation. The majority of the sufferers would gladly have quitted the town, and joined the besiegers; but the latter, aware that their departure would be a relief to the garrison, harshly drove them back within the gates. Disease, particularly scurvy, added its ravages to the general suffering; and soldiers and citizens were alike mown down by its fatal sweep. In the course of the first year of the blockade, only fifteen vessels with supplies

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were able to enter the port. Still, so greatly was the population reduced, that, in September, 1799, the French calculated that they had yet a sufficiency of grain to last them for other twelve months. At this date, a pound of fresh pork brought six shillings; salt meat two shillings and a penny; fish, of the coarsest kind, two shillings and twopence; a fowl fifty shillings; an egg eightpence; a pound of sugar eighteen shillings and fourpence; a rat one shilling and sevenpence. Even the flesh of mules and asses was greedily purchased. Happily, a scarcity of water was not added to their calamities. The canals that conveyed that necessary element from the interior had indeed been cut away; but the private tanks continued to furnish a steady supply.

Month after month passed heavily over. In August, 1800, the citizens being totally beggared, and the treasury nearly empty, the garrison was put on half-pay. Still, trying as was their situation, the buoyant spirit of the French soldiers never deserted them. They made gardens in the fortifications, and raised fruit and vegetables to ameliorate their situation. Four months afterwards, their pay was entirely stopped, and their rations further lessened; yet still they performed their duty as became good troops, supported by hopes adroitly propagated by their commander, that supplies would soon arrive; and, by the glory which the voice of rumour from time to time assured them, the French armies were reaping on the Italian plains. The ancient chevaliers of Saint John themselves never, even in the days of their greatest renown, made a more obstinate defence.

At length this gallant stubbornness began to decline. Intelligence arrived that a squadron of storeships from Toulon had been captured by the English; and General Vaubois, disheartened at the news, called a council of war, to deliberate on what should be done; but its resolutions were of an unimportant description. Deplorable as the condition of the city was, the General had hitherto found it advisable to retain in pay a company of comedians; but now sheer beggary and famine compelled him to dispense with their services. Several amateurs, however, supplied their place; and still the French soldier chattered and laughed at stage-jokes, though surrounded by death and desolation. The population, which had numbered forty thousand souls at the commencement of the blockade, had now dwindled down to little more than seven thousand; and all fear of insurrection having evaporated, the people were, greatly to their joy, allowed once more to make use of the church-bells, an indulgence which, for precautionary reasons, had been previously interdicted. At length General Vaubois acceded to a request of the Marquis de Nissa, the Portuguese Admiral, to be admitted to a private interview; but as the Frenchman refused to listen to a word about surrendering, the negotiation failed, and the Marquis returned

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to his ship, followed by shouts of "Long live the republic!" "No capitulation!" Nothing remained but to straiten the blockade, for the Maltese land forces were too few in number to attempt a regular assault. In his despair, the French commandant, with the advice of his council, resolved to despatch the *Guillaume Tell* man-of-war, with all the sick and supernumeraries, to France. She stood out of the harbour in a moonless night; but the Maltese sentinels on the Coradin rock descried her as she was clearing the port of the galleys, and the batteries of the besiegers instantly opened a heavy fire. Thus warned, the English squadron kept a sharp look-out; and, though the Frenchman succeeded in slipping out to sea, pursued him so hotly, that he was speedily overtaken, and captured, after a gallant resistance, in which he lost two hundred and seven men. The *Guillaume Tell* was the last remnant of that proud fleet, which, two years before, had unfurled its sails so exultingly for the Egyptian coast; and its capture completed the dismay of the garrison, who could no longer remain blind to the necessity of eventual surrender.

Famine now stalked openly in every quarter. Fresh pork brought seven shillings and twopence a pound—rats, especially those found in bakehouses, which were, of course, well fed, sold at an exorbitant price—dogs and cats were so generally eaten, that the races soon became extinct—and horses, asses, and mules, were similarly exterminated. In short, the stores were empty; and all that the resolute Vaubois could do in his extremity, was to equip and despatch two French frigates still in port, in the hope that they would reach France in safety. They gained the sea; and, for a brief space, he congratulated himself that the vigilance of the English had for once been lulled to sleep; but, two days afterwards, he was undeceived, by seeing one of them, with the French flag struck, riding in the midst of the English squadron. On the 8th of September, 1800, a parley was held with the besiegers, when the terms of capitulation were arranged and ratified by Major-General Pigot and Commodore Martin, on behalf of the English. The main conditions were, that the garrison should depart with the honours of war, and that their property should be respected. On the afternoon of the following day, two English frigates and some small craft entered the port, while the English troops took possession of Forts Tigné and Ricasoli, and the Floriana. Next morning, the whole English squadron ran into the harbour; and, two days afterwards, the garrison embarked, and sailed on its way to France. Thus, after an endurance of two years, terminated this obstinate and memorable blockade.

Here the history of the Order, strictly speaking, may be said to terminate. At the peace of Amiens (1802), a special article respecting Malta was introduced into the treaty between France and England, to which the other great powers of Europe were invited to accede, by which it was stipulated, that as the Order, in its fallen state, was

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incapable of maintaining the independence of the island, the knights' sovereignty should be re-established, with the understanding that their neutrality was to be guarantied by the presence of a Neapolitan, or other auxiliary force. It was further stipulated, that there should no longer be either a French or an English language, but that a Maltese language should be instituted in their stead; and several additional clauses expressly secured other privileges to the natives. But England, doubtful of the duration of the peace, and greatly averse to resign a position which gave her the entire command of the Mediterranean, and formed an insuperable barrier to Bonaparte's projected conquests in Egypt and the East, postponed ceding it from day to day, till, at length, the First Consul, chafed into fury by that and other circumstances, rushed into a new quarrel to settle the matter. That England was in every respect justified in postponing the fulfilment of the treaty, as far as respected Malta, no unprejudiced person, who consults the history of the period, will doubt. Bonaparte had declared, that he would almost as soon agree to Britain possessing a suburb of his own capital; and had it been evacuated, as it certainly would have been, had the hollow bond of concord between the two nations endured only a few months longer, he would have lost no time in bringing it permanently within his grasp. Since that date, the island has continued to appertain to Britain; and as it has latterly been recognised by all the powers of Europe as a British dependency, there is no chance of it ever again reverting to the Order, or indeed passing into other hands. It is satisfactory to know, that the change has been eminently beneficial to the natives; and that they have ample reason to bless the fortune that placed them under the sway of the most enlightened and most paternal government in the world!

As to the Order—shattered into fragments by its expulsion from Malta, and the dilapidation of its resources—its subsequent history is so obscure and unsatisfactory, that, disconnected as it is with the politics of the times, it were idle to give the details, even though reference could be had to authenticated documents. On the death of the Emperer Paul, his successor, Alexander, issued a proclamation (March, 1801), in which he assumed the character of Protector of the Order, and ordained, that the Imperial Palace should continue its chief residence, until such time as circumstances should permit the election of a Grandmaster according to the ancient forms and statutes, and that the Field-Marshal, Count Soltikoff, should in the interim act as lieutenant of the mastership. In the same year (July), the Council of the Order met to deliberate on the matter, when it was resolved, that, as the elements of a general chapter could not be assembled at Saint Petersburg, the different Grand Priors should be invited to convene their chapters, for the purpose of forming lists of such knights as were worthy of succeeding to the sovereign

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dignity. These lists the Council proposed afterwards to submit to the Pope, with an invitation for him to choose a Grandmaster out of them; but under a protest, that this submission was not to be regarded as a precedent, injurious to the privileges of the Order in after times. Accordingly, (February 9, 1805), his Holiness, Pius the Seventh, nominated Tommasi, an Italian knight, Grandmaster; since which time, the mutations in the superiority have excited no general attention. In 1814, the French knights, taking heart at the humiliation of their arch-enemy Napoleon, assembled at Paris in a General Chapter, under the presidency of the Prince Camille De Rohan, Grand Prior of Acquitaine, for the election of a permanent capitulary commission. The government being declared concentrated in this commission, it was empowered to regulate all political, civil, and financial affairs, connected with the Order; and under its direction, a formal but fruitless application was made to the Congress of Vienna, for a grant of some sovereign independency, in lieu of that of which the Order had been so wrongfully despoiled. In 1823, when the Greek cause began to wear a prosperous aspect, the same Chapter, encouraged by the good-will which the Bourbon family was understood to entertain for the Order, entered into a treaty with the Greeks for the cession of Sapienza and Cabressa, two islets on the western shore of the Morea, as a preliminary step to the reconquest of Rhodes; to facilitate which arrangement, an endeavour was made to raise a loan of 640,000*l.* in England; but the negotiations were conducted with a considerable degree of pompous ambiguity; and the financial speculation completely failed. The formalities of the Order are still maintained with some degree of splendour in the French capital, and it continues to enumerate a number of distinguished members; but the utter dilapidation of its revenues, and the total annihilation of its political influence, has reduced it to the situation of an obscure association; and such, as far as human foresight goes, it is destined to remain.

Thus, after outliving the vicissitudes of seven centuries, was the venerable and sovereign Order of Saint John of Jerusalem shorn of its possessions and political distinction. The degeneracy of the knights themselves, during the latter days of their residence in Malta, furnishes an ample apology for the small consideration which their claims of restitution have received since their expulsion from that island; while the altered state of society clearly indicates that the powers of Europe will never conceive it imperative either to restore their property, or reseat them in an independent jurisdiction. They had their epoch of renown; and though now useless, as the ancient armour in which they combated so long and so successfully the enemies of the Christian faith, it were ungenerous to deny, that many of their actions are worthy of a proud place in the annals of mankind.

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APPENDIX.

I.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE GRANDMASTERS OF THE ORDER OF SAINT JOHN OF JERUSALEM.

		Elected
1.	Raymond Du Puis	1118
2.	Auger de Balben	1160
3.	Arnaud de Comps	1163
4.	Gilbert D'Assalit	1167
5.	Gastus	1169
6.	Joubert of Syria	1170
7.	Roger de Moulin	1177
8.	Garnier of Naplouse	1187
9.	Ermengard Daps	1187
10.	Godfrey de Duisson	1191
11.	Alphonso of Portugal	1202
12.	Godfrey le Rat	1202
13.	Guerin de Montaigu	1208
14.	Bertrand de Texis	1230
15.	Guarin de Montacute	1231
16.	Bertrand de Comps	1236
17.	Peter de Villebride	1241
18.	William de Chateauneuf	1244
19.	Hugh de Revel	1259
20.	Nicholas de Lorgue	1278
21.	John de Villiers	1289
22.	Odo de Pins	1297
23.	William de Villaret	1300
24.	Fulk de Villaret	1307
25.	Helion de Villeneuve	1319
26.	Deodato de Gozon	1346
27.	Peter de Cornillan	1353
28.	Roger de Pins	1355
29.	Raymond Berenger	1365
30.	Robert de Julliac	1374
31.	Juan Hernandes de Heredia	1376
32.	Philibert de Naillac	1396
33.	Anthony Fluvian	1421
34.	John de Lastic	1437
35.	James de Milly	1454
36.	Peter Raymond Zacosta	1461
37.	John Baptista Ursini	1464
38.	Peter D'Aubusson	1476
39.	Emeri D'Amboise	1503
40.	Guy de Blanchefort	1512
41.	Fabricio Caretto	1513
42.	Villiers de L'Isle Adam	1521
43.	Peter Dupont	1534
44.	Didier de Saint Jaille	1535
45.	John D'Omedes	1536
46.	Claude de la Sangle	1553
47.	John de la Valette	1557
48.	Peter de Monte	1568
49.	John de la Cassiere	1572
50.	Hugh de Verdale	1582
51.	Martin Garzez	1595
52.	Alof de Vignacourt	1601
53.	Mendez de Vasconcellos	1622
54.	Anthony de Paule	1623
55.	Paul Lascaris	1636
56.	Martin de Redin	1657
57.	Annet de Clermont	1660
58.	Raphael Cotoner	1660
59.	Nicholas Cotoner	1663
60.	Gregory Caraffa	1680
61.	Adrian de Vignacourt	1689
62.	Raymond Perellos	1694
63.	Mark Anthony Zondodari	1720
64.	Manuel de Villena	1722
65.	Raymond Despuig	1736
66.	Emanuel Pinto de Fonseca	1741
67.	Francis Ximenes	1773
68.	Emanuel de Rohan	1775
69.	Ferdinand de Hompesch	1797
70.	The Emperor Paul of Russia	1798

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II.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE GRANDMASTERS OF THE KNIGHTS TEMPLARS.*

	Elected A. D.
1. Hugh de Payens	1118
2. Robert of Burgundy	1139
3. Everard de Barri	1147
4. Bernard de Trenellape	1151
5. Bertrand de Blanchefort	1154
6. Philip of Naples	1169
7. Odo de St. Amand	1171
8. Arnold de Troye	1180
9. John Terricus	1185
10. Gerard Ridefort	1187
11. Robert Sablæus	1191
12. Gilbert Gralius	1196
13. Philip de Plessis	1201
14. William de Carnota	1217
15. Peter de Montagu	1218
16. Armaud de Petragrossa	1229
17. Herman Petragrorius	1237
18. William de Rupefort (Regent)	1244
19. William de Sonnac	1247
20. Reginald Vichierius	1250
21. Thomas Beraud	1257
22. William de Beaujeau	1274
23. Theobald Gaudinius	1291
24. Jacques de Molai	1298
25. John Mark Lamienius (Order suppressed)	1314
26. Thomas Theobald Alexandrinus	1324
27. Arnold de Braque	1340
28. John de Claremont	E
29. Bertrand Du Guesclin	
30. John Arminiacus	
31. Bernard Arminiacus	
32. John Arminiacus	
33. John de Croy	
34. Bernard Imbault (Regent)	
35. Robert de Senoncourt	
36. Galeatius de Salazar	
37. Philip Chabot	
38. Gaspard de Jaltiaco Tavannensis	
39. Henry de Montmorençi	
40. Charles de Valois	
41. James Ruxellius de Granceio	
42. James Henry de Durefort, Duc de Duras	
43. Philip Duke of Orleans	
44. Louis de Bourbon, Duc de Maine	
45. Louis Henry Bourbon—Condé	
46. Louis François Bourbon—Conti	
47. Louis Henry Timoleon, Duc de Cossé Brissac	
48. Claude Mathew Radix de Chevillon (Regent)	
49. Bernard Raymond Fabré Palaprat	

III.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE MASTERS OF THE TEUTONIC ORDER.†

	Elected
1. Henry a Walpot	1190
2. Otto a Kerpin	1200
3. Herman Bart	1206
4. Herman de Saltza	1210
5. Conrad Landgrave of Hesse	1241
6. Poppo	1253
7. Hanno de Sanger Hausen	I
8. Herman	
9. Burchardus Schuadens (deposed)	
10. Conrad de Fertuangen	

* Several of the names are Latinized.

† This list is taken from Fuller's History of the Holy War. It comes only to the expulsion of the Military Orders from Palestine.

THE END.

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