

A PICTURESQUE TALE OF PROGRESS

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NEW NATIONS

PART II

II

The Crusades

(1095—1295)

The First Crusade

Pope Urban II, to whom the Emperor Alexius made his frantic appeal, set out at once for France, where he bade all true Christians to meet him. One gray November day in the year 1095, the Council of Clermont assembled outside the city gates; knights and peasants, rich and poor stood at Pope Urban's feet.

"O race of Franks," cried Urban, "race chosen and beloved by God; from the confines of Jerusalem and the city of Constantinople a horrible tale has gone forth! A race from the Kingdom of the Persians has invaded the lands of the Christians and despoiled them with fire and sword, slavery and cruel torture!"

A shout of anger made quick answer.

"Think on the grave of our Lord held now by unclean peoples, and on the holy places treated with shameful dishonor."

A groan of horror arose from the host.

"Your own land is shut in on all sides by the sea and by the mountains. Your soil scarcely yields enough to feed so many people. Set out for the Holy Sepulchre; take fields for yourselves from that wicked race!"

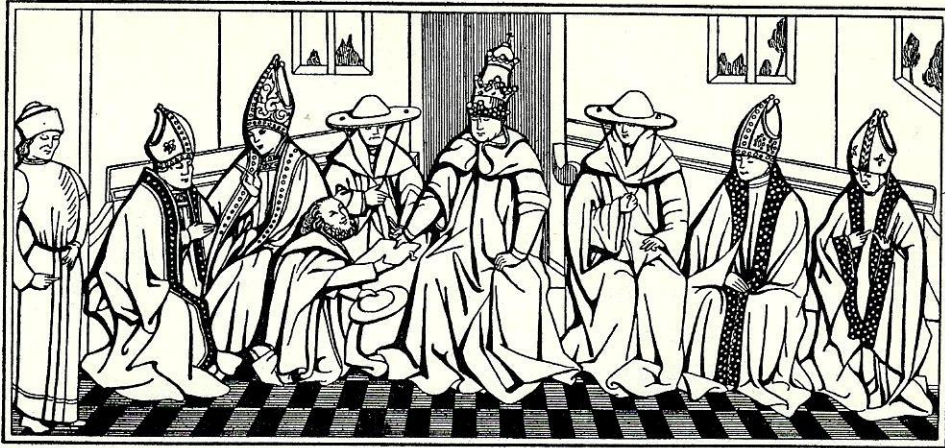
Faces flushed with rising excitement and desire. War against God's enemies! And more fields to be taken!

"Moreover, if you die, your sins shall be forgiven, and you shall thereby win the glory of the Kingdom of Heaven!"*

*From the accounts of two eye-witnesses of this moving scene: Robert the Monk, and Fulcher of Chartres.



Emperor Alexius who appealed to Pope Urban for aid against the Turks. (A fresco from Trapezunt.)



Pope Urban receives Peter the Hermit, who led the French peasants. (15th cent. MS., Burgundian Library, Brussels.)

Hope of eternal life, and by the exciting road of fighting and adventure! At once the crowd started to shout:

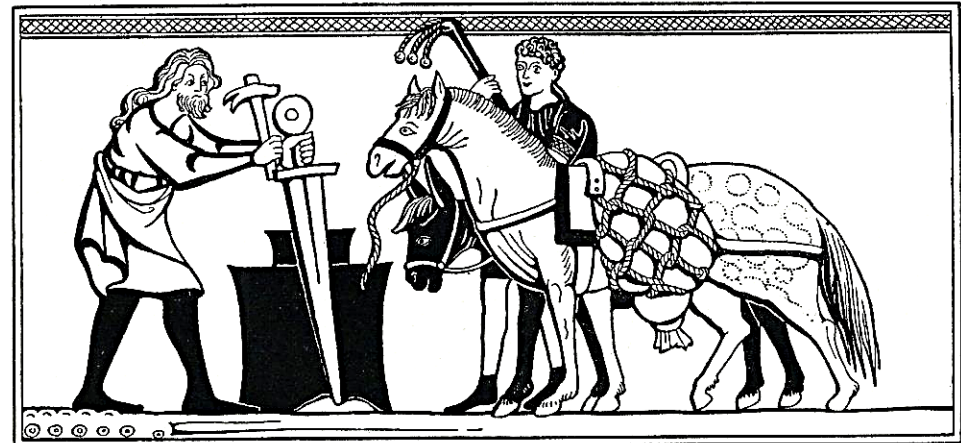
"God wills it! To Jerusalem!"

Then they all fell to the ground on their knees before the Pope, and Urban, passing among them, pinned a red cross on each man's breast. The First Crusade had begun.

From city to city went Urban, exhorting all true Christians to take up arms for the Cross. And throughout the countryside, a wizened little monk with eyes as bright as carbuncles, rode on a slow-paced mule. Wherever Peter the Hermit stopped, at market-place or church-door, the peasants flocked to hear him. He told of the sorrows of Jerusalem; her streets were running with Christian blood as brooks with water in springtime! Harkening to Peter, the peasants forgot their fields and their masters. Setting their children in carts, they started off for Jerusalem, bringing neither food nor extra changes of clothing; for none had any idea how long and bitter a journey it was to the Holy Land. Most of them had lived all their lives on the spot where they were born. Of the mountains, rivers, and seas that lay between them and Palestine, they never dreamed.

Armed with reaping-hooks, hammers, and ox-goads, they straggled along the roads, robbing the fields and orchards and sleeping under hedges, conscious only of one thought: that God would provide for His soldiers. By the time that spring had come, an enormous peasant-army with Peter at its head, had set out from Cologne. Marching through Germany and Hungary and losing many by the way, the peasants crossed Bulgaria and so reached Constantinople; but when they arrived in Byzantium, they proved such disorderly beggars that the Emperor in secret fear, urged them to go at once across into Asia Minor, where most of them were promptly slaughtered by the Turks.

Nevertheless, there were people in France wiser than Peter the Hermit. Those who had made the long pilgrimage to the shrine of St. James in Spain, or as far as distant Rome, knew better than to start off unprepared on such a journey as this. Throughout the fall and winter of the year 1095, in village and castle all over Europe there arose a mighty hammering as sparks flew from the anvils. Swords must be sharpened and tempered, and chain-mail reinforced. War-horses, pack-horses, and mules must be bought and equipped.



A smith forging swords for Crusaders, and a muleteer preparing for the long journey. (*Hortus deliciarum*, Munich.)



Crusaders in chain armor and conical helmets attack a castle with fire and ax, while the defenders throw heavy stones upon them. Western knights wore chain armor, and in the earlier Crusades had unadorned shields. They learned to use figures on their shields for identification from the Arabs. (*Hortus deliciarum*, 12th cent., Munich.)

Lands and property must be turned into ready money; for every knight was to pay his own way and that of his followers until they reached Asia Minor, where they could count on plunder taken from their foes. So eager were the lords of the manor to set off for Jerusalem that they gladly agreed with their tenants to accept the rent in money, instead of the customary labor. Many villeins or serfs bought their freedom from week-work or boon-work in these exciting days.

But all this vast army, now gathering, had no one supreme leader, for the vassals of every great lord were faithful to him alone. In Southern France, the knights gathered under Raymond, Count of Toulouse; in Central France, under Hugh, the brother of the King; in Germany, under Godfrey of Bouil'lon' and Baldwin, his spirited brother; in Normandy, under Duke Robert; and in Sicily, newly-conquered from Saracens by restless Norman adventurers, under Count Bo'he-mond and his nephew, Tan'cred the Bold.

As each little army was ready, it set forth by its own route to join the others at Constantinople where Peter the Hermit likewise waited to join the ranks. But mountain cold and swift rivers took their toll of the weakest; and stragglers from the line of march fell a prey to robber-barons who lay in wait on the high-roads and seized on captives for ransom. The sea-route was less dangerous; for Pisans, Genoese, and Normans had wiped the Saracen navy from the Central Mediterranean, making voyages to the East from either Marseilles or Genoa reasonably safe and sure, and allowing four new maritime powers, the Genoese, the Pisans, the Venetians, and the Normans to fill the seas with their ships. Many a Christian galley now sailed on waters that for several centuries had seen no ships save those of brown-skinned Saracens, or the proud and lordly Byzantines.



A Saracen army mounted on horses and camels marches against the advancing Crusaders. (Arabian MS., Paris.)

But, however the Crusaders came, they pressed on undaunted by dangers; and by summer of the year 1097, thousands of Western warriors were gaping at Sancta Sophia, and staring covetously at the "gold and silver and precious stuffs" of a civilization so far in advance of their own. They were, after all, crude fellows out of rude, half-barbaric lands. The age-old culture and luxury of imperial Constantinople made them gaze with wide-opened eyes.

As company after company of strong, mail-clad Crusaders poured into the imperial city, the Emperor Alexius grew afraid of the friends he had called to his aid, and sent them in haste into Asia. Moreover, he made all the leaders promise that in exchange for money, food, and guides, they would surrender to him all the cities they took.

Eagerly the Western warriors advanced on the city of Ni-cae'a, the headquarters of the Turks, who lay now only seventy miles away from Constantinople. Sweeping out to meet them, the Turkish cavalry boastingly flourished long coils of rope. With these they would bind their victims

after the victory! But the light Turkish arrows and javelins could not penetrate Frankish chain-mail. The Crusaders stood like a rock against the onrush of the Saracens; and when the Franks charged, wielding heavy swords and crying "Jerusalem! God wills it!" the Saracen ranks parted before them like water. Ere many hours had passed, the Saracen ropes were trailing hopelessly in the dust, and Nicaea had surrendered.



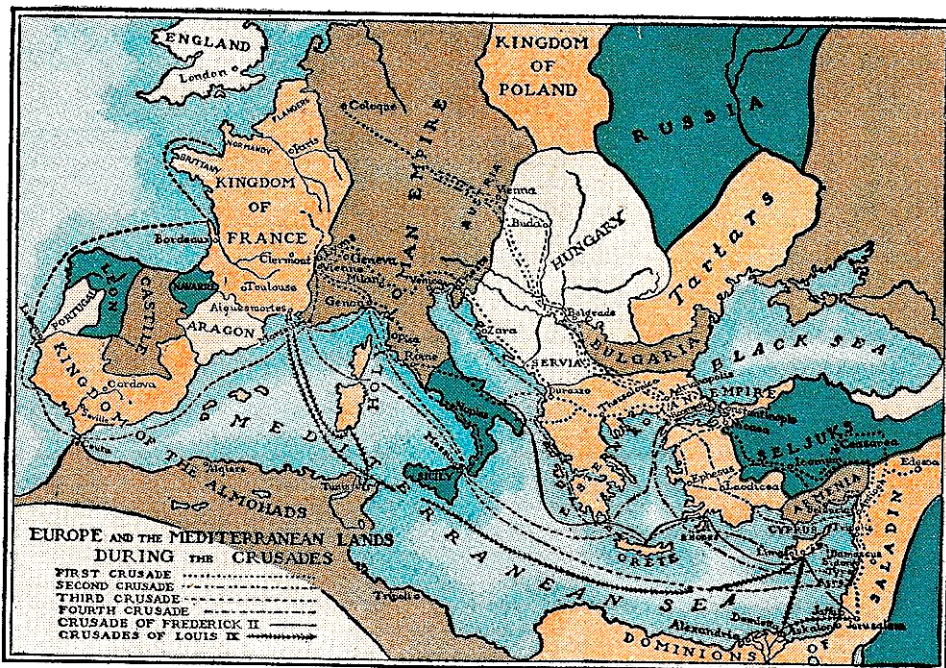
Crusaders fight Saracens. The Saracens have round helmets, baggy trousers, and armor of metal scales. (Window in the Church of St. Denys, built by St. Louis.)

Then the Crusaders pressed on to where the Holy City lay groaning beneath the Turk. But alas for all their dreams! Scarce half of those who had set out so bravely from their homes ever looked on the walls of Jerusalem. As the army followed the ancient caravan-route to the south, a fierce midsummer sun beat down on their armor and helmets. Heat, dust, and flies made each day's journey a misery; and fleeing Arab peasants burned all the fields of grain. Even the strongest Crusaders fell ill for lack of food; one by one the horses died. But whenever some minstrel sang the *Song of Roland*, or, when Peter the Hermit struck up a marching hymn, then drooping shoulders would straighten, as one by one the companies took up the rousing strains. Summoning all their strength, the Crusaders laid siege to Antioch; but just as they entered its gates, an army of Turks arrived and in turn laid siege to them.

Within a few days they were starving; the smallest loaf of bread cost a golden bezant, and poor men were chewing their leather shoes or the oxhide edges of shields. A plague bred of impure food carried off hundreds of victims; and every night furtive figures let themselves over the walls with ropes and fled to the Turkish camp. Those left in the city jeered at these deserters. "Rope dancers" they were called. One night a sentry seized a muffled figure as it swung clear of the walls, and pulling back its hood, looked into the frightened eyes of the once-bold Peter the Hermit. With no gentle hand, he hauled the starving creature back to the ranks.



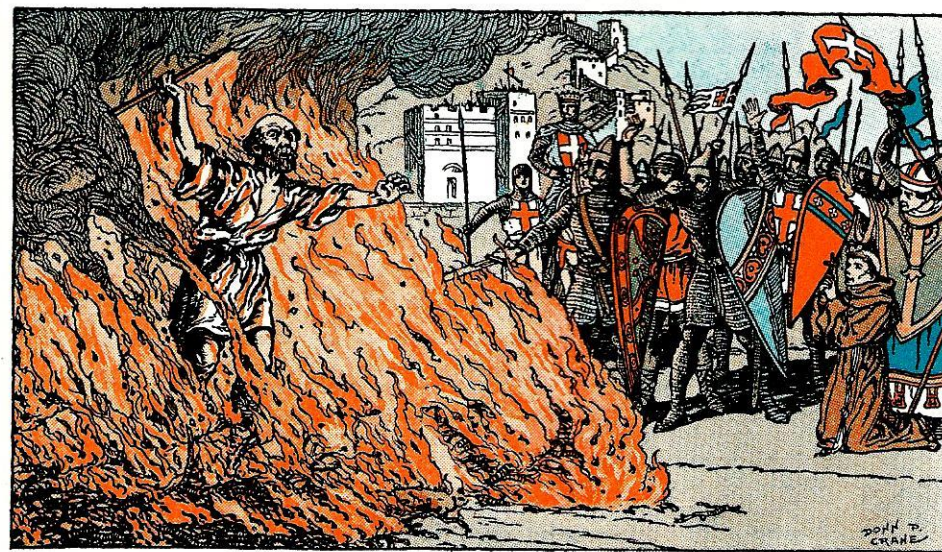
Storming Antioch with scaling ladders. (St. Denys.) It was here that, due to starvation, Westerners eating every little leaf and branch first tasted *sucra* or sugar.



Europe and the Mediterranean Lands during the Crusades, 1096-1300. The most important Crusades were: First Crusade, 1096-1099; Second, 1147-1149; Third, 1189-1192; Fourth, 1202-1204; Children's, 1212; Fifth, 1228-1229; Sixth, 1248-1254. After the First Crusade, most of the Western knights journeyed to Palestine in Venetian ships.

Slowly the spirit of the Christians was breaking under the strain. No help came from Constantinople. They felt that God had forsaken them. Nothing short of a miracle could give them back their courage. And then a miracle happened! A priest called Peter Bartholomew, one of Count Raymond's followers, declared he had had a vision. He had seen buried under the pavement of a church in Antioch, the lance which had pierced the side of Jesus as the Savior hung on the Cross. Sending soldiers to dig, the Crusaders, indeed, found a lance-head, and straightway the starving mob hailed the lance as a sign from heaven and Peter as a saint. With the sacred Lance as a banner, the Christians marched out of Antioch and gave battle to the Turks; and such was their courage and faith, that the Turks fled as from devils. The way was opened again for food to be procured.

Inspired by the Holy Lance, the Crusaders could then have marched on Jerusalem itself, had not Count Bohemond of Sicily and Raymond of Toulouse each claimed the lordship of Antioch, spreading dissension and jealousy through the ranks of their men. Since danger of starving was past, the enemies of Count Raymond said hard things of Peter Bartholomew and the finding of the Lance. They remembered how none who dug so frantically in the church, had been able to find the Lance until Peter himself had leaped down into the pit. The men of Toulouse maintained that Peter and the Lance were genuine; but the Germans and the loyal followers of Count Bohemond doubted both the relic and the man. "'Tis but a rusty weapon put there by the half-wit himself!" "You lie like an infidel! 'Tis the sacred weapon which pierced the side of Jesus!" So ran the accusations until feeling ran so high, that the only thing to do was to put the matter to a test. Peter himself offered to undergo the ordeal by fire in order to prove his innocence.



Peter, bearing the Holy Lance, dashes through the long aisle of flaming branches erected for the ordeal by fire.

Forty thousand Crusaders gathered to see the ordeal. In the midst of an open space was a pile of dry olive-branches, split into parallel sections by a passage one foot wide. Along this narrow passage Peter must run for fourteen feet between flaming walls of fire. Presently Peter appeared, clothed only in a tunic, and holding the precious lance-head. His eyes burned feverishly and his whole thin body trembled, though whether with religious ecstasy or nervousness none could tell. In preparation for this moment he had fasted and prayed for three days. A short prayer from the bishop and the order rang out: "Light the pile!" Even the scoffers fell silent as Peter dashed into the flames. Two or three seconds passed; then from the end of the furnace a figure staggered forth. Peter had passed the ordeal! The lance was truly sacred! Like a flood let loose, the multitude surged forward on their hero, and he was lost to sight in the shrieking, milling throng. But after he lay for twelve days on his bed, Peter Bartholomew died. Scoffers said that he died from being burned by the flames; but believers said he survived the flames and was trampled to death by the crowd! As to Count Raymond, his master, he declared Peter a martyr, and treasured as his dearest possession Peter's Holy Lance.

To such a pitch of excitement had Peter's ordeal raised the army that the leaders dared not delay. The order was given at last: "To Jerusalem, forward! God wills it!"

As they drew near the Holy City the Crusaders forgot their weariness; were they not treading the very roads that Christ and the saints had trod; did not their eyes behold the very hills and valleys that His eyes had beheld on earth? In the stillness of a summer dawn, they climbed the Mount of Olives and looked down on the white roofs and shadowy domes of Jerusalem. Then all fell on their knees and glorified God who had brought them at last to their journey's end; God who had delivered their enemies into their hands.

But the Moslems, too, loved Jerusalem; they believed that here Mohammed had been snatched up to Paradise, and that here the souls of the faithful would await the Last Judgment Day. Therefore, when the Crusaders rushed madly down the hill, the Saracens, fighting fiercely, drove them from the gates.

Raymond, Godfrey, and Tancred debated what to do.

Without siege engines the Christians could not take Jerusalem. But to build towers and catapults much wood would be needed, and the country around Jerusalem was treeless and desolate, all white rocks and glittering dust. However, captured peasants bought their lives by telling where there were groves of trees hidden among the hills. Slowly the engines took shape under the direction of Godfrey, while Tancred with his Normans, and Raymond with his Provençals foraged the land for food, or fought the Moslem garrison when it sallied out of the gates. At last the engines were finished; catapults for hurling arrows, mangonels for casting rocks, and movable wooden towers covered with raw oxhides to protect men from missiles.

The day before the attack, a solemn procession took place. As the Israelites of old had marched around Jericho, so the Crusaders with prayers and chants encompassed the walls of Jerusalem led by their white stoled priests. Saracens jeered from the walls, and setting up crucifixes they spat upon them, crying: "Behold your cross, O Christians!" But the sturdy Crusaders marched on, heedless of insults.



Duke Robert of Normandy in chain-armor unhorses a Saracen noble who wears scale-armor over the usual baggy trousers of the East. Robert was the oldest son of William the Conqueror. (Church of St. Denys.)



The capture of Jerusalem. The Crusaders' movable scaffolding for entering walled towns is clearly shown in this window from the 13th cent. (Church of St. Denys.)

At dawn they began the attack and for two days fought desperately; but on the third day, Godfrey and his strong-armed German knights leaped from a burning siege-tower to the top of the city wall, and beating down all who opposed them, opened one of the gates so their comrades swarmed into the city. Jerusalem was won! The Holy Sepulchre was saved! Drunk with holy zeal, the Crusaders turned their

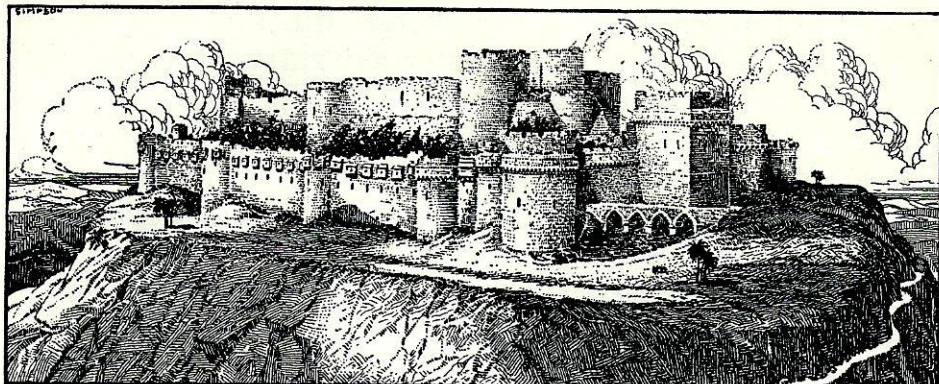
backs on all the teachings of Jesus. For this they had sweated, toiled and died during four weary years! Not a man, woman, nor child in Jerusalem was spared! In all the streets and squares were piles of heads, hands, and feet; and conquering Christian princes wrote exultingly to the Pope: "In Solomon's Porch and Temple our men rode in the blood of the Saracens up to the knees of their horses!" Then, flocking to the Church of the Sepulchre, and sobbing for excess of joy, they put their blood-stained hands together in thanksgiving and prayer.

Godfrey of Bouillon became the ruler of Jerusalem with the title "Defender of the Holy Sepulchre"; for he would not call himself King and wear a crown of gold where Jesus had so humbly worn only a crown of thorns. But the thought of most Crusaders turned longingly towards home. Mid the dust and drought of Palestine, they dreamed of the flowering orchards and the green fields of France and Germany. Knight, squire and man-at-arms took the red cross from their breasts, fastened it to their backs as a sign that their work was done, and speedily set off for their homes.

News of these Christian victories quickly reached the West, and thousands of new Crusaders started for the East. Up at the edge of the world, Sigurd, the young King of Norway, and his berserks of the sea set sail in their dragon-ships. Many of these blonde giants had by no means forgotten their heathen gods, Odin and Thor, but they were as willing to fight for Christ as for any other cause; so they passed three years of adventure, making the voyage to Palestine. Then they drove the Saracens from the walls of Acre to which they were laying siege, took the fortress of Sidon, and visited both Jerusalem and Constantinople ere they returned to their homes in the misty, barbaric North.



King Sigurd of Norway, after fighting in Palestine, views the wonders of luxurious Constantinople. (Norse tapestry.)



A Crusader's castle in Palestine high on a hill in mountainous country. The Crusaders who settled in Palestine built their new homes of massive stones exactly like their old fortified castles in Europe. (From a photograph.)

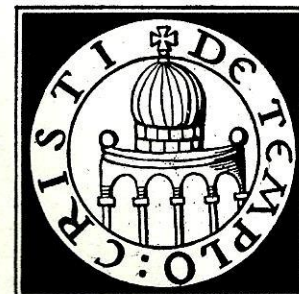
The Kingdom of Jerusalem

(1099—1187)

The good knight, Godfrey of Bouillon, reigned in Jerusalem for a year; and so nobly did he bear himself that he became like Charlemagne, the hero of countless legends, a type of all that was best in a true and ideal knight. When he died the year following the capture of Jerusalem, his brother Baldwin left the lemon-scented lands of E-des'sa which he had won for himself, and became King of Jerusalem. Count Bohemond made himself Prince of Antioch; Raymond of Toulouse carved out a new home in the mountains of Tripoli; but all Christian states, Jerusalem, Tripoli, Antioch, and Edessa, occupied a strip of land only five hundred miles long, by a scant fifty miles wide; and no Christian city was distant more than a single day's journey from some Mohammedan stronghold. These lands the knights of the First Crusade had to defend for themselves; for though many expeditions started from the West, few chance Crusaders, save Sigurd, even reached the Holy Land. The Christians, therefore, built huge, strongly fortified castles to command important heights; but the Moslems were fighting each other and paid little heed to the Franks.



Seal of the Hospitalers. The Hospitalers followed the monastic rule of St. Augustine, and cared for sick and needy pilgrims in the Holy Land.



Seal of the Templars, representing the Mosque of Omar on the site of Solomon's Temple, from which the Templars were named.

Meanwhile, two orders arose as a result of the Crusades, the Hospitalers and the Templars, who soon grew rich and powerful because they combined the two most important interests of the age, in that they permitted a man to be both a monk and a soldier. The Hospitalers were at first monks who formed an association before the First Crusade, for the purpose of helping sick pilgrims; but they soon became a military order, still caring for the sick, but owning and controlling many fortified monasteries throughout the Holy Land. The Templars grew from a group of French knights who banded themselves together in the year 1119, aiming to



Costume of the Hospitalers. Their mantles were long and full; they wore an eight-pointed Maltese cross upon them, over their armor.

defend pilgrims from attacks by the infidels. They were given quarters in the King's palace at Jerusalem which stood on the site of the former Temple of Solomon, and from this fact they derived the name of Templars. In time this order grew wealthy with all the gifts which were sent to them from Europe.



Costume of the Templars from a tomb sculpture. Crossed legs showed that the deceased had gone on a Cross-ade (crusade). (London.)



Battle scene in Asia drawn by a European artist who had never seen the animals and people he attempts to picture. The odd-looking elephants, no larger than horses, with their funny little trunks and short upturned tusks, bearing "castles," and the long-necked camels without humps were drawn solely from descriptions. (MS., Vatican.)

Hospitalers and Templars both helped the Christian rulers to establish their new kingdoms, and soon there was peace and comfort in these kingdoms of the East. Christians and Mohammedans began to grow more or less friendly. Both people were fond of hunting, and the Franks had brought with them to the Holy Land their hunting steeds, hawks, and dogs. Enthusiastic sportsmen, either Christian or Moslem, began comparing notes and hunting agreements were made, that each side might be free from attack while indulging in their favorite sport.

In the knightly courts at Jerusalem, Antioch, and Tripoli, life passed pleasantly for the European nobles. War was still their chief delight, or when warfare failed, those mock battles called tournaments; but for idle moments they had discovered new joys. After a hard day's fighting, these once crude Western warriors came back to rich Eastern foods, cushioned divans, and soft music played by Saracen slaves. They discarded their harsh field-dresses of unwieldy leather and steel for flowing robes of silk. They grew beards instead of shaving in the severe northern fashion; and they learned to delight in warm, perfumed baths, although in their cold northern castles they had considered bathing unhealthy, unnecessary, and quite unworthy of a man.

Some sent for their wives and children; others married Syrian women and their children grew up speaking both Arabic and French. And close on the heels of victorious knights, there came, as usual, the merchants. Harbors from Egypt northward were crowded with traders and shipping; and chief of all Christian ports was Acre on the coast of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. Twice every year great fleets sailed



Tomb of a German duke who went to Palestine. The women are his two Saracen wives whom he had married during his stay there. (Erfurt, Germany.)

from Europe bearing thousands of pilgrims, and twice every year they sailed back bearing strange Oriental wares.

More and more the Franks began to learn of the Moslems. They soon preferred Moslem doctors who treated patients with drugs, rather than their own method of letting blood. Moreover, religious differences ceased to be so important. Christians and Moslems each found that the other was not a devil as he had thought, but a man just like himself.