



SALADIN

A Man for all Ages

LAURAN PAINE

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In the Christian West they called him Christ's arch-enemy, the scourge of the *cruciati*, a vicious, fanatical torturer and beheader of Christians. He was pointed out by the Popes and prelates of Christendom as the outstanding example of Islam's perfidy and cruelty.

Yet this man never once violated a treaty, broke his word, refused clemency when he considered it warranted, nor betrayed his beliefs. He was more gallant, more chivalrous and sincere than the Western kings and barons who rode against him in the Second and Third Crusades. He was also a better warrior. During his lifetime there was no man, East or West, to equal him in the breadth, scope, and depth of his honour and vision.

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FOOTNOTES

VIET-NAM

BENEDICT ARNOLD: HERO AND TRAITOR

BOLIVAR THE LIBERATOR

CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH AND THE JAMESTOWN STORY

GENTLEMAN JOHNNY

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A Man For All Ages

LAURAN PAINE

LONDON
ROBERT HALE & COMPANY

© Lauran Paine 1974
First published in Great Britain 1974

ISBN 0 7091 4363 X

Robert Hale & Company
63 Old Brompton Road
London SW 7

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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
CLARKE, DOBLE & BRENDON LTD.
PLYMOUTH

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Preface

Almost one hundred years ago a Doctor of Literature, John Lord, prefaced his chronology of the Crusades in a way that properly summarized, in the light of current Western thought and knowledge, those vast, colourful, and confusing events which occurred between the years A.D. 1095 and 1272.

His mistake was to impute to history a motivation, a continuum, all its own. *Rome* did not conquer a world, the Caesars of Rome did that. Ancient Britain did not yield to events, William of Normandy came and conquered. France did not bestride Europe, that was Napoleon. History can be nothing but a passage of time, and its heart, soul, and substance, is biography.

Otherwise, Doctor Lord's analysis deserves quoting :

The great external event of the Middle Ages was the Crusades—indeed, they were the only common enterprise in which Europe ever engaged. Such an event ought to be very interesting, since it has reference to conflicting passions and interests. Unfortunately, in a literary point of view, there is no central figure in the great drama which the princes of Europe played for two hundred years, and hence the Crusades have but little dramatic interest. *No one man represents that mighty movement.* It was a great wave of inundation, flooding Asia with the unemployed forces of Europe, animated by passions which excite our admiration, our pity, and our reprobation.*

It is indeed true that in the light of *Western* thought and knowledge there was no one man representative of the Crusading epoch. There could not have been if Doctor Lord wrote in the context of a two-century effort, or from the exclusive viewpoint of a Western chronologist. But had his history reached

* Italics added.

across to the camp of Islam, had it been tolerant of an alien ethos, had it been willing to breathe biographical life into an enemy of the West who was more representative of feudalism and chivalry than was any European Crusader of those two centuries, then Doctor Lord would have found that one man did, in fact, represent the Crusading epoch and further, that at the apex of that "great inundation", the Third Crusade, one man was most certainly representative of the best and the worst of both worlds.

He was the Kurdish Syrian Sultan Joseph, who has, somehow, come down through history commemorated by one segment of a title: Saladin. He had a host of titles, including el-Melik en-Nasir al Sultan Salah-ed-Din, Yusuf ibn Ayyub, which could be interpreted: the conquering king, the bountifully religious Sultan, Joseph, son of Job.

'Saladin' may be a misnomer, but as Saladin, not Yusuf, has this lord of the Middle Ages survived. As Saladin he has been commemorated by the Arabs who revere his memory as well as by those of the Western World who recognize in this ruler of nearly 800 years ago a man capable of bridging an abyss no other man of his time could even see across. A poet of Islam said at his passing: "Think not that you alone have lost him; the whole world died with him."

It was true. Saladin was indeed a man of all worlds. He was also a man of all seasons and of all times and when he died a great impetus died with him.

An Echo of Trumpets

A history of wars, except perhaps in the Teutonic idiom, tends to be unsatisfactory if not downright tiresome unless the ideas, passions and interests of which they appear to be a culmination are vested with a sympathetic identification.

The Crusades were a semi-military, semi-religious outpouring. Every reason that could motivate people was present. Every depth of anguish, triumph and tragedy, every degree of heroism and treachery, every variety of fanaticism, barbarity and stupidity, was present from first to last.

There were seven Crusades and like the diminishing echo of trumpets they progressed from a thunderous rush of uncontrollable hordes roaring *Dieu le vult! Dieu le vult!* (God wills it! God wills it!), to a whisper of tramping feet growing fainter as objectives faded, as resolutions got turned aside, as leaders and lords very practically sought immediate accommodation rather than future salvation. The Sixth Crusade ended outside Damietta in Egypt, where Louis IX of France was overwhelmed by Moslem arms, and the Seventh Crusade, also organized by Louis IX, ended just as ignominiously at Tunis where he again turned aside to seek a conquest—which he failed to accomplish—rather than liberation of the Holy City, his objective.

Afterwards, the designations 'crusade' and 'crusader' were applied freely to almost any contest of arms where heresy allegedly prevailed, such as the activity of the Teutonic knights against the Prussian heathens, the savage suppression of the

Albigensians of southern France in the early thirteenth century, and the internecine Moorish wars of Spain.

But popularly the Crusades, or Wars of the Cross, began with the First Crusade and ended with the Third Crusade. The Fourth Crusade, like the Sixth and Seventh, lost momentum before its adherents reached the Holy Land, degenerating into a war of conquest over the ailing empire of Byzantium.

In the decades of their greatest vigour the Crusades crystallized in substance the thought and passions of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In their concept of glory they were representative of the Latin West during a period when intolerance, hatred of Mohammedanism, and the exaltation of arms needed only the catalyst of religion to trigger the greatest mass movement of spontaneous aggression in history.

The matter of delineation—First Crusade, Second Crusade, Third Crusade, *et cetera*—makes possible a segmentation which is useful for the purposes of dissection and analysis, but the Crusading *spirit* was a continual sentiment marked by high and low points, but without any break in sequence for six or seven generations. It was not originally a spirit of conquest in the strictest sense, although there is no such thing as a war—even a holy war—without some idea of acquisition to it. It was not, however, an effort aimed exclusively at colonization, at securing markets, at protecting trade, or at—initially anyway—plundering empires. It was a spirit that lacked the common causes, at least the common provocations, of war.

It was an unparalleled adventure which did not arise out of the abuse of Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land by the 'infidel' Mohammedans, although that was the initial excuse, the rallying cry throughout the West. It was instead the ultimate culmination of a struggle between Christianity and Mohammedanism which began in the seventh century, along the border lands of Arabia and Syria, spreading eventually to all the lands of the Mediterranean periphery.

The Crusading phenomenon was a lightning spark that flashed with unprecedented speed over an entire world of fragmented principalities, fusing together in one resolve the most improbable and unlikely allies. They met the unique thrust of Islam which, beginning among an equally fragmented people,

poor and warlike, had set out to conquer the world under the aegis of an epileptic who was the initiator of a new religion: Mohammed.

It was to be the last vast struggle based on religion. Even the Reformation, when wars were fought to preserve and secure religious liberty, was not a conflict of faith, but a contest of doctrine against doctrine, lock-step conviction versus soaring free thought, within the confines of the same faith.

The Crusades were a pilgrimage, a war, an absolution. Crusaders were kings, lords, wretches, children, women, weaponsmen, churchmen, hermits, harlots, adventurers. Their straggling multitudes went lemming-like to a near certainty of death. It was, a witness of those times said, "A thing unheard of, that such diverse people and so many distinguished princes, leaving their splendid possessions, their wives and their children, set forth with one accord and in scorn of death to seek the most unknown regions."

Their destination was Christ's Sepulchre, in the hands of unbelievers. (Islam did not deny Christ, nor lack respect for his prophecies; but it denied his divinity.) They wanted with all zeal, with unreasoning emotionalism, to vanquish infidels with their bare hands, to the Glory of God. On the shoulders of their tunics they sewed a red cross and were henceforth called *cruciati*, 'cross-bearers', 'crusaders'. In spirit, the most enlightened among them as well as the most ignorant, were sustained by a mirage, a dream of existence in a Promised Land ruled only by the will of God.

They saw no contradiction between the horrible massacres they perpetrated and the vision of humility, sacrifice and peace which sustained them. Their campaigns, in the historic-philosophical context were clothed with dignity; the results of their blood-letting and devastation contributed to a vaster, enduring spirituality, to the sequences of evolutionary civilization which still echo to this day.

No-one who subsequently benefited from their sacrifices was obliged to condone their cruelty, their ferocity, but that did not alter the fact that for those times, as also for others, the ultimate debasement and degradation of mankind—warfare—was the only total expression history knew, and still knows,

for the furtherance of every great ideal. Marius, Sylla, Pompey, could not negotiate their way to glory. Caesar, Constantine and Theodosius could not talk their way to unity and safety. The barbarians who came from the steppes and fiords by land as well as by dragon-ships, rude, poor, untaught and chaotic, to preside at the wake of dying Rome, could not *buy* the rich, warm lands of Europe and the Mediterranean coastal reaches they had to have, after the year A.D. 476. These requirements could only be achieved by fighting. Although not necessarily condoning that, everyone subsequently benefited from it, even the assimilated losers, and this first law of history was especially applicable during the crusading centuries: wherever Christian and Moslem met, they fought as inevitably as all strong opponents always have.

One authority commented that the Crusades were undertaken "without real necessity". Both sides were basically monotheistic and had a tolerant interchange of ideas been possible, a compromise might have been the result when Christianity and Mohammedanism eventually met somewhere in the regions of Asia Minor or eastern Europe. But both sides saw accommodation with the other with complete anathema; both felt that only a heretic could be worse than an infidel. In the unreason of mutual fanaticism that distinction became obscured. Indeed, such was the blind zeal of the advocates of the Only One God and Saviour on the one hand and the Only One God and His prophet Mohammed on the other that this fanaticism precluded any accommodation that the creeds themselves might have countenanced.

Saladin, whose genius was prescience and whose intellectual scope reached far beyond the horizons and the limitations of his own era in most things, was as unshakably settled in his religious faith as any fanatic. He was a man of unyielding honour, an individual of great heart, great charity and compassion, as well as a lifelong seeker after truth and learning, but in his religious conviction Saladin was a lifelong zealot, and those who have sought to extend his otherwise visionary liberalism to tolerance for any religion other than Mohammedanism, particularly to Christianity, have missed the whole point of his motivation. Saladin lived his faith, fought for it,

razed entire cities and condoned the slaughter of 'infidel' Christians in its name. He died completely and wholly immersed in it.

Saladin represented what the Crusades were all about; no denial of the True God by either side, but total rejection of the divinity of Christendom's Son of God. Perhaps of almost equal importance, he represented the complete difference between the people of the Middle East and Europeans, not just in religion but in philosophy, in race and colour, language and law, morality and outlook. The vast disparity was much greater than the actual physical distance between East and West. And in those times when transportation was limited to legs and wayward sails, when the first trumpet sounded, not one Western person out of thousands knew where Syria was or what a Saracen looked like and the best leaders relied on the worst guides in an enterprise that saw humanity embarking on the most protracted contest of all time, the one which inspired the greatest number of human beings with religious fervour.

The Crusades were an epoch of bloodshed not to be demeaned for they resulted in a mingling of men and cultures to the great advantage of all posterity. But to the thousands who were orphaned and widowed and ruined no such view was possible. For the most part those pitiful survivors left bitter chronicles, like all survivors who live on after wars end, the dead are buried, the grand ideals fade with time's passing. But later, when those people too passed away and impartial history made its judgment in dispassionate retrospect, the Crusades acknowledgeably fulfilled a great purpose.

The First Crusade was ostensibly undertaken to guarantee the right of Christian pilgrims to journey to Jerusalem, a right denied by the Islamic overlords of the Holy Land. However, this was the excuse for the undertaking of the First Crusade, not the reason for it; that went much deeper.

The Mohammedans, who had taken the Holy Land from the Eastern Empire, Byzantium, in the seventh century, were bitterly opposed to all Christians. When the Fatimid Caliphs of Egypt who conquered Syria in 980 were overwhelmed by the Seljuk Turks in 1065, the oppression became even worse. These

very warlike Moslems murdered Christians wherever they found them; an olive branch, a prayer and a plea were an invitation to decapitation.

Tales of atrocities reached Europe, where indignation simmered, but not until the emperor Manuel VII of Byzantium appealed to Pope Gregory VII for aid against the infidels did any general idea of vigorous opposition appear. The agitation continued and finally Pope Urban II, successor to Gregory, brought the agitation to a practical issue. He was moved by personal zeal as much as by the vivid appeals of a holy man, Peter the Hermit, an ascetic who ate neither bread nor meat and who rode a grey mule in an aimless odyssey of preaching.

At a great council in 1095, held at Clermont, France, it was decided to wage a holy war against Islam, with the practical objective to be the liberation of the Holy Land. Pope Urban's impassioned address to a vast gathering of clergymen, lords and others, at the council, brought about an unprecedented emotional outburst. An entirely new idea was born. Christendom embraced it wholeheartedly. From all over Europe thousands upon thousands of people wearing the hastily stitched-on Crusaders' cross hurried to join others and begin the march. There was little direction and practically no leadership. People went straggling off in the direction of Jerusalem with little more than weapons and the clothes on their backs. Four great disorderly 'armies' numbering in excess of a quarter of a million people were on the road, before the disciplined hosts of European chivalry were organized and ready.

The first horde, under a Burgundian, Walter the Penniless, numbered 20,000 people of both sexes and all ages. It ravaged its way across Hungary, stealing, looting, plundering. In Bulgaria the natives organized a defence and cut it to pieces. A few bedraggled survivors, including Walter the Penniless, later reached Constantinople.

The second horde, led by Peter the Hermit and consisting of 40,000 men, women, and children, followed the same route as its predecessor, and although it encountered fierce and deadly opposition all the way, eventually reached Constantinople, where it recruited the remnant of the first horde, crossed the Bosphorus and went, chanting and praying, into battle with

the Turks at Nicaea, where both hordes were utterly defeated and decimated.

A third horde of 15,000 Germans led by a priest named Gottschalk, was massacred in Hungary. The same fate befell the fourth horde, also in Hungary. This party consisted of something like 200,000 people from England, Lorraine, and Flanders, who had poured through Germany committing every manner of atrocity, particularly against Jews, whom they equated with Moslems and butchered without mercy.

Finally, the organized armies took up the march. They moved at spaced intervals in separate and distinct bodies, and although encountering stiff hostility almost from the outset, eventually achieved their destination, Constantinople. The first army marched forth in 1096 and the last reached Constantinople in the summer of 1097.

The leaders of these disciplined *cruciati* were Godfrey of Bouillon, Duke of Lorraine, Raymond of Toulouse, Robert of Normandy, son of William the Conqueror, Bohemond the Mighty, lord of a host of rapacious Normans, with whom rode youthful Tancred the fighting Norman, and finally there was Hugh the Great, my lord the Count of Vermandois, brother of the King of France.

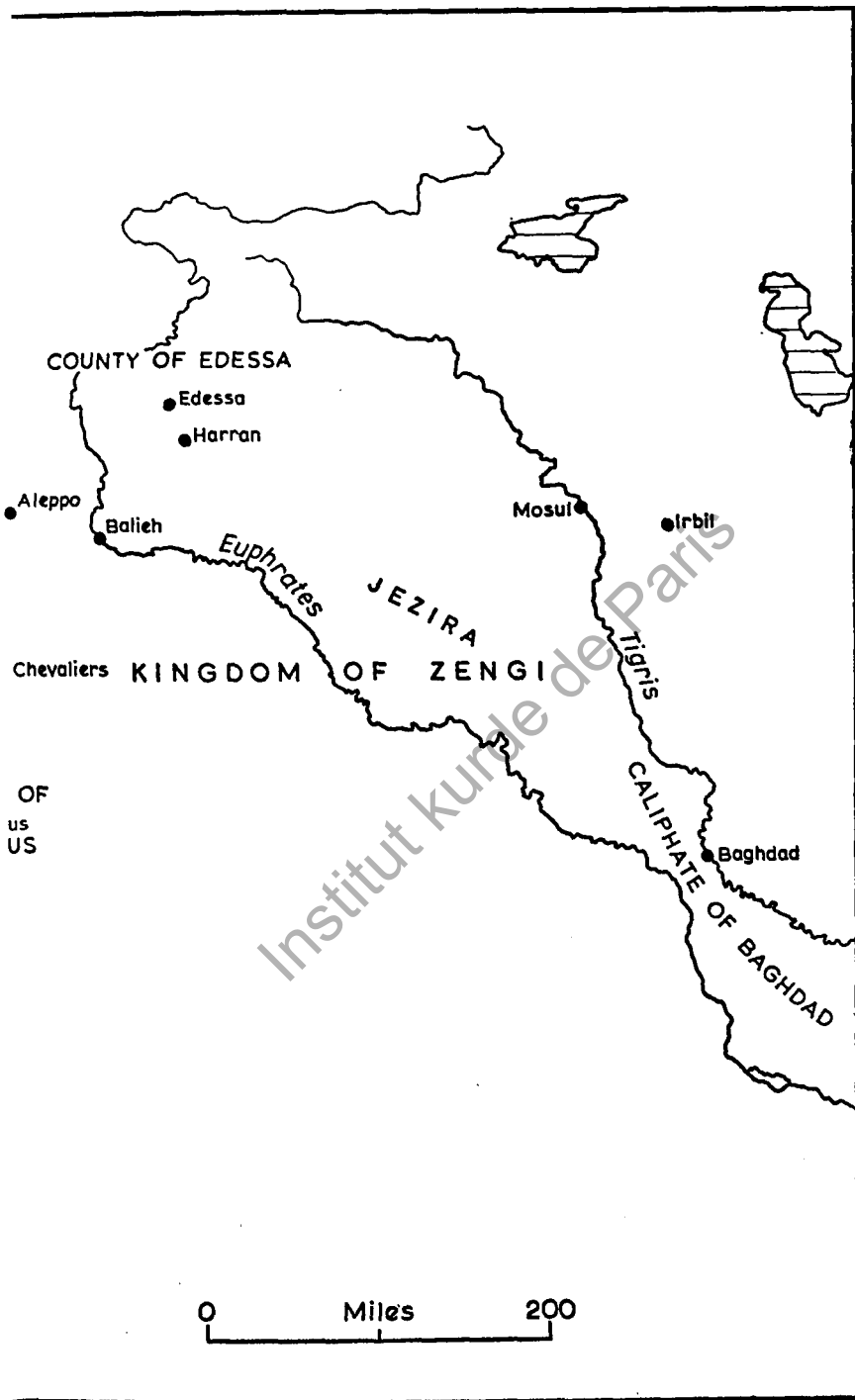
Let the Turks try their hands against these *Ifranji*, these 'Franks', which was the name Islam was learning to apply to all Christians, although it had originally been used to describe only those Crusaders who spoke northern French.

When at last the time arrived to march and the first instances of the ceaseless bickering ended, the great army crossed into Asia Minor. Indestructible Peter the Hermit was present, his emaciated body covered by a cowled monk's robe.

Nicaea, the scene of massacre where Walter the Penniless's rabble was obliterated, the capital of the Sultan Soliman, was taken on 24th June 1097. Baldwin, brother of Godfrey of Bouillon, a descendant of Charlemagne, crossed into Mesopotamia with an army and took the principality of Edessa, establishing a Christian state in Islam in February 1098.

Arriving before Antioch in Syria, the Crusaders laid siege and at length the city fell on 3rd June 1098. Infuriated Crusaders put the populace to the sword and in turn, when a





Persian army 200,000-strong appeared, the besiegers became the besieged.

Famine and disease were rampant in Antioch. Deserters who dropped outside the walls eventually reached Europe with tales of despair and suffering and a fresh recruitment was begun; but meanwhile a berserk attack from Antioch completely routed the Persian host, and the way was open to Jerusalem.

On a summer morning in 1099, 40,000 Crusaders, all that remained of the invading force said to have been originally 300,000-strong, had their first view of Jerusalem. They solemnly paraded in prayer, then set to work in the face of Moslem jeers from the walls, emplacing their siege weapons.

It was a long and terrible siege, but Jerusalem fell on 15th July and, excepting a handful of ransomed Moslems, the defenders were killed. Even the Jews, who stood accused of abetting their oppressors, the Moslems, were executed.

Daimbert of Pisa reported to the Pope: "If you desire to know what was done with the enemy, know that in Solomon's Porch and in his temple our men rode in the blood of Saracens up to the knees of their horses."

The anonymous author of the *Gesta Francarum et aliorum Hierosolymitanorum*, a participant in the siege of Jerusalem, as well as other major engagements, noted that when the city had been carried, "the army scattered . . . and took possession of the gold and silver, the horses and mules, and the houses filled with goods of all kinds". Towards evening the leaders of the triumphant force walked in solemn order to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and gave thanks to God for their victory.

Eight days later Godfrey of Bouillon was elected King of Jerusalem. At first his kingdom comprised little more than the city, but subsequent conquests extended it to include all of Palestine.

The best part of Asia Minor was restored to Byzantium, Bohemond became Prince of Antioch and for nearly fifty years the three Christian kingdoms in Islam—Edessa, Antioch, and Jerusalem—continued to grow in size, wealth and power.

Thus ended the First Crusade, which started out as a series of one disaster after another, and ended in a success which

exceeded all expectation; if not beyond the expectation of the sponsoring Pope, then most certainly beyond that of the Moslems, and perhaps beyond the hopes of the decimated *cruciati* as well.

The Second Crusade was kindled when Nur ed-Din, son of the Emir of Mosul, threatened Jerusalem after his father had conquered Baldwin's principality of Edessa. When news of these disasters reached Europe St Bernard of Clairvaux preached the Second Crusade, practically forcing Conrad III of Germany and Louis VII of France to assume leadership. This was in the year 1147.

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Islam's Camp

Europe during the Crusades was different from what it became afterwards, when a forerunner of nationalism replaced feudalism. Not only geographically but spiritually. During the Crusades there was one Church, consisting of a papacy at Rome and its eastern tributary in Greek Byzantium. Church harmony was scarcely to be expected, for the Greek spirit, revelling in subtle theological metaphysics, clashed with the lucid, sombre genius of the Latin episcopate. Still, there was a common ground, and for a time, with more momentous events at hand, a schism was impractical; Christians, whether of East or West, had very great need of each other.

Geographically, the situation of Christendom was even less enviable, for while it was strong, Christianity was not the dominant faith of the world in Medieval times, when 'civilization' meant North Africa, Asia Minor, Egypt, Syria, Persia, Mesopotamia, and Europe.

In this vast arena Judaism, Christianity and Moham-medanism co-existed unpredictably and intolerantly. The rivalry that developed between the richer, more urbane and civilized Eastern church and the poorer and less sophisticated Church of Rome, was already on a collision course when the Byzantine Emperor Manuel appealed for help to Pope Gregory against the Moslem East. The appeal was answered by Pope Urban and the Crusades began, but the schism which subsequently was held in abeyance was never resolved, and while in

fact Christianity presented a face of unity it was not actually unified at all; was not even reconciled, except in its opposition to Islam, and as time passed that opposition became increasingly recognizable, in Christianity's camp, as having less to do with spirituality and more to do with politics.

Byzantium, Christianity's outpost in the Moslem East, was caught between two jaws of a vice: the hordes of Islam, and its differences with Rome. Of the two Islam's camp was more likely to bring disaster, hence Byzantium appealed for the succour that brought forth the Latin Church's armies. Yet in the end that appeal did not prevent Byzantium's fall, and it cost the Latin West five million lives; it did not even prevent Islam from re-taking and holding Christianity's most cherished of holy places, Jerusalem, but it *did* stop Islam's avowed march towards world domination.

If Christendom had not taken the Cross, if it had attempted to halt Mohammed's zealots principality by principality, the way Europeans had done their fighting up till now, without a doubt Islam would have triumphed, even though its first great thrust had already been fragmented by Charles Martel between Tours and Poitiers, when he vanquished the Saracens in 732 and again at Narbonne in 737. Islam would have won because its motivation, subsequent to the advent of militant Mohammedanism, was far greater than the European concept of warfare based on nothing more inspirational than conquest and glory. Only zeal equal to its own could have halted Islam's camp, and nothing short of that zeal was demanded of its adherents, and obtained. When that zeal evaporated, the cloud of Islam closed down over all that had been gained. Although Europe remained sovereign, its loss in resources was unequalled: In Spain alone there were Moslem rulers for seven hundred years.

When Mohammed began his career at Mecca, Arabia was scarcely known, yet within fifty years of his death in 632, Mohammedans, the followers of this most exalted of all Arabs, ruled from the Caucasus in the North to the Indus in the East and westwards to the Atlantic coastlands.

Never before were men's minds captured so swiftly and so completely. In brusque, simple sentences Mohammed preached a doctrine of One God Almighty and in His name he urged

jihad, holy war, to bring enlightenment by the sword to unbelievers. Initially, Mohammed's holy war was directed against his own kind, who were idolators, but in 630 when he led an army against Mecca and captured it, Mecca became not only the Holy Place of Islam, it also became the centre of militant Mohammedanism.

Mohammed's God was never passive. He did not seek oneness with His followers; He proclaimed and those who believed obeyed. He did not hold forth an unending absolution, did not forgive easily and His will was absolute; men were His subjects, not His sheep. Paradise, where the faithful wore green robes, was full of honours for those of Islam's camp who had struck down unbelievers with the sword. Deliverance and delight could only be achieved through implicit obedience to the will of One God as revealed through His prophet, Mohammed.

Mohammed's objective was Arab unity. After that came conversion, enlightenment, and strength through selfless dedication and uncompromising zeal. Mohammedanism was lacking in dogmatic mysticism; it was a philosophy for the poor, the ragged, the untutored. Man could achieve perfection only when he learned God's will from God's Prophet and obeyed it without equivocation or hesitation. God's will was elemental; it had less to do with instruction than with subjugation, and from this first tenet of Mohammedanism arose the war-oriented fanaticism that welded Mohammed's followers into a society of armed believers—Islam's camp.

Mohammed was still weak when he threatened the Emperor of Byzantium and the King of Persia, but when they replied with scorn Mohammed's followers overran them with a fanaticism that neither Rome nor Persia had ever seen. They lived, said one of their chroniclers, beneath the shadow of their lances, and prepared their meals over the coals of conquered cities. By the year 715, eighty-three years after Mohammed's death, his True Believers had overrun all of Western Asia as well as the entire north coast of Africa, and Spain, even beyond the Pyrenees. They were in Europe like a plague of locusts and when Charles Martel stopped them in Europe proper, he was hailed by the Pope as the saviour of Christianity. But although that was true, it was also premature, for two victorious cam-

paigns did not ensure total victory. Not when conquest simply for its own sake was never the issue.

Nevertheless Islam was checked. For several centuries, excepting the clashes in Spain and Italy and along the coastlands of Asia Minor, the holy war languished. During this interim the development of the two worlds took totally different directions. In the West, the papacy's ambition gradually forced men into the same narrow ecclesiastical path which Mohammed's advent had originally forced Islam into, while in the East, after the ninth century, although the idea of holy war was not disclaimed, Moslem enlightenment found expression in such things as art, science, ethnic awareness and independence, and a separation of Church and State, until eventually the caliph, or supreme ruler in Mohammedan countries, was dominant only in the spiritual sense, otherwise Islam became a series of separate enclaves primarily concerned with trade, secular politics and temporal intellectualism.

Islam as a conquering force had lost its vigour, but the antagonism never died, and in the West when Charlemagne, who viewed his imperial mission as a religious one, made war against unbelievers including the Saracen Mohammedans in Spain, Islam's caliphs urged reunity and holy war. It did not happen then, but it was kept alive in Islam's heart, while the West progressed steadily towards the melancholy era that marked its first thousand years, becoming increasingly morbid and religious until, by the time of the Council of Clermont in 1095, its unhealthy religiosity equalled the same spirit that had prevailed during Mohammed's day, about four centuries earlier in the East, and by then the clash, the Crusades, were all but inevitable.

In Islam the pendulum had also begun to swing back. The weakening sensuality that had been predominant for several centuries fell prey to a new fanaticism, that of the fierce and stubborn Turks, who had as their objectives leadership of the Mohammedan world, the Greek Empire's crown jewel, Constantinople, and finally, all of Eastern Europe.

Even in the times of Peter the Great, the Turks were a formidable power. It was at the Council of Clermont that Pope Urban II urged beating back this second wave of Islam's camp in Asia,

rather than fighting defensively when it eventually arrived in Europe.

The Turks overran Syria, Armenia, Africa, Spain, Asia Minor, even the Balearic Isles in the Mediterranean off France. They re-ignited the spark of *jihad* and fanned it into a vast flame that for a time appeared unquenchable. In fact it was not extinguished until the fateful battle of Lepanto in 1571, but by then the Crusades, as history knew them, were long past.

It was under the aegis of these people that Islam renewed its covenant with Mohammed. Greek and Latin chroniclers called all Mohammedans 'Saracens', a term of vague origin, but originally applied only to Arab tribesmen along the edge of the Syrian desert. Just as Mohammedans had difficulty differentiating between English, Flemish, German, Spanish and Norman Crusaders and eventually lumped all under the name 'Franks', so the Europeans had difficulty differentiating between their enemies. The Turks first appeared in European history when they were driven by the Mongols from Central Asia to Armenia and subsequently overran Asia Minor (and in the process became Mohammedans), and the Seljuks, who were also Turks, deriving their name from Seljuk, a chieftain of the Ghuzz (Turkish) confederacy of ancient Transoxiana, or the Turkomans (or Turkmenians), yet another branch of the same race who were to be found in Northern Persia and its adjacencies.

Then there were the Mohammedan Arabs of patchwork-tribal affiliations, the Turcoples, the Armenians, the Persians, Syrians, Kurds, *et cetera*. It became necessary to find a common name and 'Saracen' gained popularity, but foremost, and most significant in the light of each Cross-bearer's purpose, was the designation that lay at the root of what the Crusaders most anathematized—Moslem, Islamite, *Mohammedan*.

The terms 'Mohammedan', 'Moslem', 'Saracen', were used indiscriminately for all the people of Islam's camp, as the term 'Frank' was used in the same context for all *cruciati*. As the term Saladin was used for Yusuf ibn Ayyub (Joseph son of Job), and technically incorrect as each was, nonetheless they had achieved credence by the time Nur ed-Din, Emir (prince, chieftain) of Aleppo threatened the Frankish principality, or kingdom of Jerusalem, after the fall of that other Frankish

enclave, Edessa, thus encouraging the advent of the Second Crusade.

By that time Islam's *jihad* was alive again throughout the entire Moslem world. What had atrophied after Mohammed's passing was revived under the Turks and although the First Crusade had succeeded, by 1144 much of that success had been swept away before the Second Crusade was undertaken and names as alien to European ears as Nur ed-Din, Zengi, Abak, Shirkuh Saif ed-din Adid, Melik Shah, earned a degree of prominence equal to the names of the earlier heroes of Islam's camp.

By the year 1147, although the Franks in Islam still relied most heavily upon the crusading spirit of Europe to replenish their armies, after half a century they had become more nearly self-sustaining, practical politicians, than zealots. Their enclaves flourished, commerce had expanded and trade existed in the midst of strife.

Islam, too, was a little more sanguine. There had been alliances between Moslems and Christians, and Frankish miscegenation flourished, its offshoots frequently finding favour with both sides. General assimilation was neither advocated nor condoned, although in time it might have been, but there had been a notable increase in fraternizing. These were human beings and fifty years was a long time to enjoy celibacy.

After the death of Zengi in the late summer of 1146, when he fell victim to an assassin's knife, and during the progress of Nur ed-Din Mahmud, his youngest son, to prominence as the proper successor to a warlike father, Islam had no great leader against the Franks, although it had any number of lesser ones. But the animus was still alive.

Millions of Moslems were in arms. The entire Saracen world was acutely aware of the alien presence, and if there had been a degree of practical accommodation, from time to time, between the *emirs* and caliphs of Islam's camp, and the Europeans, to the Moslems who formed the great armies, at least those who did not live in the Frankish shadow, the Prophet's unyielding virulence against infidels was law.

But there was no great leader, for a time, so the Franks were able to cling to their holdings a little longer.

When Zengi re-took Edessa, the first Frankish possession of real importance to be re-taken, he condoned a massacre of fifteen thousand people of both sexes and all ages. Every Frank who came into Moslem hands was put to death, including small children.

Zengi was a great champion of Islam and so was his youngest son, with this difference: Zengi's cruelty was only *indirectly* the result of his religion—two years before taking the great city of Edessa, Zengi had the entire Moslem garrison of the city of Baalbek crucified—but Nur ed-Din's equal ferocity was *directly* the result of his religious fanaticism.

Nur ed-Din became the leader Islam needed. Instead of allowing fragmentation of the Zengid dynasty, he brought it in time to its greatest eminence. He was a merciless religious fanatic; he was also a man of solemn dignity who never departed one iota from the precepts of the law. He avoided the pomp of a potentate and was uncompromisingly faithful to the things he believed in. His word was never broken. He was inexorable in his judgments, but never hasty in arriving at them. His harshness towards the infidel Franks derived directly from his dedication to the Prophet's injunctions, but he could be, and often was, just as uncompromising with Moslems whose zealotry lacked the same total, complete, selfless dedication.

It was perhaps unique that when Zengi died his autocracy was able to survive in his son. Not only because the fragmentation that commonly obtained after the passing of a strong, central figure, was almost assured when Zengi divided his holdings, giving Mosul to the eldest son, Saif ed-Din Ghazi and Aleppo to the youngest son, Nur ed-Din, but also because Islam was not immune to the internal rivalries and factionalism that had plagued the Franks since their earliest days in Islam.

But aside from the genius of Nur ed-Din, there was the spirit of *jehad*. Unlike the *cruciati*, whose zeal had to be tempered by politics as well as by a religion that exalted humility, Islam was motivated by politics *second after* religion; and Mohammed had preached most earnestly *against* both humility and accommodation. Nur ed-Din Mahmud's great gift was the breadth and grasp of intelligence coupled to the narrowly dogmatic religious conviction, that a true victor in the cause of Islam

had to have in order to re-inspire the people he led. Under this greatest of the Zengid rulers, there was no place for compromise with infidels. He did not believe in delay or procrastination, and as his strength grew, so also did the peril increase for the Franks in Islam.

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The Coming of the Kings— the Second Crusade

Frankish calamities in the East necessarily caused consternation in Europe. The French in particular were interested because Fulk V of Anjou and Raymond of Poitiers, son of the Duke of Aquitaine, were Eastern *atabegs* (regents or governors) and French lords equated the Syrian principalities with their own fiefs. Also, there was the papacy's involvement. With the fall of Edessa the peril to the Frankish kingdom of Jerusalem was serious. It was intolerable that the Holy Land, which had been a Catholic province for half a century, should be in danger of recapture by infidels.

Fulk of Anjou ascended to the throne of Jerusalem in 1131, when the Frankish dominions were at their greatest, but although all Syria and the better part of Mesopotamia were open to Crusading expeditions, the matter of entrenchment was paramount, even though it was not the only reason such places as Aleppo and Damascus were never conquered. Another reason was that Crusader valour was no substitute for sound leadership. The leaders of both the First and Second Crusades were Christian knights by heritage, not necessarily by virtue of intelligence.

The extent of European domination was never great, either, in relation to the full extent of Islam. Frankish possessions were roughly five hundred miles long from south to north and

approximately fifty miles wide. They included much of the coastlands fronting the Mediterranean from Antioch through Jerusalem, as well as a number of fortified towns in the interior, plus as many great *kraks*, forts, as could be successfully besieged and reduced. But it was never more than an uneasy tenancy. As Stanley Lane-Poole noted in his biography of Saladin, "The Latin Kingdom, with its subordinate principalities, counties, baronies, and fiefs, was more an armed occupation than a systematic conquest. . . ."

Nonetheless, after more than a generation of occupation, the Crusaders in Islam no less than their advocates in Europe considered Frankish Islam an extension of European chivalry and Holy Roman Catholicism, and while none of it survived Zengi by more than forty years, with the fall of rich and strategic Edessa, the second great call was heard throughout Europe. Shortly thereafter the second phase of what actually was a centuries-long continuing crusading effort, rather than individual crusades, began.

This time, however, the outpouring of armed might from Europe had a more practical intent; as aggression was met with force in Europe, it was now to also be met in Islam. The Edessan principality had been European. It had been attacked and conquered by enemies and was to be re-taken, if possible, in that light. God and the cause of Christianity had something to do with it, of course, particularly insofar as it was practical for recruitment purposes to invoke divine sanction.

The French monarch, Louis VII, a morose and pious young man inspired by earlier examples of messianic kings—among them Charlemagne—took the Cross. However, the German Emperor, Conrad III, was not quite so susceptible to mysticism. He heard Saint Bernard preach for a fresh invasion of Islam before the Diet of Speyer, and agreed, ultimately, to lead the Germans towards Jerusalem, but, as Saint Bernard noted, it was a miracle. Conrad probably had some aspiration to being the first European monarch to march into Jerusalem. If this were so, then Conrad's ambition was greater than his generalship. In any case, there happened to be ill-will not only between the two kings, but also between their lords and nations and to preclude an almost certain clash if both armies used the

same route at the same time, they marched out of Europe separately.

Where they could not avoid meeting there was candid antagonism, something that worried the Byzantine Emperor, Manuel Comnenus, who feared his allies more, actually, than he feared the Saracens. He had, in fact, only recently concluded a treaty of accord with the Seljuk overlord of Anatolia, which placed him in the delicate position of having on the one hand to permit the passage of Louis and Conrad across his territory to attack Moslems, or having to try and prevent this—which he was not strong enough to do. But intrigue was the life's breath of Manuel, had been for all the Comneni, for generations, and in the final analysis the critical issue was for Manuel to be rid of the proud and arrogant armoured might of Europe before it involved him in some kind of internecine strife. He may have been party to what shortly befell the Crusading force—some people thought so, then and later; but at any rate he expedited the European crossing of the Bosphorus and as soon as Conrad and Louis were in Asia Minor, Manuel no doubt hoped for their defeat. He had enough enemies and antagonists. What he certainly did *not* need was a vastly reinforced and powerful Frankish Syria that might—almost certainly would—become hostile to Byzantium.

The route of the Second Crusade was to be by way of Damascus, *via* Palmyra, to Edessa in the Euphrates Valley. This was the practical route because it was the shortest, but it crossed a waterless waste of desert and also passed through a thoroughly hostile and forewarned countryside.

Perhaps the German Emperor and the French King were aware of the very great danger ahead when they disembarked in Asia Minor, but they did not act as though they were. They surely must have heard from youthful King Baldwin III of Jerusalem, who joined them with a force of local barons, old settlers, descendants of the first Crusaders, what their enemy was like.

Nevertheless, the Second Crusade disembarked in Islam as though all it had to do was allow the blazing desert sun to shine off its magnificent armour to terrify the Prophet's followers. For the first time in these wars the flower of Euro-

pean royalty was in Islam, the better to impress and intimidate. Riding with the King of France was Robert, Count of Dreux, Louis' brother. His Majesty had also brought along his queen, the beautiful and troublesome Eleanor of Aquitaine. There were also Thierry, Count of Flanders, Henry, Count of Champagne, Alfonso-Jordan, Count of Toulouse, others as noble, or nearly so, by the score, along with their grand retinues, their wives, children, steeds, falcons, elaborate tents and attendants.

With the German Emperor rode his half-brother, Otto, the Bishop of Freisingen, and his nephew, later known as Barbarossa, but at this time simply Frederick of Swabia. Also, there was a Welf, the Duke of Bavaria, similarly to be better known in other times. There were two great Bishops, Henry of Toul and Stephen of Metz, along with the Margrave of Baden and the Marquis of Montferrat. The banners of the Empire were very numerous, and indeed very impressive, if not to the infidels, then at least to all other Europeans, as well as to the orientalized Frankish barons of Islam.

Of the latter there was some distrust. Many of these old settlers, while armoured like proper Crusaders, wore Arabic chasubles over their steel. Some had relinquished the enormously heavy sword of Europe for the much lighter, and finer, steel of Damascus.* They had adopted a number of disgusting infidel customs, such as keeping harems, bathing, and living in houses with clean floors and courtyards where fruit trees grew. The Bishop of Acre particularly denounced them for having sought to live in harmony with their Moslem neighbours. They made treaties, he said, "and rejoiced in peace with the enemies of God". They "flourished in their rich dwellings amid harvests of grain and wine and oil, they were more used to baths than to battles and even [their] priests left the cloister to go to the public bath. . . ." Outrageous.

* As a knight was required to be able to spring up on to his horse's back unassisted, contemporary armour was not the plate steel of later times but a knee-length shirt of ring or chain-mail, the hauberk. Helmets were without visors and simply covered the head although some had a strip of steel either down between the wearer's eyes or across his cheeks, to protect the nose. The horseman's lance of Saladin's era was rarely more than ten feet long, often only eight feet; it was of wood with an iron or steel tip and much lighter than the cumbersome fourteen-foot battering ram of later times.

On the other hand, the old settlers, while impressed by the fresh array from Europe to which they were allied through nationality and usually by blood kinship as well, were not completely happy to have it in the East. Fifty years of settling-in had made possible, at least in some areas, a kind of general harmony. As the Vizir of Damascus said, prior to the storming of his city by the arms of the Second Crusade, the old settlers stood to lose more from Louis' and Conrad's arrival than they would lose otherwise and it was true. It was also probably true, as was claimed later, that some of these orientalized Franks, with Saracen wives and mothers, and half-Saracen offspring, secretly abetted the disasters which soon befell the Second Crusade.

In any case the Germans went forth first, challenging not only the first *atabeg* to bar their way, Mas'ud I, the Seljuk Sultan of Rûm, but also the deadly, waterless heat of the desert. On 26th October 1147, in the area of Dorylaeum, Conrad's great army, "dying of heat and thirst", was surrounded by a wild host of Moslems, who had been awaiting this day with fervent anticipation for some time, had been gathering from all sides until they numbered many thousands, and when the Germans could not shatter the Mohammedans with the customary mounted attack, in order to break free, were completely overwhelmed and defeated.

Conrad lost over half his army; all his foot, nearly all his horse, and all the pilgrims who accompanied crusading armies, many of his knights, his baggage and equipment, and his war-chest. The people who were not able to escape were either butchered on the field or carried off to be sold as slaves.

Conrad and most of his high officers escaped. The Emperor got back to Constantinople and embarked aboard ship for the Holy Land. The woeful remnant of his army that could do so eventually got back to the walled city of Nicaea, and huddled there awaiting the arrival of the French force, into which it was ultimately incorporated.

A Syrian chronicler related that after the débâcle at Dorylaeum the Turks had so much booty that the value of silver "became as the price of lead". The fate of prisoners and hostages was unenviable. Even those of the aristocracy who could

manage to be ransomed were not always spared. Mohammedan zealots could achieve more honour in the Afterlife by killing infidels, even infidel children, than by allowing them freedom in exchange for gold.

King Louis' advance was less forthright and was therefore a little more successful, and a little more prolonged. Most certainly his tribulations were more prolonged. He marched over mountains and deserts but closer to the coast than Conrad had gone, his progress orderly, his forces maintaining discipline. He lost men to Turkish attacks, as well as to accidents and illness, but he eventually reached Attalia (Antalya) which lay protected by a bight of the Mediterranean Sea within sight of the Taurus Mountains.

From Attalia the French embarked aboard Greek ships on a course between the mainland and Cyprus, for St Symeon, which was the port of Antioch, presumably in the friendly hands of the Syrian Franks. An incident occurred at the port of embarkation that indicated how little life mattered; the usual straggling horde of Christian pilgrims, plus some of the French King's infantry, could not be accommodated aboard the crowded Greek ships and were left behind, abandoned. As soon as the fleet sailed these people were attacked by Turks and put to the sword.

When Louis landed at Antioch the lord of that principality, Raymond of Poitiers, Prince of Antioch, who also happened to be the uncle of Eleanor of Aquitaine, rejoiced, while Nur ed-Din and the Moslem residents of Aleppo, inland but not too distant, feared for their safety and holdings. Louis could have marched at once and taken Nur ed-Din's patrimony; instead he attended sumptuous feasts held in his honour—not without some justification; his odyssey since crossing the Bosphorus had been one travail after another—while his soldiers recovered from their recent dangerous and constant exertions.

After sufficient time had elapsed Raymond of Antioch, at this time a large, sturdy, handsome man nearly fifty years of age, urged King Louis to begin the campaign against Nur ed-Din which was presumably the objective of his crusade. Louis' piety, plus an intense jealousy of his lovely queen, got in the way. The King's messianic fervour was marked by an exulta-

tion of the spirit, the closer he got to Jerusalem, that impaired his practical judgment. But it could be said in his favour that Antioch, a city of great wealth and a kind of luxury few noblemen in Europe dared dream of, did not seem in imminent peril. It was a sun-washed, beautiful place, peaceful, old, and serene. Raymond knew better; Nur ed-Din was an implacable foe and would strike when he was ready, but he could not convince Louis of this, so he turned to his niece, with the most dolorous result. Louis flew into a rage at what he undoubtedly viewed as an attempt on Raymond's part to achieve a seduction.

Eleanor did not help matters. A lengthy alienation from her husband which had been in gradual progress for some time culminated when she told Louis she wished for a divorce. The King's reaction was swift, and, for the Prince of Antioch, disastrous. He made immediate plans to leave Antioch, and, under cover of night, Louis took his protesting queen and started in the direction of Jerusalem. His lords and army followed.

Raymond of Poitiers, guiltless or not, had sealed his own fate. A year later his head was sent to Baghdad by triumphant Moslems—the third such head to be exported to Baghdad from Antioch.

In Jerusalem the French King and the German Emperor met again. Conrad's meagre force of barons added little to Louis' power, nor did the additional force of Frankish barons who also joined Louis in the Holy Place. For all its vaunted glory, the strength of the Second Crusade on reaching Jerusalem, was inferior to the Moslem armies waiting beyond to give battle.

Conrad of Germany was the first King of Europe to visit Jerusalem. Louis of France had to be content with being the first *French* monarch to prostrate himself before the Holy Sepulchre. He also made pilgrimages to Bethlehem and Golgotha, fulfilling the promises he had made which, when he told them to Eleanor's uncle, had so depressed Raymond: he had come to the Holy Land not to wage war, particularly not to do so for Antioch, but to do homage to Christ in Jerusalem.

Whatever may have been in the pious French King's heart, this was certainly not the universal sentiment of his lords and barons; they had come to wage holy war, to regain Edessa, to

slay the desecrators of Christianity's holiest of holy places. They also paid homage at the Sepulchre, but a soldier did not stand praying forever. Even a pious king could scarcely do that, not when his barons kept reminding him of his role as Defender of the Faith.

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The Departure of the Kings— the Second Crusade

Since arriving in the East the kings and barons of the Second Crusade had been overwhelmed by an altogether confusing variety of sectionalism and rivalry. They were certainly not unaccustomed to intrigue and competition, but in Islam the frequent affinities and alliances between Christians and Moslems were not just as outrageous as the prelates claimed; they were also bewildering.

In Jerusalem the Frankish lords conspired to induce the King of France to attack Damascus, whose overlord, Muin ed-Din Unur, wished for an alliance of mutual protection with the Franks, and was opposed to Nur ed-Din.

Raymond of Poitiers, Prince of Antioch, had effectively alienated Louis as well as the Counts of Edessa and Tripoli. They now appeared, not as allies, but as rivals. These, with Baldwin III, King of Jerusalem, although not yet twenty years of age at this time and dominated by his mother, Melisende, openly wished to use the Crusading army to further their territorial ambitions. They pleaded in person, sent honoured emissaries, loaded Louis down with presents, and even the Patriarch of Jerusalem himself, Fulcher of Angoulême, was not above seeking to exert influence. For the French King there was no alternative, nor was he wholly disinterested; having prayed at the Holy Sepulchre and elsewhere, having accom-

plished his intention of making the Pilgrimage, he was now ready to strike a blow for Christianity. He did not clearly see which course was best—how could he when no two Frankish barons argued the same cause—but his ultimate decision could not have been worse if he had sought to make it so. He decided upon the attack of Damascus, where the regent was already proffering a palm frond, while in the east Nur ed-Din and the waiting armies of Islam were threatening every Frankish possession. These latter were the real foes of Christendom.

For the cause of the Crusade the decision was deplorable; for the land-hungry Frankish barons, it was valid, if not sound nor wise. From the cold and practical standpoint of tactics and strategy, it was disastrous. But in any event the decision was almost unanimous.

By this time the Crusaders had fully recovered from their arduous trip from the Bosphorus. They had been resting a month in Jerusalem. They had been in Islam four months. They had also had their distrust of the Syrian Franks increased by some knowledge of how devious and completely Easternized these former Europeans, and descendants of former Europeans, could be. But when the army was mustered at Tiberius for the march up to Damascus and the Franks joined with their own armed retinues, full of enthusiasm and good will, the Europeans were glad enough to have these war-wise allies along.

According to an old account,

From the place of muster at Tiberius, the host, with the Holy Cross at its head, marched across Jordan; first went the barons of the land under King Baldwin, next the French, and last the Germans. The mud wall that surrounded the famous gardens of Damascus offered no bar to such an army. But the thick orchards with their narrow footpaths and their growth of fruits and herbage formed a far better protection to the city. Everywhere throughout the length and breadth of this vast stretch of green and trees the [ambushing] Saracens opposed the invaders' progress; or, penned up in lofty buildings, which here and there rose up like stone islands out of a sea of green, shot down their arrows from above. At last, after long fighting, the woods were cleared, and the Christians, wearied out with heat and thirst, made for the river, only to find a fresh army drawn up against

them. "Why do we not advance?" cried [the Emperor] Conrad, from the rear, and, learning the cause, burst through the French battalions to the van. There, in true Teutonic fashion, he and his knights leapt off their war-horses, and, closing up behind their shield-wall, soon swept back the enemy within the city.

The siege, beginning on 24th July 1148, was concluded four days later in a welter of mistrust and confusion, during which time the besiegers entrenched, cordoned off the city and were well on the way to victory, when a number of unique events brought the fighting to an end.

William of Tyre reported correctly that the siege would have been "brought to a successful issue, had it not been for the greed of the great princes, who commenced negotiations with the citizens." He was referring, one may presume, to the Syrian Franks.

Negotiations had, in fact, been going on all during the fighting, both openly as well as covertly. The Vizir of Damascus left no doubt in the minds of the Frankish barons that he would call for help to Nur ed-Din, if he were forced to, and in that case the Crusaders, even if they succeeded in capturing his city, could not hold it against the *atabeg* of Aleppo and all the Moslem armies he would summons. Furthermore, if Nur ed-Din held Damascus, the entire Kingdom of Jerusalem, so conveniently close, would fall next to the fanatical son of Zengi.

It was a good argument and to make it even better, Muin ed-Din Unar, according to a Syrian historian, bribed the court of Jerusalem with 200,000 gold dinars, and bribed the Frankish barons on a correspondingly lower, but evidently satisfactory, scale. Finally, he sent a message to the Franks: "Saif ed-Din [the eldest son of Zengi, *atabeg* of Mosul] has just arrived in the area [with an army]. If you do not raise the siege, and I know I am too weak to defend the city against you, I shall deliver it to him, and you cannot be unaware that on the day he possesses Damascus, it will no longer be possible for you to remain in Syria."

Now, therefore, the Syrian Franks began to agitate among the Crusaders for a withdrawal, apparently telling only part of the story, the part about Saif ed-Din's approach. But the

French and Germans became suspicious and there was considerable acrimony. Despite this, the Franks started to withdraw, which left the European Crusaders the choice of being vanquished by a great Saracen army or withdrawing. They withdrew in anger and frustration, their earlier distrust seemingly vindicated. William of Tyre noted that as a result of this so-called treachery, the French King and the German Emperor wanted "to have nothing more to do with" the Syrian Franks. The only exceptions were the knights of the military orders, the Hospitallers and the Templars.

In Moslem eyes the débâcle at Damascus was only worthy of scorn. In French eyes, according to William of Tyre, the entire humiliating affair was the result of Frankish treachery, and the French said openly that the Turks "were worth more than" the Franks were. Both Louis and Conrad had had enough. They left for home with what remained of their armies, and thus ended the Second Crusade.

But an eleven-year-old boy who had lived through the siege of Damascus, Joseph the son of Job, later called Saladin, had not only had his first impression of warfare and of the dreaded Franks, but had also for the first time seen a great host of European soldiers wearing the shoulder-patch of the *cruciati*.

The results of the Second Crusade affected different people in seemingly unrelated ways. Nur ed-Din, for example, who had feared for Aleppo, was at first mystified by the sudden withdrawal from Damascus. On the other hand the Damascenes were overjoyed to be saved by this same seemingly inexplicable event in their eleventh hour, while the European Crusaders went home in an abyss of despair. Not only had Damascus been the epitome of their disillusionment, they had lost an enormous fortune in money and equipment as well as tens of thousands of lives, and had accomplished nothing except for an opportunity to kneel before the Holy Sepulchre, which may have been enough for some, but was not enough for the great majority.

Most critical of all, however, was the situation of the Franks. They had ridden to battle against their Moslem neighbours with the Europeans, which had forever ruined their chances of co-existing in Islam, and they had discredited themselves in

the West, in Europe, their only true source of armed succour. After fifty years of balancing on the sword's edge, they had made a fatal mis-step, and they knew it.

Nor was their plight made better by the widespread knowledge which gained support throughout Islam that when Christendom's two greatest kings could not reduce one single Moslem city they had given up and had departed. Nothing could have raised the spirit of Islam more than this. All that remained to be done was to vanquish the Franks, and Mohammed's land would again belong to Mohammed's followers.

No Crusade fell as far short of expectations as did the second one. No other Crusade brought such a calamitous aftermath.

Only the Moslems benefited and they managed this at negligible cost, but terrible as were the events of 1148, and certain as their results appeared to be, the major Frankish hegemonies were not to be overrun so easily. But their prestige was seriously crippled after 1148 and they became what they had always been, small, troublesome enclaves in the sprawling, vast Moslem world; it was reasonable to assume that they could not survive much longer. But they did survive, and for quite a bit longer. However, one of the Frankish princes, for a reason no one ever quite satisfactorily explained, did not survive the departure of Louis and Conrad more than a short time.

Raymond of Antioch gathered his small force and, unable to gain allies—none of the other barons would associate with him—marched to attack Nur ed-Din at Aleppo with one thousand foot and four hundred mounted knights. It was such an incredibly rash act that Nur ed-Din believed Raymond's force was the vanguard of a much larger army. William of Tyre was at a loss to explain this, at the time; subsequent historians could do no better. At Fons Murez (the Fountains of Murad) the vaster Moslem army closed in. Some of Raymond's men abandoned him in the face of certain death, the rest remained and, with their Prince, fought to the death.

Raymond was a large, powerful man even in his advanced years. "He made a clear space around him, cutting down all who came near him," said William of Tyre. "But in the end he was overcome." This "accursed prince", it was also written, "was found lying amid the corpses of the most valorous knights

among his followers. His head was cut off and carried to Nur ed-Din. He was one of the knights most renowned among the Franks for his great courage, his extreme vigour, and his mighty stature."

A son-in-law of Joscelyn II, Count of Edessa—who detested Raymond of Antioch—perished in this same fight, a knight under the Prince of Antioch. Joscelyn II rejoiced at the passing of Raymond, if not at the passing of his son-in-law and former vassal, Reynald of Marash. All Syria, in fact, appeared to rejoice, but Moslem Syria most of all, for Raymond of Poitiers and Antioch had been an armoured corsair, a terrible foe and warrior. To the other Franks he had also been an untrustworthy ally. But however much they may have disliked Raymond, the suicidal last act of his life created a situation at Antioch they could only view with anxiety. After the loss of Edessa there had been going on a steady wearing away of territory and influence as the growing strength of Nur ed-Din increasingly turned to *jihad*. The loss of Raymond of Antioch, unloved though he may have been, left another Frankish possession leaderless. Raymond's widow, Constance, became regent in the name of her infant son, Bohemond III, which may have ensured the succession, but Islam during the Crusades was hell for horses and women. It was properly a man's world; even the fierce and conspiring Melisende of Jerusalem, daughter of King Baldwin the Second, wife of Fulk V of Anjou, mother of Baldwin III, an artful conspirator and schemer, was unequal to the demands made of rulers. In Islam there was a different spirit altogether, in the enemy, from that in Europe.

Also, with Raymond had perished his army. Nur ed-Din marched on Antioch ravaging the Frankish countryside as he went. At first he was practically unopposed. News of his coming was enough to send outlying Franks fleeing. But the closer he got to Antioch the stiffer became Frankish resistance. Even so, he very nearly carried the lovely walled city; could have carried it without much doubt if he had gone swiftly to attack it immediately after vanquishing its Prince.

The alliances Raymond had wished for with other Frankish lords, and had been refused, he forced upon them in death. As word spread that Nur ed-Din was besieging Antioch, the King

of Jerusalem and several armies started out to raise the siege, and did so. Nur ed-Din was apprised of the approach of his enemies, in strength, and withdrew.

But the damage was great. Constance and her Antiochian vassals held the city and the port. Nur ed-Din had re-taken for Islam all the lands of Raymond lying across the Orontes River, more than half the territory of the late Prince of Antioch's domain. Worse, Nur ed-Din's conquest had moved the frontier closer to the coast, making what remained of the principality of Antioch vulnerable to the attacks Nur ed-Din most certainly would launch in the future.

All this Raymond had bequeathed the Franks, and it was quite enough, coming as it did on the heels of that other disaster—and humiliation—the abortive siege of Damascus.

But the process of atrophy was not done; Joscelin the Second, Count of Edessa—except that he no longer owned his principality, only one province of it, Turbessel—was required to swear allegiance to the Sultan of Rûm simply in order to survive. There was, of course, the Christian ethic involved in this kind of act that was clearly understood among all Crusaders to absolve them from having to honour any pledges made to Moslems on the grounds that Christians did not have to be honest with infidels. Singularly, on the other hand, the Moslems honoured their word to Christians whom they also considered infidels.

In any case Joscelin II was living on borrowed time, and it may have been a similar conviction that had driven Raymond of Antioch, a fierce and unpredictably violent man, to decide this kind of existence was sufficiently intolerable to drive him to do what he did. If this were true, then it was quite in character, not only for Raymond but for many of the other Frankish overlords; they were all redoubtable warriors. Even their Moslem enemies never denied that.

The attrition continued. Joscelin was attacked simultaneously by Turkomens from the north and by Nur ed-Din from the south-east. He could not raise a sufficient force to prevail against both, but, like Raymond of Antioch, he fought with the fury of tigers, yielding up what remained of his territory almost yard by yard, and in late 1149 he actually defeated Nur

ed-Din's troops, captured the *atabeg's* personal servant, and routed a segment of his relentless foes, only to subsequently be captured in a Moslem ambush and taken to Aleppo, a prisoner. Nur ed-Din's reasons for what ensued were understandable, for those times, but hardly condonable even then. Joscelin was given an opportunity to abjure his faith, which he refused to do, and was then blinded and thrown into a dungeon, where "he died after nine years of misery".

What remained of Joscelin's domain was subsequently sold by his heartbroken wife to the Byzantines, upon the advice of the King of Jerusalem, who doubtless saw this as the best alternative to a protracted war with Nur ed-Din, which he did not want at this time. At least the Byzantines were Christians; William of Tyre commented: "It was better that this land should be lost by the Greeks than by us."

Joscelin's wife—and subsequently his widow—the Countess Beatrice, took her three children to Jerusalem and there lived on in what amounted to a vain hope, supported by the outright payment she had got from the Byzantines, plus an annual pension. The Armenian inhabitants of the lost lands, with reason to dread the Byzantine Greeks more than the Turks, implored the King of Jerusalem for protection. He went to Turbessel with an army, and although Saracens were everywhere in force, he led the exodus, with no major incidents delaying it, eventually arriving back at Jerusalem with a horde of homeless, destitute people whose grief was so deep that "those who saw it wept for pity".

The way things turned out, the Countess Beatrice could be said to have profited where none others did. The very next year Nur ed-Din took what of Edessa had not already fallen into Moslem hands from the Byzantines and Edessa, which had been a major objective of the Second Crusade, passed into Moslem hands, ceasing to exist as a Frankish principality after slightly more than half a century.

Jehad, given a great impetus by the ignominious departure of the gonfalons of the Second Crusade, was inexorably arraying itself crescent-like around the remaining Frankish principalities. Edessa was lost, of Antioch only the walled town and the port remained, and Zengi's son had turned out to be every

bit as terrible and capable as his father had been. Jerusalem and Tripoli remained, and some other possessions with Frankish overlords, but now it was clear that the Franks could no longer enjoy the luxury of competition and rivalry. More than half of Frankish Syria was lost and the victors, enriched as well as enormously heartened, were poised to drive out or bury the last Frank in Syria today and to do the same throughout all Islam tomorrow.

The strategists and statesmen among them surely realized that the moment they laid siege to Jerusalem, Europe would again rally, but after witnessing the coming and going of King Louis and the Emperor Conrad, they could not have felt much fear.

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Impressions from Damascus

The youth who witnessed that fierce fight for Damascus when the King of France and the Emperor of Germany were ultimately beguiled, Yusuf ibn Ayyub, had been born on the banks of the Tigris River of Kurdish parents, in the Castle of Tikrit where his father, Ayyub the Kurd, was commandant, holding as his fief both the castle and the surrounding countryside, his overlord being the ruler of Baghdad. Yusuf's uncle Shirkuh, an impetuous, violent, valorous man, like Ayyub the Kurd, became in time a high officer in the army of Zengi, the Seljuk Turkish *atabeg* of Mosul. Shirkuh was a fierce man all his life but Ayyub was not only diplomatic and shrewd, he was wise and prudent, as well as being a man of uncommon sympathy and understanding.

In 1139 when Zengi appeared before ancient Baalbek, called by the Greeks the City of the Sun and from whence came the gilded dome over the mosque in Jerusalem called the 'Dome of the Rock', the alarmed citizens sprang to the defence. Ayyub, as one of the Zengid generals, along with his wife and their infant son, was there, as was fierce and forceful Shirkuh.

In the ensuing battle Baalbek fell, except for the battle-mented garrison, and Zengi offered good terms if this force would also yield. He promised the defenders their lives and they marched out. Zengi then retracted, ordered the defenders put to the sword, and they were killed to the last man.

Ayyub the Kurd became commander of the citadel and

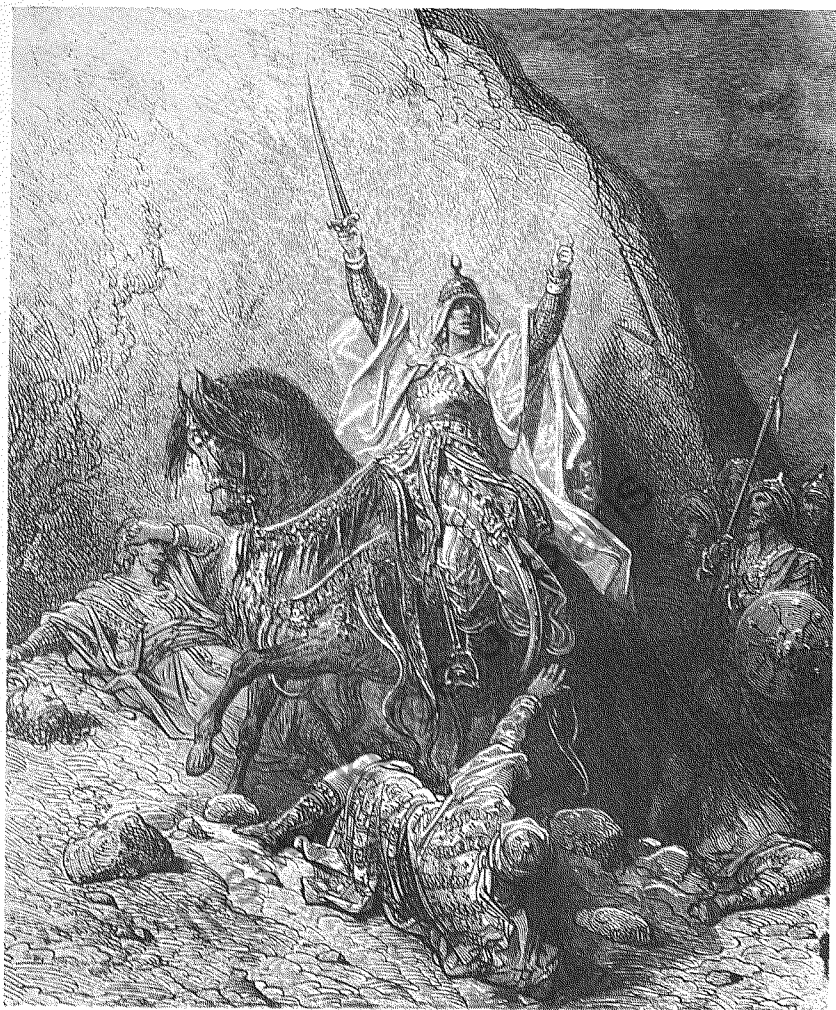
governor of the province by order of Zengi the conqueror. His infant son, born in either 1137 or 1138, gained his first knowledge of the Moslem world, and also of history no doubt, during his early years at Baalbek. He did not leave the city until he was nine years old, and then he went down the road only thirty-five miles to Damascus, which was then, as it is now, the oldest continually inhabited city in the world.

Ayyub the Kurd had five sons and two daughters, and he was devoted to them all.

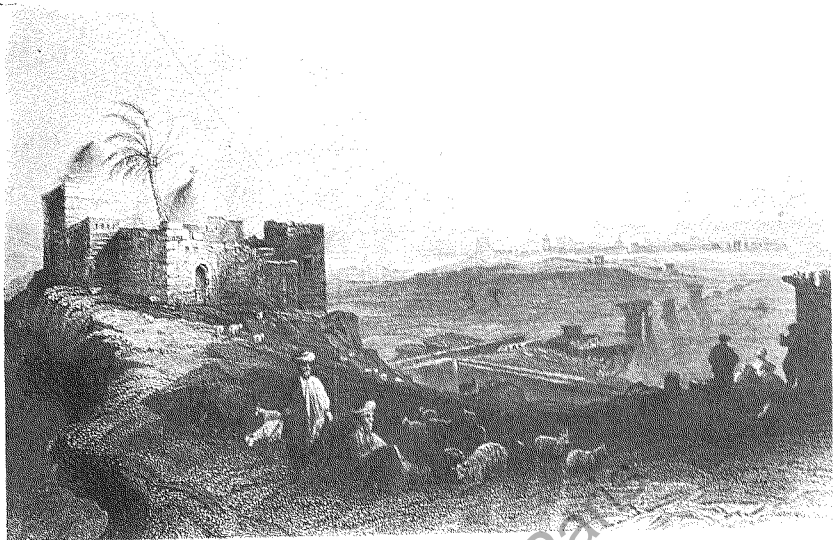
Ayyub's disposition was not notably warlike. He was an exemplary administrator, a very capable and sagacious politician; Shirkuh his brother was the soldier, and Zengi clearly appreciated this distinction, for both men had proved their capabilities during and after the capture of Baalbek, Shirkuh by his tireless service in arms, Ayyub by maintaining peace and order in his province which was, after the perfidy of Zengi at the capture of Baalbek, no easy task. The aggrieved people of the countryside had reason to rebel as soon as Zengi marched away. The surrounding territory held only enemies of the *atabeg* of Mosul. Ayyub's course was more difficult by far than Zengi's or Shirkuh's had been. In those times throughout Islam when every man was a soldier of one kind or another, any man of sufficient power and valour could appear ten feet tall, sword in hand, but very few men could propitiate a conquered people and win their regard the way Ayyub undoubtedly did.

For over half a decade Ayyub governed his territory, which lay in a mountain valley four thousand feet above the level of the sea, with the ruins of ancient Rome and Greece everywhere underfoot. The people were farmers, shepherds and artisans. They had been conquered innumerable times, and each wave had left its mark, not only in stone structures, but also in the people.

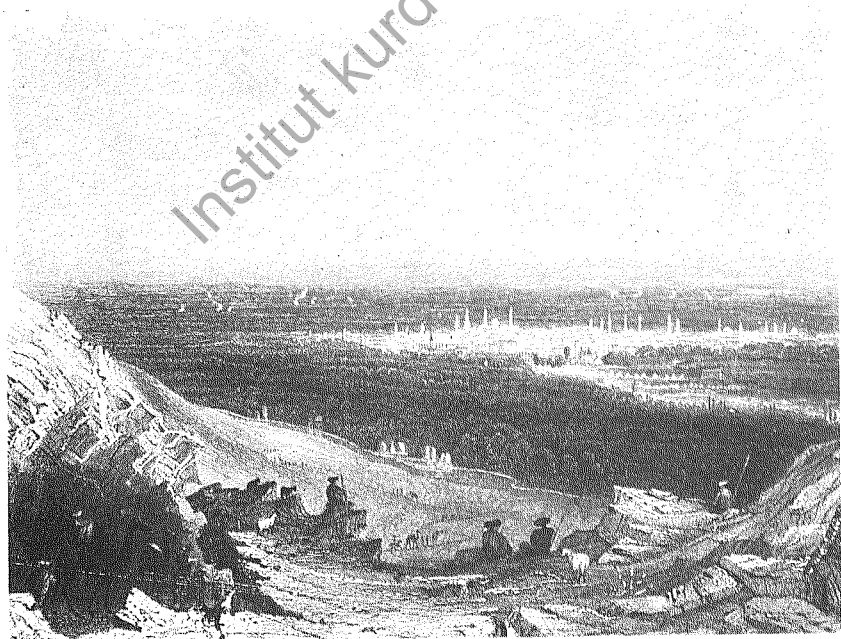
Ayyub, whose surname was Nejm ed-Din, 'Star of the Faith', could be a good soldier when occasion demanded. His territory lay uncomfortably close to the Frankish domains and although raiders, not always non-Moslems, undoubtedly appeared from time to time, the *emir* of Baalbek was never caught unprepared. His tenure, though, was marked by peace and prosperity, and



Sultan Saladin as the nineteenth century saw him : an engraving by
Gustave Doré from *Histoire des Croisades* by J. F. Michaud



(above) Tyre from the mainland; (below) Damascus from the hills overlooking the city—two nineteenth-century views by J. H. Bartlett



in 1143 when Zengi overran Edessa, taking a great part of it, Ayyub could have expected another post, one of greater responsibility. He may also have expected his lord to take Damascus next, which Zengi undoubtedly would have attempted, but three years later, at the age of sixty-two, the *atabeg* was assassinated. Very shortly afterwards *Emir* Ayyub was summoned into the presence of the Atabeg of Damascus, who had come with an army to take Baalbek.

Aside from the fact that armed resistance was futile, Ayyub had to weigh the alternatives very carefully, Nur ed-Din of Aleppo, Zengi's youngest but most capable son, had yet to prove himself. Saif ed-Din of Mosul, Zengi's eldest son, was not and never had been conspicuously warlike. But even if these two could, or would eventually, come to Ayyub's aid at Baalbek, the Atabeg of Damascus was there now. Ayyub was never a rash or imprudent man, like his brother. If he yielded his province to the ruler of Damascus who was at that time managing a harmonious if precarious existence with the Franks, at least he would be strengthening Damascus, not some Frankish baron. Also, there was the immediate concern of Ayyub's personal survival. He and the Lord of Damascus sat down to bargain, a course preferable to bloodshed. When the negotiations were concluded, the Lord of Damascus had Baalbek and Ayyub had a handsome residence in Damascus plus an extensive holding in land near the city and a position of trust in the government.

Yusuf accompanied his family southward to Damascus and for as long as he lived, the mighty Saladin, even though his greatest triumphs were achieved in Egypt, called Damascus his home. The Arabs called Damascus the 'Garden of the World'. It was a magnificent city of groves and splendid residences, of learning and art, sculpture and flowers. When the *Qur'an* told of a Paradise where the faithful would wear "bracelets of gold and pearl, and their garments shall be of silk, and they shall be guided to goodly speech and the excellent way" and when it also said they would reside in a "garden under which rivers flow" instead of the deserts and plateaux they were accustomed to, it must have meant a place like Damascus.

Ayyub went to Damascus anything but a beggar. His sons

were sent to the *madrasahs*, the religious schools where studying the *Qur'an* led one into ethics and philosophy, into learning as a virtue for its own sake, even into science and law. Yusuf learned, during the next decade and a half of his life in this great, cosmopolitan Eastern city, of the things which made life have meaning and worth. In Damascus they not only created damask cloth, but chain-mail and swords that had no equal on earth. There was a great literary tradition as well. No one living in Damascus at that time could have avoided being educated, any more than anyone living in Athens during the Golden Age of Greece could have avoided it.

Yussuf's uncle, the 'Mountain Lion', Asad ed-Din Shirkuh, meanwhile, had remained with his late master's youngest son and as Nur ed-Din prospered, as his power and prestige grew, Shirkuh, who was younger than Ayyub by a year or two, also prospered. He was a strong leader in battle and in loyalty to his *atabeg*, Shirkuh was second to no man. In time he became one of Nur ed-Din's field commanders, a great general in charge of entire armies. He held as fiefs the towns of Rahba and Emessa. Later, he would be placed in command of the great army with which Nur ed-Din intended to reduce Damascus. But that was in the future, and meanwhile Ayyub, the man of prudence, tact and sagacity, along with his family, scarcely a year after their arrival in Damascus, went through that terrifying time of siege during the Second Crusade. Ayyub had taken a responsible post under the Vizir of Damascus prior to this time, and when the negotiations began and were ultimately concluded to the great indignation of the German Emperor and the French King, it is likely that Ayyub might have been involved. He excelled at things of this nature. But whatever he actually did during those dangerous days must have been sufficiently commendable, because afterwards, long after the Crusaders were gone, he continued to rise in power and prestige until five years later in the post of military governor under the regent Muin ed-Din Unur, when Nur ed-Din finally moved with a great army to complete Zengi's dream of a unified, solidly loyal and completely Moslem Syria, Ayyub was very near to being the leading appointed official in Damascus.

Events happened quickly. Nur ed-Din's army was on the

move, its objective Damascus, which had to be conquered before Nur ed-Din dared drive towards the Frankish kingdom of Jerusalem; he could afford no last-minute secret alliances, as had occurred in the past between Damascus and the Franks, behind his back. Commanding Nur ed-Din's legions was Asad ed-Din Shirkuh. Commanding the defences of Damascus was Nejm ed-Din Ayyub. Brothers.

The regent of Damascus unexpectedly died. Muin ed-Din Unur had been the tower of Damascene strength who had defied Nur ed-Din before. His death caused both confusion and consternation at a time when Damascus certainly needed neither.

Shirkuh's armies appeared before Damascus in April 1154, prepared to bring into being the dream of both Zengi and Nur ed-Din, of a great Syrian empire centred at Damascus, free of Franks and prosperous under a Zengid dynasty.

Yusuf was by this time sixteen years of age; old enough to be greatly impressed by all that was occurring around him. And old enough by now to be awed by the chain-mailed and steel-capped brown ranks of Atabeg Nur ed-Din, encamped around the city.

Ayyub and Shirkuh met within the walled city, and for six days everyone else lived in fear and anticipation, excepting perhaps those who knew Ayyub the astute negotiator, the man who ordinarily disliked force. Impetuous and fierce-tempered Shirkuh under any other circumstances would have been all but impossible to deal with, but this situation was entirely different. The inviolability of blood kinship had been bred into both men by their father. After six days the impatient army beyond the walls and the fearful followers of the dead Muin ed-Din Unur within the city, lost and leaderless, were both able to rejoice. Ayyub, who had been the loyal vassal of Nur ed-Din's father, opened the gates to the new owner of Damascus. There had been no alternative, really. The Damascenes could not have withstood the attack. This way, Nur ed-Din had his capital, the soldiers did not have to die or suffer, the Damascenes had a new regent, a man they could respect, and they had not had to witness the sacking of their city.

Nur ed-Din proved a good overlord, for although he was

personally a grave man of cold dignity and unbending formality—everyone was required to stand in his presence and he allowed absolutely no levity—when he assumed control in Damascus he at once instituted some much-needed reforms, particularly where political and administrative malfeasance and corruption existed, and he brought law and science and learning to their apex. He had hospitals and schools erected, imported learned men who were wise in the sciences and philosophy to Damascus. He had the highways patrolled and reduced crime. He established a Supreme Court, guaranteed access to the law to everyone, no matter how poor or humble, encouraged the best architects and in short re-created in Damascus that great period of initiative and enlightenment that had existed a hundred years before under the great and beneficent Seljuk Sultan, Melek Shah and his Vizir el-Mulk.

Ayyub, back again in the Zengid fold, as a result of having delivered to Nur ed-Din his Syrian capital, along with other honours, received one that, simple though it was in fact, signified how great was the *atabeg's* gratitude; Ayyub was allowed to sit in Nur ed-Din's presence.

For ten years Yusuf the son of Ayyub the honoured commandant of Damascus, lived among the great men of his time and of his place. He was taught, among other things, how to "walk in the path of righteousness, to act virtuously, and to be zealous in fighting the infidels". He also learned chivalry: in 1162 when Baldwin III died, and the *atabeg* was urged to attack Jerusalem at once, in its time of loss and confusion, Nur ed-Din replied that to attack a grieving people amounted to treachery, "and it would be inglorious to attack those who are not able to defend themselves". But this did not mean Nur ed-Din had mellowed in his resolve to vanquish the Franks, even though it may have seemed so, for when the renowned warrior-poet Usamah of Shayzar, in response to an appeal from the Vizir of Egypt—considered a heretic by other Moslems—for help against what the Vizir considered imminent peril from Frankish armies, transmitted this solicitation to Nur ed-Din, the *atabeg* chose not to march. For one thing he was fully occupied in organizing and unifying his domain. For another, like all true believers, he considered the Egyptians apostate Moslems, and

to a man as devout as Nur ed-Din, only infidels could be worse. Moreover the Franks, as far as he knew at the moment, had not actually attacked Egypt.

News travelled by wing in those times, so Nur ed-Din was never out of touch for long. Pigeon-posts were established in all directions, and were maintained by a unit of the army not very dissimilar to latter-day signal corps units. It was by this system of communication that Nur ed-Din learned of the latest Frankish raids and depredations, as well as of the movements, and presumed schemes, of those within Islam who did not wish him well. His life as ruler was only as safe as he himself could make it and although he did not die until 1174, at least once, in 1159, when he was prostrated at Aleppo and it was rumoured he could not recover, even his loyal field-marshal Shirkuh proved that not only his enemies were quite willing to see him depart.

Shirkuh was by that time the most eminent and powerful nobleman of Islamic Syria. He assumed that Nur ed-Din must die and was about to assume the role of regent, when Ayyub, ever thoughtful, counselled against it. "Let us wait," he said, "and see."

Nur ed-Din recovered, and Ayyub's near-disaster was averted. Nur ed-Din was not a man who forgave easily, nor one who forgot easily.

Shirkuh resumed his role as Commander-in-Chief and Ayyub, spared the embarrassment his brother's impetuosity might have brought him, continued to govern in Damascus, where his sons were attaining manhood in a very agreeable environment.

Shirkuh, in these good years, captured a great many individual *kraks* from the Franks. He also extended the holdings of his *atabeg*, by the conquest of Marash, to the border of Rûm to the north. He also took prisoner Reginald of Châtillon, a penniless knight of great stature and unbelievable cruelty who had married the widow Constance of Antioch, and who had subsequently outraged everyone, including the Frankish barons, by his rapacious and inhuman ferocity. This man's brutality exceeded anything seen before by either Christians or Moslems, and his fellow-Franks feared and despised him even more than the Moslems did. He attacked indiscriminately friend

or foe. When Shirkuh led him to Aleppo in chains he was congratulated equally by Christians and Moslems.

Yusuf, who in later years offered friendship to individual Franks, and who knew a little about cruelty, himself, said that Reginald of Châtillon went "beyond all limits".

Inevitably, the maturing son of Ayyub, although living in comfort and safety during these years, saw evidence enough that Islam beyond the gates of Damascus was a place of turmoil and violence. After the battles, raids and skirmishes, it was common to see processions of chained captives pass through the streets, their torn gonfalons stained by the blood of decapitated heads tied by the hair to their staffs. Particularly valorous were the Frankish Knights Templars and the Knights Hospitallers; they therefore made the most impressive prisoners. What happened to them after being paraded through Damascus was a dolorous story, but of all the Franks, they were considered to be the most honourable, an accolade not to be demeaned because by and large both Franks and Crusaders broke their oaths to Saracens out of hand.

Also, Yusuf's uncle Shirkuh, a warlord of vast repute, a man to be respected, even admired by the young men of Yusuf's age and acquaintance, had some of his glory reflected upon his nephew, even though Yusuf at this time evinced no fiery eagerness to go campaigning. In most ways he was much more like his father than his uncle. All his life, in fact, Saladin remained so. Even after he became an invincible defender of the faith, he remained a considerate, thoughtful man, and at times this caused frustration and even despair in those around him. Like his father, Saladin did not approve of the offhand brutality that existed, nor did he rush headlong into battle, except, much later, when the zeal of his strong faith convinced him there was no alternative. But even then, unlike Shirkuh—and Zengi, among others—he did not approve of the usual gory aftermaths of religious wars.

During his pleasant and secure formative years at Damascus, he saw much and studied even more of the known world and Islam's relationship to it, and if he had not become thoroughly indoctrinated in the militancy of Mohammed's unyielding philosophy, he probably would have lived a long and comfort-

ably serene life as a man of splendid manners, superior education, elegance and comfort.

He probably would have been involved in some unpleasantness; those were times when no man lived out his lifespan without some such experience, but possibly, being of an amiable, calm and generous disposition, he would not have become as actively engaged in the strenuous aspects as most well-born men of those times became.

Ayyub may even have wished some such life for his son. Ayyub's own life was a lengthy epoch of judicious compromise. As it was said that devout Nur ed-Din won battles on his knees, it could also have been said that Ayyub achieved triumphs with his tongue.

But Shirkuh had different ideas about how a nephew living in luxury should learn the facts of life.

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A Taste of Carnage

During the reign of Baldwin III of Jerusalem, short though it was, the Franks did indeed imperil Egypt, exactly as Usamah's friend the Vizir of Egypt had claimed. Although the loss of Edessa, their only inland stronghold, was a great blow, the Franks subsequently took the city and province of Ascalon, which gave them control of the entire coastline of Palestine to the Egyptian border, where they posed a very real threat to all Egypt.

This was done while Nur ed-Din was occupied at Damascus and elsewhere unifying his Syrian holdings. Undoubtedly the Franks would have preferred to hold Damascus, but that was now impossible, so they struck southward, and it was quite possible that by conquering Egypt, which was divided by rivalries and factionalism at this time, they would gain as much territory in the south as they had lost in the north. If they could conquer *all* of Egypt, they would in fact hold more land than they had lost, a lot more. Egypt was the largest Moslem country in the East.

The Fatimid Caliphs of Egypt, according to William of Tyre, adopting a strategem the Comneni of Byzantium had used expediently for years, the *Annuam tributi pensionem*, bought off trouble for a time, and meanwhile Baldwin of Jerusalem died, at the age of thirty-two, to be succeeded by his twenty-five-year-old brother, Amalric, a surly, disagreeable man, loved neither by his subjects nor by the other Frankish barons.

But Amalric had two attributes his brother had lacked. He was a shrewd politician and by temperament a soldier. Ibn el-Athir the able Arab historian said that not since "the Franks first appeared in Syria had there been a king to equal him in courage, cunning, and cleverness". Amalric was a large, very fat man, which perhaps should have prevented him from being much of a warrior, but as a matter of fact he was as proficient in battle as he was in hunting out other people's wealth. He had been born in Syria, and was scandalously un-Christian not only in deportment, which was not uncommon, but also in his religious scepticism. The latter was uncommon.

But King Amalric of Jerusalem was not as delighted by the tribute paid by Egypt as he was at the prospect of enlarging his realm to include the entire domain of the heretical Fatimid Caliphs, in which case he would get the wealth as well as the lands. Also, since the Egyptians were as hostile to Syria as they were to the Franks, Amalric would be conquering a people whose enemies were also his enemies. This could, conceivably, swell his armies, something the Franks could be expected to anticipate with pleasure, since they were still somewhat in disfavour in Europe, thanks to the animosity of the French and Germans.

Altogether, a Frankish invasion of Egypt appeared desirable. But on the other side of the coin, Nur ed-Din could not allow Egypt to become entirely Frankish for a number of reasons, the best one of which was that, with the Franks already holding the coastlands, Syria's Mediterranean trade was seriously jeopardized, and if the caravans that now skirted the Frankish possessions, going and coming from the Egyptian ports by way of Jordan, were eliminated, Syria's commerce would nearly disintegrate.

Another consideration for Nur ed-Din was the hostility between the heretical Egyptians and his own orthodox Syrian Moslems. Aside from his detestation of heretics, Nur ed-Din certainly anticipated Amalric's idea of organizing vast Egyptian armies to be used against him. Finally, although in comparison with the great armies of Islam the Franks were inferior, if they could recruit Egyptians *and* induce the Comneni of Byzan-

tium to join them against the faithful, they would not be in a weak position.

As far as Shirkuh was concerned, and perhaps Ayyub as well, the situation was critical. Shirkuh at least would march without religious scruples to motivate him.

It was opportune, then, that at this critical period Shawar, the Vizir of Egypt, appeared at Nur ed-Din's court in Damascus with a story of having been forced to flee his country by a rival, and also with an offer to give Nur ed-Din one-third of all Egyptian state revenues, and to also pay the expenses of an expedition to Egypt, if Nur ed-Din would assist the Vizir, who was virtually the King of Egypt, to regain his former position. (The Caliphs at Cairo had long since ceased to function as anything more than luxury-loving spiritual leaders.)

Whatever Ayyub's thoughts about all this may have been, and it is easy to visualize him cautioning against hasty judgments, on the other hand there was Shirkuh's impatience to lead just such an expedition southward.

What tipped the scales in the Vizir's favour was the discovery that he had also made the same proposals to Amalric. The Vizir wanted reinstatement and obviously religion had nothing to do with it. Nur ed-Din could not have been pleased, but neither could he procrastinate. If Amalric marched, Egypt would be lost and Syria ruined.

The decision was made, an army was mustered, and Shirkuh thought it would be a great opportunity for his nephew to learn of war, but Yusuf was content in Damascus. Shirkuh insisted; Yusuf was now twenty-six years of age, well past the age when most young men learned to bear arms. Yusuf had no ambition in that direction. Shirkuh was not a patient man, so in the end Yusuf went along, unhappily, but reconciled at least by the prospect of seeing far places.

What ensued was not unheard of in the Near East, then or later. The current Grand Vizir of Egypt, Dhirgham, Shawar's successor, antagonized the King of Jerusalem, who was poised to invade Egypt in any case, by disputing the size of the annual tribute and Amalric began an invasion before Shirkuh was anywhere close. This happened in September 1163. In the confusion that followed Dhirgham was defeated near Bilbeis, the

tribute was exacted, and Amalric withdrew, temporarily satisfied. The Vizir then learned that Shirkuh was on the way, with Shawar, and immediately, and without scruple, appealed to Amalric for aid, promising among other things, an eternal alliance between Egypt and Jerusalem. It was too late for Dhirgham. Before the Franks could return, Shirkuh, with Yusuf on his staff, swept close, and the Egyptians, enraged by the disastrous policies of their Vizir, cornered him near a shrine, hacked off his head and hastened to welcome back Shawar, who, now that he had achieved popular reinstatement, decided not to pay the tribute to Nur ed-Din after all and had the gates of Cairo closed against Shirkuh and the Syrian army.

Shirkuh was never a good man to antagonize. He at once sent Yusuf and a nominal force to take Bilbeis and hold the city as a hostage until Shawar relented and sent the money. Instead of yielding, Shawar, like his fellow Moslem and late predecessor the Vizir Dhirgham, appealed to the King of Jerusalem. Amalric at once took up the march, and whichever way the wind ultimately blew, the Vizir of Egypt, by his own impolitic efforts, soon had *both* of his country's most ambitious enemies upon Egyptian territory.

Amalric marched to Bilbeis, where Shirkuh had just joined his nephew, in time to be caught in the lengthy siege which followed. Amalric, who only a short time before had been Shawar's enemy, was now his ally, while Shirkuh, who had been Shawar's ally, was now his enemy. It was enough to confuse Yusuf, the reluctant campaigner, except that with a besieging army of Franks outside the city he was holding hostage, he had little time for reflection.

Amalric's siege lasted three months and was lifted only when the Franks heard that Nur ed-Din was threatening their domains in the north. Shirkuh was reduced to a position of yielding, when, unexpectedly, the King of Jerusalem offered to raise the siege providing Shirkuh left the country and took an oath never to return.

Shirkuh accepted the terms and under the watchful eyes of the Franks marched out of Egypt. Then the Franks hastened northward. Shawar, the reinstated Vizir of Egypt, had a pyrrhic victory, for while he did not pay Shirkuh, he had further

alienated both his enemies. At least one of them, Shirkuh, had made up his mind that Egypt could be conquered, because it not only had a weak and degenerate government, but also because, as he said, it was a country "without *men*".

Yusuf had learned of war during those three months of incessant harassment at Bilbeis. He had acquitted himself well, and he had also acquired some first-hand knowledge of the fighting Franks. Whether he saw the King of Jerusalem at Bilbeis is not known, but it is entirely possible. Amalric was only two years older than Saladin; they were different in that Saladin could be eloquent and talkative, while Amalric was taciturn and had a very noticeable speech impediment.

Nur ed-Din's activities in the north had produced greater results at far less expense. He had triumphed over several Frankish barons and had taken their holdings. Altogether the year had been productive, but the peril of a Frankish-Egyptian coalition still remained, and when it was again feasible Shirkuh returned southward, with a stronger army this time and also with a less reluctant nephew. Nur ed-Din remained in the north, his policing and pacifying policies both productive and rewarding. It was essential for him to remain near the seat of his realm, in any event, for as the frontiers of Amalric's holdings were exposed to Nur ed-Din, so also were Nur ed-Din's borders exposed to the Franks.

Shirkuh's second Egyptian expedition managed to reach the Nile without opposition. He crossed to the far bank and established his camp, which was good strategy, because not long afterwards Amalric appeared, coming up in haste, but was prevented from crossing the river by Shirkuh's archers and the *détente* which ensued lasted almost two months.

Amalric, not surprisingly, because he had been busy since his last encounter with Shirkuh forging the coalition with Egypt, had in his army a large contingent of Egyptian troops. It was neither the first nor the last time Moslems and Christians joined forces, but it was the first time Yusuf ibn Ayyub had ever seen them do this in such great numbers. All the armed strength of the Fatimid Caliph was supporting the Christian King of Jerusalem, and even if the Egyptians were not renowned warriors, they could still be impressive in large numbers.

To Yusuf was given the responsibility of preventing Amalric's army from building a bridge across the Nile. To accomplish this the best bowmen were sent out into the river to harass the enemy upon the opposite shore. It was not a particularly deadly occupation, and Saladin acquitted himself well at it. He had the awesome pyramids at his back and the mighty Nile in front of him.

Eventually, Amalric, certain of victory because he had the larger army, and anxious to force a battle, marched closer to the coast, where a crossing could be effected, and got across the river. Shirkuh immediately struck camp and headed inland. He was prepared to give battle, but in view of Amalric's greater strength, only on his own terms. Not all his officers were of this persuasion however; some feared a disaster and wished to retreat back into Syria. At a council when the situation was analysed, Yusuf sided with a former slave who indignantly denounced the defeatists by saying that if they yielded Egypt to the infidels, Nur ed-Din would take back their fiefs. Shirkuh then prepared to fight.

By this time Yusuf had his uncle's full confidence, and as a commander, shared in the planning of strategy. The plan was simple: Yusuf was to command the centre where Amalric's force would strike first. Shirkuh would command on the left. Yusuf was to yield, encouraging the mounted Franks to pursue him, and Shirkuh would then close in on the rear, where the Egyptian infantry was. When Saladin turned about, the larger army would be compelled to lose the initiative and wage a defensive battle against the smaller but better Syrian army.

The Syrians were skilled and disciplined. The Egyptians were a mob, which was no advantage, and it was against these inferior troops Shirkuh proposed to hurl his left wing, while the fighting Franks were in disarray chasing Yusuf's corps.

Shirkuh's specific instructions to his nephew were: "Yield [to the Franks] . . . and withdraw a little, and as soon as they retire, thinking you are overcome, turn on them," and that is precisely what Yusuf did, with his select unit of horsemen, when the battle began on 18th April 1167.

As the Franks struck Shirkuh's centre, Yusuf gave way and in the wild pursuit that followed, Yusuf led the Franks away

from their Egyptian allies. Shirkuh's left immediately wheeled in behind the Egyptians, broke their ranks and started a rout. When the Franks turned back it was too late; the Egyptians were fleeing in every direction, a demoralized mob. By themselves the Franks were not strong enough to achieve a victory, and as the Syrians raced to engulf them, the Franks fled so precipitously they abandoned their supplies, their baggage, and a number of luckless commanders including the knight, Hugh of Caesarea, an outspoken, forthright man of great courage.

William of Tyre stated that Shirkuh's army consisted of 9,000 armoured men, 3,000 archers, and 10,000 Saracen spearmen. The Arab historian Ibn el-Athir said Shirkuh had only 2,000 horsemen in all, an improbable figure to employ in the reduction of a nation as large and populous as Egypt. Amalric was known to have had 347 knights. Otherwise the number of his Turcoples and Egyptians was only estimated. But that really was not altogether important. What mattered was that Shirkuh had achieved a splendid victory, where before the battle there had been no unanimity of opinion that any such triumph might be possible.

Shirkuh wisely did not pursue the enemy towards Cairo; they could easily get inside the walls before he could overtake them. Instead, he marched to Alexandria, where he made Yusuf military governor, left half his army there, and with the other half struck out southward to extort tribute and to recruit men for his army.

This was Yusuf's first independent command, and it would have presented enough challenges without the Franks and Egyptians converging to lay a siege.

Alexandria was a metropolis, one of the greatest seaports of the world. There were ships from every great seafaring nation in its harbour, every tongue of the East, Near East, and West was spoken there. It was quite different from land-locked Damascus, and Yusuf, who was totally unfamiliar with the sea and the kind of people who either sailed it or lived along its shores, was in the most alien environment imaginable.

Alexandria, like all great cities in those times, had walls and battlements and fortifications, but it also had another bulwark, the sea, and Yusuf, who fully understood the value of walls,

knew nothing of besieging fleets, until now, for as a land-army approached the walls facing inland, a Christian fleet appeared to blockade the harbour. If Shirkuh had had any alternative choice of a commander for Alexandria, one to whom Yusuf's peculiar position was not such a novelty, and had not chosen him, then it must have spoken highly of the confidence he had in his nephew when he left Yusuf in Alexandria with half an army, and marched away.

The besiegers on the land side erected siege towers, protected platforms from which archers could fire over the walls and down into the city, and also from which they could hurl stones and firebrands. The walls might keep Yusuf's enemies out, but without reinforcements he could not cope with the possibility of a seaward landing and also man the battlements. Nor could he have been unmindful of the peril at his back; Alexandria's merchants were wedded to trade, not warfare. If they panicked it would not be the first time the gates of a city had been opened at night to an enemy, in exchange for clemency.

He called upon the city's Moslems to help him repel the Franks, not only in Mohammed's name, but also in defence of their families and fortunes. They responded, fortunately, otherwise the end of this contest might have been very different, for, as William of Tyre noted, the attackers were both savage and unrelenting. "Our men went there . . . to destroy; they razed the whole place, so that it was a great loss to us as well to the inhabitants. They gave the city not a moment's rest."

For ten weeks the battle lasted. Yusuf could not rest, and when the walls began to weaken under the incessant pounding, Yusuf sent a messenger to find Shirkuh, and tell him that unless help arrived soon, Alexandria would fall and Yusuf along with it.

The inhabitants of Alexandria were not accustomed to either the prolonged fighting, nor the deprivation and terror that went with it. Amalric had victory in his grasp when Shirkuh appeared. At once the relief and jubilation within the devastated city gave a fresh impetus to the defenders and in a great, final effort, they attacked from within while Shirkuh attacked from without and Amalric had to withdraw.

For Yusuf the worst was over. But the siege of Alexandria was simply another phase of the Egyptian campaign, and this time there was no victory, only complete exhaustion. Yusuf ibn Ayyub never forgot this battle. It almost changed the course of his life.

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(right) King Richard I of England—a sixteenth-century woodcut. (below) The death of Frederick Barbarossa by drowning in the river Calycadmus—a textual illustration in the Gotha manuscript of the Saxon Chronicle

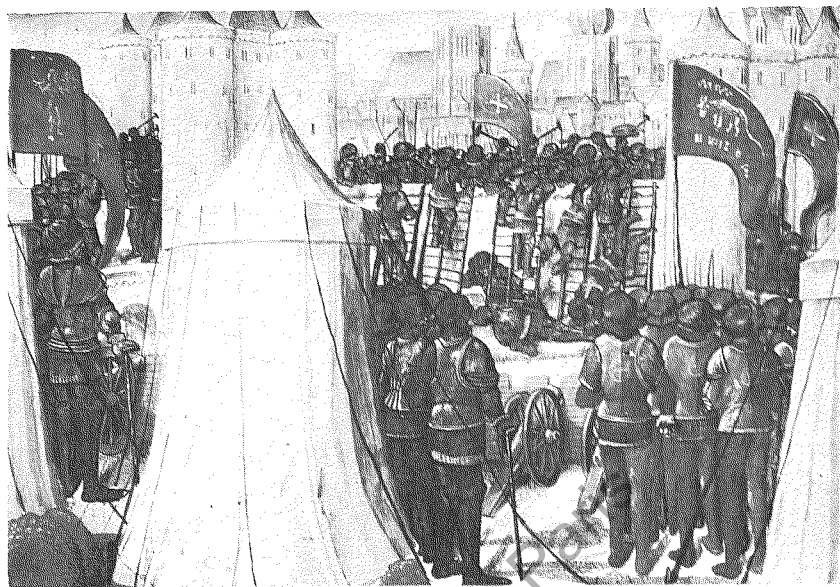


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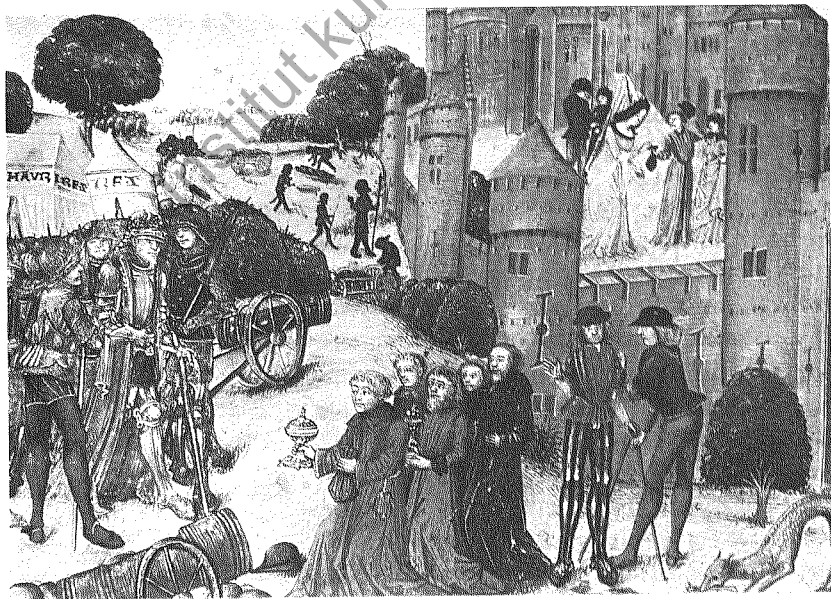


Fredericus





Scenes from the late fifteenth-century manuscript *Conquête de Jerusalem*: (above) Saladin besieging Jerusalem, 1187; (below) Almaric at the siege of Caesarea Philippi



Salah ed-Din

Amalric proposed that both armies leave Egypt. Shirkuh agreed, and of course neither the King of Jerusalem nor the 'Mountain Lion' of Islam had any intention of staying away, but the Egyptian Vizir, Shawar, who had never paid the tribute to Nur ed-Din still owing from Shirkuh's previous armed arrival, now took steps to ensure that he would never have to pay it by making a secret treaty with Amalric which allowed the Franks to station troops in Cairo until such time as the Caliph should pay 1000,000 dinars to Amalric for his aid against the Syrians, which was in fact, all or part of the tribute due Amalric in any case.

The King of Jerusalem was more than an overweight warrior, he was also a compelling politician; he had Egypt bound to him, and now he took a step that gave him an even more durable ally. In August of 1177 he married the niece of the Emperor of Byzantium and promptly planned the complete subjugation of Egypt. While these things were transpiring, Shirkuh, Yusuf and their Syrian troops marched homeward, after a pleasant stay among their former enemies during which time Yusuf met and got to know a number of Frankish knights, one of whom, Humphrey of Toron, so the story went, initiated Yusuf into the brotherhood of Christian Knights, a legend mentioned only in Christian annals and which, along with a host of other very great improbabilities, may be seriously questioned—and doubted.

Yusuf left no doubt that the impression of his most recent campaign was deep and lasting. He said afterwards that he would never be able to forget the horrors of that siege. He did not want to ever have to go through another such experience. He now wished only to live in peace.

But there were other considerations. Not only were the Franks becoming increasingly menacing, but the son of Ayyub had proved at Alexandria he was as gifted as well as a valorous warrior, and hardly a year later when the Caliph sent word to Damascus that the Franks and their allies were again devastating Egypt, Nur ed-Din sent Yusuf ibn Ayyub to Aleppo to inform Shirkuh of this situation, and again the son of Ayyub was compelled to wage war.

This time, when Amalric marched into Egypt he did so with a vengeance. His army took Bilbeis and put its inhabitants to the sword. Fustat, a suburb of Cairo, was put to the torch and its smoke blackened the skies for fifty-four days. It was said the Vizir Shawar did this in order to deprive the approaching Franks of an easy access to Cairo. It was also said Amalric had the town razed. In either case the result was the same, Egypt was being destroyed as the result of a Frankish invasion.

Shawar offered enormous bribes to Amalric and although the King of Jerusalem should have known better—no-one collected from Shawar—his notorious avarice triumphed and he agreed to end the hostilities.

Shawar's strategy was as before; while he negotiated, killing time, Shirkuh was marching south again with a large Syrian army. He had his nephew with him, but only after Yusuf had refused to go and Shirkuh had complained to no less a personage than the Sultan himself. In Yusuf's words, Shirkuh had come to him saying, "Come Yusuf, get ready for the journey." Yusuf refused: "By Allah! If you gave me the entire kingdom of Egypt I would not go. I can never forget what I suffered at Alexandria." Shirkuh was adamant; it was mandatory that Yusuf accompany the expedition, he said, and when Yusuf would not yield, his uncle went to Nur ed-Din. What ensued Yusuf noted in these words: ". . . When Shirkuh was ready, Nur ed-Din said to me: 'You must indeed go with your uncle.' I explained my distress . . . I pleaded my lack of equipment.

But Nur ed-Din gave me everything I needed, and I went with my uncle like a man being led to his death."

It was winter, and that added to his "distress". No-one enjoyed campaigning in bad weather. Also, there was reason to believe the Franks might try to intercept Shirkuh's force before it reached Cairo, but this did not happen.

Eventually, when the Syrians reached Cairo, the Caliph himself welcomed Shirkuh. Shawar, actual ruler of Egypt, liked this even less than having Amalric on his border. When the Caliph not only granted Shirkuh a personal audience, but treated him as a favourite, Shawar saw his position in jeopardy and plotted to have all the Syrian commanders murdered at a great banquet. Shawar's own son rebelled at this, and when Shirkuh heard of the plot, he sent Yusuf, with a companion named Jurdic as well as an armed escort, to institute a less refined but equally lethal counterplot.

Yusuf and his companions met Shawar, who was riding with a small armed entourage, and told the Vizir that Shirkuh had gone to visit the tomb of a holy man some little distance in the countryside and offered to take Shawar there. The Vizir accepted and when the cavalcade was safely away from the heart of the city, Yusuf directed his companions to attack Shawar's escort, which was routed, then Yusuf and Jurdic bound the Vizir and took him, a captive, to Shirkuh.

The luckless Vizir's capture, and the reason for it, were then explained to the Caliph, who had already found a successor to Shawar, the Syrian general Shirkuh, and ordered that his treacherous Vizir be decapitated. It was done. The head was taken to the Caliph and he promptly gave Shirkuh the position of Grand Vizir of Egypt with the title "King Strong to Save", and presented him with Shawar's magnificent palace.

The new Vizir sought to appease his predecessor's friends and others who might, through jealousy or for some other reason, plot his downfall, by giving away the vast wealth of the former Vizir, which included the furnishings of the Vizir's palace as well as great amounts of gold.

But Shirkuh may not have been entirely successful, as events will indicate. In any event, while he was the ruler of Egypt the battle-scarred old warrior confirmed in office al-Fadil, the

Chancellor, an Egyptian of many talents, as well as a fellow-Kurd, Aissa the legalist, one of the most learned legal men of his time.

Shirkuh had reason to distrust Egyptians and to abhor the corruption he found everywhere in their government. He instituted rigorous reforms, and foremost among the men close to him who were entrusted with carrying out these reforms, was Shirkuh's nephew.

Yusuf ibn Ayyub found this most recent Egyptian campaign far preferable to the previous ones. For one thing, Amalric withdrew. He had acted prematurely at best. He failed to collect the bribe or tribute Shawar had promised and with a strong Syrian army now at Cairo, his plans were ruined.

The other Frankish barons were furious. With Amalric's expulsion from Egypt and a strong Syrian army there, which obviously was not going to march away, this time, the best opportunity for conquering Egypt had come and gone and the barons blamed Amalric for heeding Shawar's offer of a bribe when he should have completed the conquest before the Syrians arrived.

Another aspect of the present campaign that doubtless appealed to Yusuf was the opportunity he had as his uncle's able administrator, to demonstrate that, as Ayyub's son, he had inherited from his father a great talent for conciliation and order. Then, in March of 1169, Shirkuh "fell ill from overeating and died". He was, so it was alleged, "a mighty trencherman and addicted to heavy feeding". It could also be said that the day Shirkuh saw Shawar's head delivered to the Caliph el-Adid and assumed Shawar's position as King of Egypt, he had very considerably lessened his chances of dying comfortably in bed at an advanced age.

But whatever the cause of Shirkuh's death, the Caliph, or perhaps his advisers since he was a lad in his teens at this time, could not allow the office of Grand Vizir to remain vacant for long and because they had to be quite satisfied at having a formidable Syrian army in Egypt maintaining order and stalemating the energetic Franks, a replacement for Shirkuh had to be found.

The Caliph summoned Shirkuh's trusted and talented nephew,

Yusuf ibn Ayyub, and endowed him with the office and the power of Vizir of Egypt. Salah ed-Din, he called Yusuf ibn Ayyub, 'Rectifier Of The Faith', or, as it has been more commonly interpreted, 'Honour Of The Faith', and although the new ruler of Egypt was only thirty-two years of age in 1169, the Caliph himself was fifteen years younger.

It was significant that the Egyptians caused no unpleasantness over the fact that a foreigner who had come to their country with an invading army was now their king. Evidently peace and some measure of prosperity took easy precedence over such things as religious difference, and living in the shadow of an army of occupation. Most certainly Salah ed-Din took notice of this attitude and allowed himself to be influenced by it in what he presently undertook as Egypt's master.

Like his uncle, Salah ed-Din retained in office the Chancellor, al-Fadil, and the Kurdish legalist Aissa, among other honest and capable administrators. He continued his uncle's reforms and, so it was said, from the moment he became ruler of Egypt, "His garments were energy and zeal."

There was no question about Saladin's ability to administer; he had demonstrated this side of his nature before, both in war and peace, but now for the first time he was able to express his own initiative and genius without doing so as a subordinate. That he understood Egypt's particular *malaise* was made clear in a letter he had Chancellor al-Fadil write for him to the Caliph of Baghdad, who was the spiritual head of orthodox Islam: The Egyptian bureaucracy, he said, was a government "in which the worm grows, the truly great have no power, and terror paralyses action. All that the law forbids has free sway. Religious law is invoked in name and scorned in deed. Heresy grows [and] idols are worshipped instead of the true God. . . ."

Of his, and the Syrian army's, occupation of Egypt, he said, "It was God's will that we should possess Egypt for its own good and govern by strong and enduring laws." Later, when he was Islam's greatest hope, he told a confidant, Baha ed-Din: "From the moment when I obtained Egypt so easily, I knew that God demanded of me the deliverance of the coast of Syria. He then inspired my heart with that purpose."

The deliverance of the coastline from the Franks may have

been his long-term objective, but immediately subsequent to Shirkuh's passing he was fully occupied with the internal affairs of Egypt. Although, because he was a zealot, he could not have been unaware of the uniqueness of his position as an orthodox Mohammedan ruling a nation of heretics, that too had to be temporarily sublimated so that he could correct the ills of a corrupt and decadent country. Those of Saladin's biographers who tend toward a conviction that, at this period, he was *not* a zealot and base their belief on the fact that he concentrated his attention for some time after becoming Vizir on Egypt's national ills instead of upon the *jehad*, show little or no understanding either of his situation at this time or of his real genius.

He administered Egypt, no doubt because he accepted and liked, the challenge, but primarily because, like any genuine strategist, he took the long view; if Egypt could be made strong again, then joined to Syria, the infidel Franks could be exterminated. It was not necessary to be irresponsibly fanatical to be a zealot. To look further, if Egypt and Syria could become not only the mightiest amalgam in Islam, but could also be the heart of a unified Moslem world, even aid which might be forthcoming from the West would be unlikely to prevail in favour of the infidel Franks. Saladin was a man of prescience, which made him none the less a zealot. If anything it made him the most dangerous kind of a zealot, at least to his Frankish enemies.

One of his duties was to conciliate his uncle's other associates, high-ranking men, jealous of their positions and prestige and generally older than Saladin, who could not be expected to view Saladin's abrupt promotion favourably. One of these men was the brother of Saladin's mother, a doughty and outspoken old warrior. It took all Saladin's diplomacy to avoid serious trouble, but he was Ayyub the master-conciliator's son and eventually, except for one absolutely adamant general who flatly refused to serve and returned to Syria, Saladin was able to achieve harmony.

But that was only within his own immediate command. He still had two unpredictable overlords. One was the Caliph of Cairo, the other was the Sultan of Syria, Nur ed-Din, who, admittedly, was growing increasingly meditative and intro-

spective as time passed, but who was nonetheless Saladin's Sultan, and he never allowed Saladin to forget it. The son of Ayyub might be Grand Vizir of the richest nation of Islam, but to Nur ed-Din he remained Shirkuh's reluctant nephew, an *emir* of Syria, not even a field-marshal. When Nur ed-Din sent instructions to his generals in Egypt he did not transmit them through Saladin; in fact he never addressed Saladin personally, but only obliquely, and then as an *emir* of Syria. Neither did Nur ed-Din ever use Saladin's title, but that was more basically understandable; Nur ed-Din the unyielding orthodox Mohammedan would never recognize an honour bestowed by a heretic even though he might be the Caliph of Cairo.

Saladin's means for ensuring popular support among the less exalted Egyptians was to abolish the monthly tax. This burden was levied on almost everyone. Even small farmers and caravaners, fishermen, anyone at all who sold anything, had to pay the tax. Those who would not, or who simply could not pay, were severely punished. There was even a tax on bathing. Also, this vast source of revenue was a great temptation, and tax-collectors were notoriously dishonest.

Saladin instituted a new system; after abolishing the monthly tax, he had enacted into law an annual tithing, with about two-thirds going back to the people in the form of poverty relief and the balance accruing to the government, with stiff penalties being meted out to those among the administering bureaucracy who attempted to line their pockets.

The savings which resulted from paring down the bureaucracy, and enforcing strict honesty, more than made up for the reduced revenue. Egypt prospered as it had not done before in the memory of living men.

He also had the Egyptian navy brought up to strength. Although unfamiliar with the sea, as ruler of a nation facing the Mediterranean over which two-thirds or more of all export and import business was transported, he appreciated the need for protecting Egyptian commerce as well as Egypt's extensive and vulnerable coastlands. The Franks controlled all the northward coast. It would amount to a major disaster if they should extend that holding to include Egypt's port-lands. He may have suspected it, or he may not have, but the Franks and their

allies the Byzantines were in fact planning at this time to take fullest advantage of the decline of Egypt's maritime strength. Saladin's intervention in this situation through a greatly strengthened Egyptian navy brought about his first serious clash with the combined forces of Byzantium and Jerusalem.

The important coastal city of Damietta was attacked from the land side by Amalric of Jerusalem, while a large fleet of Byzantine galleys sealed off the harbour. Saladin appealed to Nur ed-Din for aid. He was wary of leaving Cairo ungarrisoned while he marched to the relief of Damietta. The intrigues of, among others, the Caliph's palace entourage, had never ceased; those who professed friendship for Saladin and the Syrians, could not in the least be trusted.

Nur ed-Din responded and Saladin went at once to the aid of Damietta. His bowmen were so aggressive against Amalric's besiegers that the Franks were checked and by means of enormous chains the Byzantine galleys were prevented from landing for water and supplies, with the result that they eventually, after fifty days, had to sail away. With the loss of his naval support, Amalric's efforts were greatly impaired. Eventually, with Saladin receiving fresh troops and ample supplies while the Franks could only manage to exist by foraging, the King of Jerusalem was forced to raise his siege and march away.

For Islam this was a signal victory. For Saladin it was a personal vindication; he had now proved himself Shirkuh's able successor in war. He had already proved himself a better peacetime administrator. When he marched back to Cairo, where he was hailed as a hero, it was with the thought in mind of creating a special and separate Department of the Navy. A *diwan* whose exclusive function was to supervise and maintain a larger and more powerfully armed Egyptian fleet.

The reaction of the Franks to the defeat at Damietta, was to view Shirkuh's youthful nephew and successor in a fresh perspective. Heretofore he had been noted primarily as his uncle's competent but not very outstanding nephew, and even as Vizir of Egypt, Islam's richest nation, he had proved himself only in the capacity of an administrator who was supported in office by a strong Syrian army. But after Damietta it became clear that, unless he had been exceptionally lucky, Saladin was

likely to prove himself as formidable a foe in the south as Nur ed-Din was in the north-east, a situation that the Franks could not afford to tolerate. To prevent another such Mohammedan *emir* from rising to prominence on their southern borders, the barons were willing to resort to battle and also to attempted assassination.

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A Man for All Ages

Ayyub and his other sons arrived in Egypt, it was said, at the behest of Saladin, and the Vizir's brothers were absorbed into the government or the army. Ayyub was offered a position of power by Saladin and declined in these words: "My son, God would not have chosen thee for this great position hadst thou not been fitted for it; it is not well to take lightly one's destiny." But Ayyub did, eventually, assume the position of treasurer.

By the time Saladin had been Vizir for more than a year, he had created a contingent of loyal partisans, some of whom were Egyptians, but more of whom were Syrians. To these men he gave the lands and revenues—the fiefs—of Egyptian *emirs* who had proved themselves treacherous or antagonistic.

He gradually became that anomaly, a strong man of war as well as an astute politician. The Caliph and his palace entourage—not minor by any means, the palace guard alone consisted of 10,000 Sudanese blacks—were willing for the Syrians to leave Egypt, now that the country again had a great navy, a well-motivated army, and general prosperity. They probably also resented having an orthodox Sunnite Vizir ruling their heretical Shiite nation, although it might be suspected that they more sincerely resented having to support all those numerous and expensive Syrians.

Saladin's position was still not clarified with respect to Nur ed-Din, the aloof and other-worldly Sultan of Syria. Nor was he available to the solicitations of the Franks. If he fell, it would

not be, as with the Vizir Shawar, the result of avarice or treachery, although that would not make a personal disaster any more agreeable.

But he was seldom enough of a politician to favour expediencies for their own sake. When he temporized it was to retreat one step in order that he might advance two steps at a more opportune time. He had one major objective, vanquishing the infidels. That was his mission and the deflections forced upon him from time to time never amounted to more than diversions. Otherwise he probably would not have undertaken the very dangerous course he now pursued: the elimination of Cairo's Fatimid Caliphate in favour of unification of Egypt under the orthodox Caliphate of Baghdad. It was one thing to intervene in a nation's corrupt government, which was already detested by its people, and something quite different to interfere in the daily religious practices of the people themselves.

For almost 300 years a Fatimid Caliph who claimed descent from Mohammed through his daughter Fatima, had been the spiritual leader of Egypt. Mohammed had left no son. Nor had he appointed a successor, and if he could not have corrected the former condition, it seems likely that he surely could have done something about the latter, for although he maintained that "God meant all people to be one nation", he ensured the rise of at least three schisms when he took no steps to prevent such a thing through an endowed successor.

The division in Islam was strong. Aside from the Fatimid Caliph of Egypt, there was the orthodox Caliphate of Syria, and another Caliphate that held power in Spain and Morocco.

Saladin's objective was to unite Egypt with Syria under the orthodox Caliph and his first step was to give orders that when Egypt's Moslems were called to prayer at the Friday service in which loyalty to the spiritual leader, the Caliph, was proclaimed, Nur ed-Din the orthodox ruler of Syria was also to be named.

The *Khutbah*, or Friday service, was accordingly convened, and each *Khatib*, or priest, men of considerable political as well as spiritual power, invoked Nur ed-Din's favour along with the favour of al-Adid, the heretical Caliph, who at this time was

gravely ill, and although some resistance, some degree of scandalized reaction was expected, none ensued.

Prior to this time terrible wars had been fought to ensure that the divisions of Islam should exist and they had. Yet Saladin's non-violent assault was well on the way to becoming an accomplished reality, and not a sword had been drawn. Subsequently, when a later *Khutbah* was convened, al-Adid's name was omitted completely, and when he died a very short while later without knowing he had been deposed as Egypt's spiritual leader, the Egyptians, perhaps in part as a result of losing their spiritual leader, accepted the black banner of the orthodox Abbasid Caliph of Baghdad without opposition, at least none that could be attributed exclusively to this reason, although the Sudanese palace guard had been organizing against the Syrians for some time, and provoked trouble shortly before the Caliph died.

Saladin sent the white banner of the Fatimid Caliphs to Baghdad along with other religious relics and when the news reached there that Egypt's three centuries of apostasy had ended, there was great jubilation.

The Caliph sent robes of honour to both Nur ed-Din and his *emir* at Cairo, and whatever the Sultan of Syria thought about his increasingly popular—and powerful—subordinate, elsewhere throughout orthodox Islam, and undoubtedly throughout the Latin or Frankish domains as well, there was a rather general conviction that the Vizir of Egypt had done more than bring about a re-unification among Moslems, he had taken a giant step towards forging a Mohammedan crescent around the coastal hegemonies of Eastern Christendom.

For Saladin, personally, any triumph of Shafe'ite or orthodox, principle, was welcome. In this particular case it meant an easing of his conscience, for as a devout orthodox Moslem, he could hardly have felt at peace with himself while serving a heretical Caliph.

He only needed one additional conquest to be the complete master of Egypt: the Caliph's authority and his palace, the latter an enormous walled city within a city, where something like 30,000 people resided in four thousand rooms and where the courtyard could accommodate 10,000 soldiers.

Access to this mighty fortification was by way of three gates. Outside, the city proper lay in all directions, and a considerable part of it belonged to the Caliphate, into whose treasury came rents as well as taxes and tithings.

Only a short time before the Caliph died, the black eunuch who commanded the palace guard, Nejah, was found to have entered into a secret agreement with the Franks by which the latter would draw Saladin's Syrians out of Cairo, after which the Sudanese would attack from the rear and would kill all the Syrians and their supporters left behind in the city.

The revelation of this plot brought swift retribution. Nejah was taken into custody, tried, condemned and put to death. Saladin appointed a white eunuch in his place and replaced all the black Sudanese with white troops. At once all the blacks in Cairo, about 50,000 of them, revolted and Saladin's army fought them in the streets, drove them out of Cairo and razed the areas where they had lived.

The blacks made a great exodus to the Upper Nile, in the vicinity of Giza and there, some time later, during the winter of 1171-72, Saladin's elder brother, Turan Shah, a man who put one in mind of his uncle, Shirkuh, fought the blacks and temporarily vanquished them.

These people continued to be troublesome, but without ever constituting much of a peril to Saladin, who was, after their expulsion, master of the Great Palace of the Caliph and along with this acquisition, when the Caliph finally died, Saladin acquired his power. He was then, while still no more than an *emir* of Nur ed-Din, the actual and complete master of Egypt.

The luxury of the Caliph's palace far exceeded the palace Shirkuh had acquired when he became Vizir and distributed Shawar's wealth. In fact there was no palace in Europe so sumptuously furnished nor containing such riches. There was gold in enormous measure, sapphires, pearls, emeralds by the bagful, a library of 120,000 priceless books, a screen of gold behind which the Prophet's descendants sat while holding audiences, zoological and tropical gardens, hundreds of gold and silver chalices, intricately and exquisitely engraved, and deep within the confines of this great structure were the marble and tiled

rooms of the Caliph's family, where every human need was catered for. These people were left in peace; otherwise Saladin had the bureaux of government installed here and he did as Shirkuh had done: gave away the enormous treasure.

Nor did he move to the Great Palace. The Vizir's residence, previously stripped by his uncle, remained his residence. By decree many of the Caliphate's slaves were freed, and others were sold, with the funds going to the national treasury. By legal right Saladin was entitled to acquire these people; Mohammed had only admonished that slaves should not be abused. Saladin, although by this time a family man and therefore, according to custom, entitled to have as many slaves as he might need or wish, lived quite simply and seemed never to need or wish to own any great retinue of human chattels. His women, of which little is known beyond the fact that they bore his children, and one, at least, a concubine named al-Khatun (Lady of the Moon), the mother of el-Afdal his eldest son, remained with him until his death, were evidently as little inclined towards ostentation as was their master.

Saladin's loyal white eunuch, commander of the new palace guard, was a former slave freed by Shirkuh, whose name was Karakush—'Black Bird'. He designed the citadel beyond the Caliph's walled inner city, to which it was linked, which Saladin wanted erected so that the outer city would have a protective battlement. This structure was not finished during Saladin's lifetime as a result of Karakush's marching to the wars later, during the Third Crusade. However, because it was erected largely from great stone blocks gleaned from the nearby pyramids, it stood longer than most battlements, and having been remodelled a number of times, it still stands, long after Saladin and his conquests have turned to dust.

There were other structures, mostly dedicated to education and the sciences, initiated by Saladin in the years after 1171, when, with the exception of several campaigns against the Franks, he had a period of relative peace. Also, because Egypt was never without plots and plotters, aspirants and dissidents, he strengthened his entourage of loyal partisans, but even with them he rarely appeared unarmed or without at least chain-mail under his white robes. When he went abroad it was with

a suitable escort. The Egyptians generally favoured him, but throughout Islam assassins were never far distant.

He was not a robust man, yet he had enough physical strength to serve his purpose. As Vizir of Egypt, personally responsible for his actions to the people he ruled, not to mention Nur ed-Din in Damascus and the Caliph in Baghdad, he was rarely able to enjoy the leisure he had grown up enjoying, and still enjoyed.

No reliable likenesses of Saladin have survived, although a number of portraits based upon several descriptions exist. He was of medium height, lean in build, with black eyes, black hair, and a black beard, according to the chronicles of his contemporaries. He was never impressed by wealth, lived rather simply but well, and while he was Vizir of Egypt sired three legitimate children, all sons. He loved horses and played polo as often as he could. Like other inspired idealists, and despite access to great fortunes during his lifetime, when Saladin died the money for his interment had to be borrowed.

Saladin thoroughly enjoyed hunting and falconry. As a horseman, he was said to know all the great pedigrees, and the greatest gift he could bestow was a fine horse. It was also said that as a result of his generosity, Saladin seldom rode a horse that had not already been promised to someone.

By nature he was neither cruel nor indifferent, which was unusual in his time. His leniency more than once was the despair of his generals. He was kindly and, excepting religion, was open to suggestions and advice on most topics. Although successful in warfare he disapproved of bloodshed, but as a zealot of Islam, could wage war with great vigour against infidels and upon occasion had both infidels and apostates put to death.

He was a compassionate man centuries before compassion was considered a virtue among the victorious and the strong. He also enjoyed lively discussions among learned men and was brilliant in conversation—his interests ranged from theology to medicine to history, geography, commerce, politics, and astronomy. One of his contemporaries said he was "delightful to talk to", and others noted a complete lack of ostentation. He was totally unaffected, a very easy man to be with.

In scholarly gatherings it was said that Saladin "... set everyone at ease, and instead of repressing conversation, he let the talk flow at such a pace that sometimes a man could not hear his own voice." In this he was the opposite of Nur ed-Din. "At Saladin's court all was eager conversation—a most unkingly buzz." But there were limits; he tolerated no irreverence or obscenity, and would not permit snideness or malice.

He was personally restrained in language even when provoked and did not tolerate bad language in others, but he enjoyed humour and had a great sense of it himself. He was a democratic ruler centuries before democracy had a single powerful advocate in the West, insisting that all men had to be equal before the law. If he had been a ruler seven hundred years after his death, he would have been completely at home among the democratic institutions of those times; as a man who was "approachable, deeply intellectual, gracious", as the Syrian physician Ald el-Latif described him, Saladin was indeed a man for all ages.

Later, during the siege of Jerusalem, Saladin personally superintended the operations. "... even carrying stoves on his own shoulders; and everybody, rich and poor, followed his example, even Imad ed-Din the *Khatib*" and his Chancellor of Egypt, the Arab of Ascalon, al-Fadil.

His daily routine was simple, almost ascetic. He did not possess a robust disposition, but during his period of relative peace as ruler of Egypt, Saladin was fortunate enough to acquire as his friend and personal physician the great and brilliantly learned Moses Ben Maimon. Maimonides, who had been expelled from his native Spain (he was born at Cordova in 1135, making him thirty-seven years old in 1172), arrived in Cairo at the only time, up until then, a person of his race and convictions could have flourished.

Maimonides advised Saladin on matters of health—and no doubt philosophy as well—in a way that was well in advance of the times. He advised the Vizir not to take liquids with his meals, only later, to exercise often but never too strenuously, to keep the Moslem rule of bathing the entire body once weekly and to sponge himself daily. He also suggested games instead of simply physical exercise for keeping fit, on the grounds that

the mind should be stimulated at the same time as the body. Maimonides advocated eight hours of sleep for most, but not all, men, and the eating of only fresh foods. He believed sunshine was an excellent disinfectant and that a correct diet consisted of a proper proportion of fats, sweets, vegetables and meat. If none of these things are profound today, they most certainly were at that time; Europe at the same time was exorcizing demons to alleviate indigestion, and as every intelligent resident of the West knew in 1172, bathing at all, let alone once weekly, was a dangerous and unhealthy addiction.

Maimonides, a Jew forcibly converted to Islam and a scintillating conversationalist, the man who sought to reconcile Mohammedanism's Aristotelian precepts with the Old Testament, was—and was not—a heretic. It is easy to visualize Saladin's delight in the company of this man who, in his famous *Dalalat al-Ha'irin*, or *A Guide To The Perplexed*, sought a rational balance and whose atomistic theory of creation was unusual to say the least.

It spoke well for Saladin, that Maimonides remained his friend and advocate. Any autocrat could control sycophants, almost any autocrat could buy scholars, but few indeed inspired the loyalty and enduring respect that Saladin was able to inspire. He could never have done so with a man of Maimonides' calibre simply because he had wealth to hand out and power to share.

Saladin strongly disapproved of self-indulgence and abhorred hedonism. When a son of his neglected his responsibilities in order to carry on a passionate affair with a slave girl, Saladin reacted swiftly and unyieldingly by separating the couple and punishing his son.

Baha ed-Din, who served Saladin for years, said that the Vizir was "very noble of heart, kindness shone in his face, he was very modest, and exquisitely courteous". He would not countenance the beating of his servants even when they stole from him, a crime commonly punishable by death. He had an extraordinary, almost an exasperating, amount of patience and his concept of honour was greatly admired by the Franks, who so frequently took advantage of it that Saladin's generals, in later years, threw up their hands. If a baron broke a treaty, Saladin

neither condoned the treachery, nor stooped to emulate it. His word was not given lightly, but once passed was never violated.

It was his custom never to spurn importuners and very rarely was a petitioner of any kind turned aside. He was a man of easy, warm dignity, the kind to inspire other men, even those men who, in the years ahead, were both his Frankish and Moslem enemies.

His magnanimity became a legend while his mercy established a precedent in Islam, where mercy was a rare virtue indeed, that was emulated long after Saladin's death.

History has only very rarely produced men such as Saladin. In Europe during his lifetime, not one such king or emperor existed and after his death Islam did not produce another such man.

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From Viceroy to Sultan

Until mid-1174 there were no major campaigns, which seemed an auspicious beginning for this year, but before the end of it several events occurred which Saladin could hardly have anticipated, and which forced him to turn outward, facing directions beyond Egypt.

He took Gaza, near Ascalon, which established his outposts uncomfortably close to Jerusalem and was on this account to have repercussions; then he also took Aylah, a Red Sea port through which, in former times, considerable merchandise had passed on its way to and from both Cairo and Damascus.

Between Aylah and the great cities of Islam stood the mighty *krak*, or castle-fortress, commanded by Reginald of Châtillon, that belted scourge feared and loathed equally by Franks and Moslems. Reginald's stronghold menaced the route to Mecca. He had attacked Moslem caravans and pilgrims alike from this place and he had also indiscriminately plundered luckless Christians as well.

Saladin marched to besiege Reginald in mid-1173 in a joint effort with Nur ed-Din, but later, before the Sultan appeared, Saladin raised his siege and marched away. He did this twice and the supposition was that Saladin did not want to have to meet Nur ed-Din, which was probably true. Nur ed-Din was Saladin's suzerain; it lay within the Sultan's power to remove his vassal, the Vizir of Egypt. On the other hand the Sultan may not have felt any such urging, for when Saladin marched

back towards Cairo after the second siege, sending an emissary to Nur ed-Din with his excuse—his father was ill and he feared plotters—the Sultan said, “the preservation of Egypt is more important than anything else”. Thus the rapacious Reginald achieved a respite, while Saladin found when he reached Cairo that his father had died in his absence as the result of being thrown from a horse.

Elsewhere, Turan Shah, Saladin's brother, had marched with an army to take the Yemen, in southern Arabia. He also took several adjacencies, and if this campaign of conquest was not co-ordinated with Nur ed-Din, as seems to have been the case, the Sultan's protest, if there was to have been one, did not materialize; the Sultan, whose heart had troubled him before, suffered a bad attack in early 1174 and died.

Nur ed-Din's proper heir, Malik es-Salih Ismail, was a child of eleven years of age at this time, and although Saladin, now recognized as the most powerful of Islam's leaders, sent a message of condolence to Damascus, not all the heir-apparent's guardians were sure he would not make an effort to take Nur ed-Din's place as Sultan of Syria, while being also Viceroy of Egypt.

The Franks, too, could be expected to exploit the situation, and no sooner had the Sultan been laid to rest than uprisings occurred in the Moslem areas Nur ed-Din had pacified. It appeared inevitable that the unity Nur ed-Din had forged could not outlast him. As though in support of this suspicion, the Franks under Amalric of Jerusalem, whose son and heir had not too long before been confirmed to be suffering from leprosy, marched to besiege the castle of Baniyas, close to Damascus, formerly known as Paneas, so-called by the ancient Greeks after their god Pan.

At once, Saladin gathered an army and marched to the relief, but before he reached Baniyas the Franks had been induced to accept a cash tribute and marched away. Some said Nur ed-Din's widow paid the bribe, but Saladin's indignation was vented upon the governor of Damascus, to whom he sent a letter stating that when money was paid to ransom one community, it was certain to be used in financing a siege of some other community, and the purpose of all believers was to resist in-

fidels, not placate them. He was right, of course, but there was nothing for him to do now but return to Cairo, which he did.

Amalric died on 11th July 1174, shortly after the siege of Baniyas, at the age of thirty-nine years, leaving his leper son, Baldwin IV, as King of Jerusalem. As was the case in Syria after the passing of Nur ed-Din, Jerusalem was overwhelmed with internal difficulties for a time. Raymond of Tripoli eventually became regent for Amalric's thirteen-year-old heir and that at least was favourable for the Frankish kingdom because Raymond was an able and sagacious lord. After eight years in a dungeon in Aleppo, a prisoner of Islam, the Count of Tripoli was thirty-four years old in 1174, and had been back from captivity only two years when Amalric died. Although Saladin said Raymond was "infected . . . with . . . hatred for Islam", Raymond did nothing to support this contention when he became regent. Instead, he cautioned against unprovoked war at a time when the Franks probably could have taken several of Nur ed-Din's former holdings which had rebelled against Damascus and had broken away. Particularly could they have done it when Saladin was returning towards Cairo from Baniyas, because alarming news arrived in Saladin's camp: an enormous war-fleet had arrived off Alexandria from Sicily and the Latins had blockaded the city and were pressing a vigorous siege.

The Chancellor al-Fadil noted in awe that: "Never did the sea bear so many vessels. Never was it crowded with so many warriors. The King of Sicily had transported whole provinces—such an army the Caliph [had never seen]."

The arrival of this great force was no accident. Some time earlier a conspiracy in Cairo, in which Egyptians, Sudanese and even some of Saladin's Turcoples, were involved, had come to light. Saladin was to be confronted by a popular uprising in Cairo, and the King of Sicily, one of the conspiracy's luminaries, was to land at Alexandria with a great army. Saladin was to be defeated by enemies in front and behind. However, the Cairo plotters were discovered and put to death. (They were crucified on 6th April 1174). But the Sicilian fleet was already on the way. When it appeared before Alexandria, expecting to hear that Saladin was fighting for his life in Cairo, it found

him on the march for Alexandria, where he arrived in due course to help the embattled Alexandrians and a terrible battle followed.

Ibn el-Athir puts the Sicilian fleet at 282 vessels. Baha ed-Din wrote of 600 ships and 30,000 troops. Whatever the actual number, the invaders came prepared; they had, aside from their warships, a great host of bowmen, catapults capable of heaving enormous stones over the walls into the city and mangonels of equal power.

The triumph went to Islam, the Sicilians fled back to their ships, abandoning much *matériel*, and sailed away. Saladin was sure he had vanquished as great an array as could be sent against him and in the wake of victory, when he was importuned by others (including some Franks who appeared to think the same way), he wrote to the Caliph in Baghdad: "As to the infidels that surround his country, their proudest chief . . . is the Master of Constantinople [Byzantium's king]. He has sent me humble letters asking for my friendship, and even warning me against the Sicilians."

But from the year 1174 onward, although he would savour other triumphs, he would not again enjoy much *personal* peace and scarcely had the Sicilians been routed than he received word that Damascus itself was on the verge of civil war. He rode north at once accompanied by al-Fadil and a close friend, Murhaf, who was the son of Usamah the poet—who had some time before fallen from favour with Nur ed-Din, and now resided in exile.

This was Saladin's Year of Truth. He was the acknowledged warrior-lord of Islam. If he could hold Nur ed-Din's domain together, could rule it either as regent or sultan, he could quite probably vanquish the Franks, as well as force Arab unity to survive the death of his Sultan. At least those were his objectives. Not only as an experienced leader of men between two boys, one of whom was a leper, the other still only a child, but also as a man who now understood war as well as politics, he undoubtedly saw in the year 1174 his foremost opportunity to achieve greatness. On the long ride to Damascus—it required thirty days to reach Damascus from Cairo—he had ample time to test himself and to achieve a decision.

When he reached the city he considered home, where the Lord of Mosul had recently arrived to assert his right as es-Salih's cousin to assume the role of regent, in opposition to the boy's palace guardians, he found the city divided, some favouring the Lord of Mosul, Nur ed-Din's nephew, Saif ed-Din Ghazi, some favouring the palace clique.

Prior to Saladin's arrival young es-Salih had been abducted by Saif ed-Din Ghazi and taken to Aleppo, where again, factiousness blossomed.

Seeing civil war imminent, Saladin was also mindful of the Frankish threat. He knew that as soon as the barons understood how Nur ed-Din's empire was crumbling, they would attack. Accordingly, although accompanied northward by only his personal guard of 700 horsemen, Saladin made it clear that unless the law was upheld and the dissension ceased, he would, as the late Sultan's foremost *emir*, assume the regency.

He could, by custom, do this. The Caliph, like the Latin Pope, had the right to appoint national administrators in emergencies, and while the laws of heredity were strong in the West, in the East the dominant principle seemed more sensibly to be founded upon contingencies, i.e., if es-Salih could not rule and Saladin could, it lay within the Caliph's power to make the change. Because the Caliph was, at least technically, the ruler of all Islam, as the Prophet's representative he was supreme. In fact, of course, rulers gained ascendancy by the sword, as in the West, and were able to maintain it only as long as they were strong enough to do so.

In Saladin's present situation the assumption of responsibility, whether prompted by greed, as some have inferred, or by practical considerations, amounted to the same thing; the Lord of Mosul was not strong enough to maintain Syrian unity, but the Viceroy of Egypt was. Also, the Viceroy of Egypt could not watch the disintegration of Nur ed-Din's realm with equanimity, because a fragmented Syria would not only invite a Frankish invasion, it would also destroy the Syrian-Egyptian coalition and leave Egypt isolated.

This crisis was, recognizably, the turning point of Islam's power and unity. A fragmented Syria would require a lifetime to reunify. To Saladin such a condition had to be intolerable.

Al-Fadil said at this time that the disintegration was already beginning. "In every stronghold a chief has installed himself; every province has its pretender."

As though to prove he was loyal to es-Salih, Saladin did not take up residence in the palace, but lived in his father's house. He spent the winter bringing unity back to Damascus, which was absolutely essential before he dared lead an army against dissidents in the countryside in the spring. He managed this very well; even the young Sultan's loyal partisans were convinced, by the time the worst of winter was past, that Egypt's ruler was the young Sultan's vassal.

Finally, with better weather ahead although snow still lay on the ground, Saladin, leaving one of his brothers, surnamed the "Sword of Islam", as governor of Damascus, marched against the petty nobles who had set themselves up as independent *satraps*. He overcame them city by city and fortress by fortress and eventually marched against fortified Aleppo where es-Salih, along with his ambitious relatives and advisers who had instilled in the child a dread of Saladin, prepared to resist. The young Sultan wept in the streets to encourage the citizens to fight for him, and they did. In fact, they prevented Saladin's army from entering the city. He then withdrew, set up camp, and during the course of many consultations with his officers, was very nearly killed.

Three *hashashin*, eaters of hashish (from which word derived the Frankish word 'assassin'), got as far as Saladin's tent, and there, when they would have rushed in, swords drawn, Saladin's guards intervened. After a short but violent fight, all three Assassins were killed.

Undoubtedly these members of the dreaded sect of *hashashin*, the *fedawi* (devoted ones, of which more later), had been hired by es-Salih's partisans in Aleppo. And although they had failed this time Saladin knew very well they would not cease in their efforts to slay him, once their leader, the Shaikh al-Jabal, the Old Man of the Mountain, had contracted to kill him.

However, es-Salih's relatives were not discouraged; they devised a way of ridding Aleppo of their enemy by making an alliance with the regent of Jerusalem, Raymond of Tripoli. As soon as Saladin learned that a Frankish army was imperilling

his loyal garrison at Emessa, he undertook a forced march which successfully prevented the Franks from capturing Emessa—but by so doing he had been drawn away from Aleppo.

He did not return, but continued on in the direction of Damascus, and at Baalbek, his boyhood home for a time, when he asked for submission it was promptly given. He had, in this spring and summer campaign, brought all of Syria except Aleppo under his control. He had also acquired Imad el-Din of Ispahan, the learned and loyal companion whom he made chancellor of Syria, but whose fame as Saladin's distinguished contemporary biographer long out-lived that other purely political honour.

Es-Salih, who was not a robust child, and his partisans in Aleppo, having failed, twice, once by the Assassin's sword and again by inducing the Franks to attack when it was probably thought Saladin was too distant to repel them, were still active and adamant, but Saif ed-Din Ghazi among others whose ambitions had been to rule Syria through Nur ed-Din's son, had been isolated. Excepting the ever-ready Franks, they could not count on very many allies, particularly after Saladin had proved himself the able commander of a large army.

However, the matter of the *hashashin* still remained. No-one slated for death by these organized murderers could relax for a moment. Nor were they simply a small group of killers. Later historians scoffed at their power and even at their existence, but in Saladin's day and earlier (Marco Polo referred to them) they were both notorious and dreaded.

These men were the most deadly of fanatics because in their conviction that the delights of Paradise could only be achieved through death in the service of Allah, they went forth, full of drugs, to kill on the orders of their leader. They had, at the cost of countless lives over the years, accumulated a string of great fortified castles and enormous wealth.

The leader of these men, the 'Old Man of the Mountains', was said to be a "demon with a human face whose followers believed him a god". This *satrap*, whose castles stretched from Syria to the sea coast, and which were noted for their luxurious furnishings as well as their impregnability, accumulated wealth less from hiring out his assassins for murder than from extort-

ing vast sums from the rich and powerful, such as Saladin, for *not* sending his assassins to slay them.

Al-Jabal's word was inviolable. Once his 'protection' had been bought, the 'protected' person was quite safe from the daggers of his *fedawi*.

It was Saladin's intention after his return from the summer campaign to exterminate these heretics, and eventually he made the effort, but not immediately. Word came that the Lord of Mosul had mustered an army and was on the march. With him was the seasoned garrison from Aleppo, the same force that had so vigorously repulsed Saladin the previous spring.

At once a great army was mustered. In it Saladin had legions from Egypt as well as his veteran Syrians. At the Horns of Hamah, roughly mid-way between Damascus and Aleppo, the two armies met, and when Saladin offered to negotiate and was told the only acceptable terms would be for him to leave Syria and return to Egypt, he prepared for battle. On 13th April 1175 the troops of Aleppo and Mosul attacked. They were feinted into a large ravine between Saladin's troops and, unable to get clear, were decimated.

In the ensuing rout Saladin pursued the demoralized troops to the gates of Aleppo, but withdrew rather than try again to breach the fortifications. He had, however, convinced any remaining sceptics that he was the ruler of Syria as well as of Egypt and although the house of Zengi still refused to yield, he appealed to the Caliph of Baghdad for confirmation as Sultan of Syria—as well as of Egypt, Western Arabia, Africa and Palestine.

In due course the official confirmation arrived, along with the Abassid banner which was thereafter to accompany him in battle, as well as authorization to delete es-Salih's name in the *Khutbah*, and to have his own name substituted on newly-minted money.

Of course the Zengis refused to recognize Saladin's investiture, but the Caliph's appointment was law, and that reduced the Zengis to, at the least, rebels and at the most, outlaws.

Those who saw in this an act of treachery against Nur ed-Din's son neglected to appreciate that Saladin still called

himself es-Salih's 'mamluk', his vassal. In the message to the Caliph he had said that he would serve temporarily, implying that, even yet, he considered Nur ed-Din's son the rightful ruler of Syria.

But most important, Saladin had managed to hold Syria together. Even had he intended to usurp es-Salih's position, it could have been justified on these grounds. The *jihad* was not dead. Islam's avowed first purpose was to vanquish the infidel Franks, which it could not do as a series of petty principalities.

His oath to the Caliph included the promise to maintain order, uphold the law, protect the interests of Nur ed-Din's son—and wage Holy War.

"The Franks know that in me they have an adversary whom no calamity can discourage," he wrote, "and one who will not put down his arms until they surrender."

He was a man of his word, always.

Saladin, Sword of Islam

The partisans of es-Salih were compelled to accept a truce subsequent to their defeat among the hills known as the Horns of Hamah. The house of Zengi retained its holdings, consisting of Aleppo and environs, while the Sultan of Syria and Egypt remained the master of all that he had reunited and pacified during the recent campaigns, including such places as Hamah, Barin, and Ma'arrat an Nu'man, close by Aleppo itself.

The Zengis did not yield, even now when they had very little chance of achieving their objectives. In fact, their resolution was so stubborn that even after es-Salih died in 1181, they continued to scheme and plot, making alliances with the Franks, sowing discord in Saladin's armies, employing arbitrary diplomacy and bribery to inconvenience the Sultan, and hiring assassins to kill him.

Saladin did little to placate them. As Sultan, he had es-Salih's name replaced on coins and in prayer with his name: "el-Malik en-Nasir Yusuf ibn Ayyub, ala ghaya"—"the King Strong to Aid, Joseph son of Job; exalted be the Standard", and when the Lord of Mosul again came to the aid of his relatives at Aleppo in 1176, arriving before es-Salih's stronghold with an army of 6,000 which was immediately reinforced, Saladin received the news of this fresh challenge with strong resolution. He marched to the meeting under an auspicious sign: there was an eclipse of the sun on 11th April 1176 at the Orontes River crossing. Beyond, at a watering place, on Wednesday 21st April, the

Lord of Mosul abruptly appeared but did not attack, which was fortunate since Saladin's force was in disarray at the wells. The following day when the battle was joined only fifteen miles from Aleppo, despite some early successes by es-Salih's partisans, Saladin, in the van of his personal corps of 700 horsemen, broke the enemy's line and a rout ensued. During this many Zengid *emirs* were captured, along with all the baggage, much of the wealth and equipment, and a great many of the luckless soldiers of the Lord of Mosul, Saif ed-Din, who only narrowly escaped, himself.

Again the cause of es-Salih was checked. Saladin had the plunder distributed among his troops. He also released the prisoners and saw to it that the wounded received every consideration. The enemy *emirs* were set free and both soldiers and officers were provided with means for reaching their homes. Some, perhaps inspired by the magnanimity of their captor, took service under his banner and were in his ranks when he marched to Aleppo, where, again, the gates were barred against him and the walls were manned.

He did not press another siege, but went instead to the nearby Zengid stronghold of Buzaa, which capitulated, then he pressed along to the town Azaz, which also fell. Full of confidence, his army approached the mighty castle of Azaz and here Saladin was held in stalemate for thirty-eight days and lost a great many men. But most important, here again he was almost slain by al-Jabal's *hashashin*.

This time the attack confirmed the earlier suspicion that Saladin was slated to be killed. The Assassins were actually in his army; worse, they had managed to secure positions in his corps of personal troops.

The siege of Azaz, important as it was from the standpoint of pride, was not important in comparison with the Sultan's life, and subsequent to the second attempt, when Saladin was struck on the head by an Assassin's dagger and had his neck slashed before the attackers were cut down, it was decided that something had to be done to put an end to this kind of attack. While the Sultan was quite reconciled to the risks of battle and could take a warrior's precaution to minimize them,

there was no way to protect oneself against fanatics who were masters at infiltration, disguise, and murder.

Eventually, on 21st June, the fortress of Azaz surrendered. Saladin then returned in a grim frame of mind to Aleppo, home of the plotters who had undoubtedly hired al-Jabal's Assassins, and this time there was to be no respite.

The city agreed to negotiate but the garrison within the castle remained defiant until imminent starvation, plus Saladin's persistence, convinced its defenders that, this time, the Sultan was not going to relent. On 29th July, a general treaty was entered into. Es-Salih, as King of Aleppo, agreed to recognize Saladin as the master of Syria; no more Zengid armies were to be sent against him from either Aleppo or Mosul and each side was hereafter to serve as the ally of the other.

Finally, when es-Salih's young sister appeared before Saladin as a petitioner, the Sultan received her with gentle good humour. As a favour, she asked to be given the fortress of Azaz, so recently reduced at such a high price in blood. Saladin made her a present of the castle and many other things including jewels, and this little episode concluded his current campaign. Now he turned to the matter of the *fedawi* in their mountaintop castles.

The seat of the Assassins was in the mountains amid the boulder-strewn passes and canyons of the middle Syrian range, the Ansiraya Mountains. It was very hot in August when Saladin went up there. It was a gloomy, forbidding countryside full of silence and danger. The soldiers who had followed Saladin into battle everywhere from Egypt to Aleppo invaded al-Jabal's domain full of dread.

It did not help their morale, either, when upon a number of occasions they awakened in the morning to discover scraps of paper pinned to their bedding by daggers, upon which were written threats of death if they did not withdraw.

At Masyaf the Syrians established a siege of the Assassins' main castle. Storming failed and eventually so did the siege, but the Shaikh himself was at another location, not far from the little town of Kadmus, and when Saladin's demand for surrender reached him, al-Jabal took only two companions and went to a mountaintop where he could see the Syrian camp. From

this place he sent word that he would see Saladin. The Sultan sent a body of soldiers to apprehend the Shaikh, but when they approached, by some means never very satisfactorily explained, they were seized by an inability to move their legs.

When the report of this bizarre condition was relayed to Saladin, along with the Shaikh's promise that unless the siege was lifted and his tormentor went away, al-Jabal would assassinate every member of the Ayyub clan, Saladin's perplexity was acute.

What actually took place hereafter depends upon whose tale one prefers. That the Master of the Assassins was an extraordinary individual cannot be doubted. That Saladin had good reason to fear him goes without saying. The simple fact that ensued, and which all subsequent historians and biographers have to rely on, was that Saladin lifted his siege and was back in Damascus by 25th August. Never again was an attempt made upon his life by the Fraternity of Assassins.

Apparently, Saladin agreed not to return with an army, and the Old Man of the Mountain agreed never again to send his *fedawi* to seek the life of the Sultan. It was not a victory for Saladin, but it was a guarantee that neither his Moslem nor Christian enemies would ever again be able to hire al-Jabal's murderers to accomplish by stealth what no one ever accomplished in battle—the death of Saladin.

In Damascus, the Sultan dismissed his troops, appointed his brother Turan Shah as governor, and left for Egypt on 22nd September, accompanied by his personal troop. Not long before, he had concluded a treaty—actually a truce—with Raymond of Tripoli, Regent of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, and while there was no reason to believe this might produce much in the way of peace, Jerusalem was at this time sufficiently involved with internal difficulties to encourage a reasonable assumption that a Frankish attack might not occur.

The Sultan had been absent from Egypt two years. It seems to have been his intention, once he again entered Cairo, to inaugurate an ambitious programme of public works and he did begin something of this kind. The work on the Citadel was undertaken, repairs were made to the walls of the Great Palace enclosure, and the enduring great dyke of Giza was pushed

forward, but in the midst of these endeavours trouble with the Franks came.

By 1177 King Baldwin IV, the leper son of Amalric, was sixteen years of age. His disease, which had not incapacitated him very noticeably up until this time, had, however, forced upon him a degree of fatalism. He would have no children and he could not expect either a normal or an extended lifespan. He was an unsmiling, willing soldier, and William of Tyre said of him that he was a better horseman than his forebears. It appears that he was also distrustful and taciturn.

That he rode willingly to war is not surprising under the circumstances. He had been educated by knights and masters-at-arms as a fighter, and by nature he was dauntless and unyielding, therefore, with so little to expect from an existence that could not have been anything but a tribulation much of the time, it seems to have been Baldwin's ambition to wield power in such a way that the kingdom he must shortly bequeath to others, should be as strong and secure as he could make it.

In 1177 Baldwin IV ended the regency of Raymond, and declared that treaties signed by others were not binding upon him, now that he was sole ruler and King of Jerusalem. Of course this negated Raymond's truce with Saladin and at once Frankish hostility increased beyond the point of raids and forays.

Damascus itself was threatened and a fortress belonging to es-Salih, the King of Aleppo, was besieged. The possibility of a strong buffer between Egypt and Syria coming into existence was certainly great, and this, perhaps more than the fresh upsurge of Frankish activity, compelled Saladin to take to the field.

In a series of swift manœuvres Saladin's army, said by William of Tyre to have numbered 26,000 troops, drove up out of Egypt to Ascalon and beyond, inland in the direction of the Dead Sea, laying waste as it ravaged the countryside of Baldwin's domain, razing the cities of Hudda and Ramla. The army did not stop until it was in sight of the Holy City itself.

During the course of this swift and devastating invasion, however, King Baldwin and the Knights of the Temple got into Ascalon, and subsequently Saladin, with no reason to expect

it, barely survived one of the worst defeats of his career. Having been unable to provoke open combat, Saladin decided that the Franks were not strong enough to face him and began to withdraw. His army went ahead and the Sultan, with his personal corps of mamluks wearing yellow tunics to distinguish them as his personal élite corps, came along later with their Lord and Master. Not far from ruined Ramla, on 22nd November 1177, the Knights of the Temple and the Knights of Jerusalem, 375-strong, caught Saladin and his personal corps in a savage attack and although outnumbered, rode down the Saracens with such fury that Saladin, fighting side by side with his guardsmen, attempted to withdraw. This retreat turned into a rout as the Christians cut Saladin's unit to pieces, capturing Aissa, the legalist and very nearly capturing the Sultan himself.

Although the Sultan's nephew, Taki al-Din, and others distinguished themselves in the day-long running fight, under cover of night, when only a few survivors remained, the greatest Sultan of Islam, mounted on a swift camel, fled for his life towards Cairo accompanied by all that remained of his decimated élite corps, abandoning weapons as well as his scores of wounded in the flight.

After much hardship and suffering Saladin reached Cairo, and was immediately in need of his physician's services, for while the people rejoiced at his escape, Saladin's condition was poor by the time he had lived through all that hardship and want.

His personal assessment of this disaster may have been motivated by a wish to re-instil confidence in his subjects. He said that "God delivered us and preserved us for another task". Al-Fadil, the learned Chancellor of Egypt who had also survived the débâcle, left no judgment, which is unfortunate, because al-Fadil was a very astute and candid man. But without much doubt, the Sultan had been guilty of an unreasoning over-confidence.

He did not return to the wars for a while, but, probably because the Franks were for the time being not quite as troublesome as before, Saladin took up where he had left off on his public works undertakings.

At this time Cairo was a focal point for many learned and

distinguished men. In their company Saladin found the surcease he always seemed to need, and to gratify when he could, even though the periods of relaxation and pleasure were getting to be fewer and shorter as the full responsibility of great power fell increasingly upon his shoulders. He did not have the quality of men around him that he truly needed; for every al-Fadil he had a hundred conniving mediocrities, and when Egypt appeared to be docile and thriving, events in Syria took a turn for the worse, and when it appeared that Saladin might expect a year's respite in Cairo, he had to return to Damascus.

The Franks, emboldened by Saladin's defeat and rout near Ramla, were very aggressive in the north under their leper king whose sovereignty was showing all the signs of a stubborn and unyielding hostility.

Saladin left Cairo with a vast entourage, including "harems and much wealth", for his favourite city, Damascus, still under the rule of his brother Turan Shah. After arriving there, he spent what remained of the winter preparing to campaign against the Franks, come spring, in the year 1178.

Prior to marching, he tried through negotiations to induce the King of Jerusalem to destroy a recently-constructed castle on the Jordan River at Jacob's Ford. Here too the Franks had built a bridge. Both castle and bridge greatly facilitated forays into Saladin's Syrian heartland, something the Sultan could not tolerate.

But, although the Sultan offered Baldwin sixty thousand gold dinars to raze the castle, Baldwin refused. Saladin then offered one hundred and twenty thousand gold dinars, and still the King of Jerusalem was not tempted. Thereafter the Sultan's army marched, and after a fierce siege, carried the castle and "threw a thousand bodies [of the Christian defenders] into the reservoir". They also took a number of prisoners, but the important aftermath of all this was that the castle, which commanded the access route to Baniyas and the fertile agricultural lands thereabouts, became a Moslem stronghold instead of an eyrie of predatory and rapacious Franks.

Saladin, having learned one thing about the Franks above all other things, that they rarely rested, took steps to secure the countryside for Islam by establishing a base at Baniyas,

that ancient town of cool courtyards and great stone works called by the Romans Caesarea Phillipi when Jesus sojourned there.

Baldwin, recognizing the threat of Saladin's strength, poised, as it was, for a thrust into Jerusalem by way of the northernmost outposts, and motivated as well, no doubt, by the savage reduction of the castle at Jacob's Ford, rushed upon the Saracens. Although initially successful, when his triumphant troops scattered to plunder the Saracen camp, Saladin rallied his soldiers, charged the Franks, and after a piecemeal battle, not only defeated them, but captured King Baldwin himself, along with seventy of his marshals, including Odo the Master Templar, "a haughty, arrogant man, with the breath of fury in his nostrils", Raymond of Tripoli, who was no stranger to captivity, doughty Hugh of Tiberias, and many others of equally exalted rank. Those not captured or killed fled northward towards Sidon on the coast, or to the castle of Belfort, much closer to Caesarea Phillipi—Baniyas—but Baldwin's disaster was complete, and although the King subsequently ransomed himself for 150,000 dinars, his marshals doing the same on a correspondingly lower scale, according to rank, Baldwin was at last succumbing to his incurable malady, and after his return from this latest campaign, neither he nor his barons sought further battle with Saladin for a time.

Up until now the Sultan had used his limited sea power as a separate force. Its usefulness had been rather generally confined to harassing the Frankish coastlands. There had been some successes; in the autumn of 1179, according to Arab chroniclers, a thousand Christian captives were taken to be subsequently sold as slaves, but in the spring of 1180 the Sultan, despite indications that this was to be a bad year (a drought threatened), organized an expedition upon the Frankish coastlands using his fleet of seventy warships in conjunction with a great land force.

Baldwin of Jerusalem, ill and troubled by dissensions, proposed a truce, and Saladin accepted, providing his enemies would agree to a peace of several years' duration, which was to be binding upon civilians as well as armies, on land as well as on sea. Baldwin agreed and such a compact was subscribed

to by the most solemn oaths. At once Raymond of Tripoli, recently freed after his second captivity and no partisan of the leper king, denounced the treaty and rebelled against what he considered a Saracen-dictated truce which brought humiliation upon the barons. Saladin's warships appeared off the coast of Raymond's enclave, a Saracen army marched across his border, and Raymond, with a prompt change of heart, embraced the idea of a four-year truce.

Subsequently, Saladin was embroiled in a campaign against the Prince of Konium, an Arab lord, the results of which made his power felt as far as Armenia. He was the strongest Sultan of Islam with no-one able to challenge him successfully from the Nile River to the Euphrates Valley, and when it was his wish that the Frankish peace be extended to include the scattered and troublesome *atabegs* of such places as Jezira, Irbil, and Mosul, plus the kings of Konium and Armenia, there was no-one who, alone or in an alliance, could hope to prevail against his *Pax Saracenica*.

The Enduring Antagonists

Reginald of Châtillon, the Lord of Antioch, who was considered almost a renegade by the other Frankish barons and of whom it was said that he "scandalized all Islam by his conduct", refused to be bound by Saladin's treaty. Unlike Raymond of Tripoli, he was not closely threatened, but even had he been, it is difficult to imagine him yielding. This was the same fierce lord, who while an ally of Byzantium, sacked Cyprus so savagely that even among other lawless men the tales of that terrible occupation aroused shame.

Among the Saracens, however, there were none to defy Saladin's peace, unprecedented though it was in a part of the world that had scarcely known a full year's respite from war in centuries.

At least the *atabegs*, who were for the most part hereditary enemies of the Franks, could be persuaded on this account to believe in Islamic unity. Saladin's masterful manipulation of these prickly war-lords, through the promise of *jihad*, created the kind of an atmosphere in the East which promised the greatest results when, in the fullness of time, Islam was finally ready to mount a sustained effort.

But four years was a long time to have peace, enforced or otherwise, in a domain where warfare had never ceased to be a way of life and where the Prophet himself had exalted it.

But Saladin was master. The *atabegs*, if not necessarily the

Franks, could expect little mercy and even less forgiveness if they violated Saladin's truce, for not even a coalition of the more disgruntled and reluctant war-lords could expect to prevail for long against the Sultan's Syrian and Egyptian legions. Also, there was another consideration: Saladin, whose own pledge was inviolable, demanded nothing less honourable from other Arabs. He also expected it from the Franks in spite of the fact that by the year 1181 it was apparent that no knight in the Latin hegemonies believed a Christian had to keep faith with a Moslem.

Politically, of course, the matter of Saladin's peace throughout Islam gave the Christians a cause for genuine anxiety. If Saracen unity became a solid reality, then, obviously, the next step would be for the Sultan to lead all Islam against the Franks in a holy war the Franks could not expect to win: they had always been far too few to face a unified Islam; they had only survived this long because of the express *disunity* among their infidel neighbours.

King Baldwin, tiring and wasting, troubled by the incessant denunciations of his truce, and nearly stifled by palace intrigues, could not even compel the Lord of Antioch, now also the Master of the great Castle of Kerak, which dominated the Syrian countryside, to maintain the peace.

But at least for a while there were no serious incursions, and during this period Saladin left Damascus for the long trip south to Cairo. His nephew, Farouk Shah, ruled in Damascus. Elsewhere, he had left other men of faith and trust, but among the *atabegs*, except for the fear they had of Saladin, the peace was strained indeed.

Es-Salih died in 1181, and the House of Zengi mourned his loss less than it welcomed a change, for Nur ed-Din's sickly son was promptly replaced by a new lord of Mosul. Saif ed-Din, es-Salih's former champion, had also died. The new Lord of Mosul, however, refused to attack Saladin's Syrian holdings, on the grounds that as a subscriber to Saladin's peace, he could not break his pledge. He may also, very probably, have been motivated by respect for the Sultan's greatly superior power, but in any case, although importuned by other *atabegs* to make war, he did not do so.

Saladin had probably intended to invest Aleppo when es-Salih died. It would have eliminated that principality as a source of trouble. But when the successor to Saif ed-Din Ghazi, a fierce and conniving prince, Izz el-Din, took over Aleppo and became an ally of the Zengid establishment, Saladin did nothing. He was pledged to peace and never broke his word in his life. But it was a strain. The Zengid lords began to accumulate strength. They made a treaty of mutual assistance, not only with the Master of the Assassins, the Shaikh al-Jabal, they also made one with that most detested of all Frankish barons, Reginald of Châtillon, whose holdings, now that he had acquired el-Kerak by marriage with Stephanie, widow of Humphrey III of Toron, extended from Hebron on the Jordan River, to the Red Sea and on across to Sinai. It required almost a month on a good camel to cross his domain. Aside from el-Kerak, Reginald had three other mighty castles to house his soldiers, and to keep watch over his principality's waving fields of wheat and barley, the date-palm groves; the sugar cane, millet and indigo plantations. But most objectionable of all, to Moslems, was Reginald's command of the byways connecting such places as Mecca and Damascus with Cairo, not to mention the Red Sea ports through which so much of Islam's trade passed.

This would have rankled even if Reginald had been a more amenable and predictable Frank. But Saladin was bound by his pledge, even though he knew of the alliance between the Lord of Antioch and the Zengid princes against him. Reginald stormed down from his mountain fortress, the impregnable castle of el-Kerak, to attack Moslem caravans. When Saladin was importuned to march against the baron of Kerak, he kept his pledge, for, although he ultimately left Egypt bound for Syria, where other troubles seemed imminent, he did not attack Kerak, and while he marched his army by the same route the caravans used and was thus seen by the Franks, they, on their side, did not attack either.

Saladin departed from Cairo on 11th May 1182 and arrived a little over a month later at Damascus. True to the prediction of a poet, he never saw Cairo again.

In Syria, the Franks had violated Saladin's peace innumerable

times and the Sultan's nephew, Farouk Shah, retaliated with exceptional success. His army crossed the Jordan, devastated Galilee, sacked a number of Frankish towns, and overcame a great Frankish fortress, Habis Jeldek, then withdrew with a thousand captives in chains, driving along an immense herd of cattle—said to have numbered no less than twenty thousand head.

The following month, July 1182, Farouk Shah, with another of Saladin's nephews, Taki al-Din, again struck at Frankish Palestine, but this time, with knowledge of their route—towards the valuable castle of Belvoir near Bethsan, atop the hill of "the Star"—the Franks hurried to intercept them. The armies met at Belvoir.

Saladin was at Tiberias. Until his treaty expired, although he showed force to cow his enemies, he did not make war.

The battle at Belvoir, fierce and prolonged as it was, produced no victory for either side (although, because the Franks kept their castle, they claimed a triumph) but elsewhere Saladin had achieved a victory without bloodshed. He went to Aleppo, established a great camp nearby with his legions, and when the *atabeg* saw this vast array and understood its purpose—a prolonged siege—he offered to trade Aleppo to Saladin for the town of Sindjar, and that is how the Sultan finally rode into Aleppo as its master.

The treaty expired. Saladin's unification programme was succeeding, and with Aleppo united to the rest of Syria, he was now master of all interior Syria. There was, of course, Mosul, but he had already considered those mighty fortifications and found them too strong. Mosul could wait.

While he was at Aleppo word arrived from the Sultan's most powerful and capable brother, al-Adil, now Viceroy of Egypt, that the Franks were harrying his borders. Saladin was ready to march in short order, and this very anxiety may have been the cause of his hasty appointments at Aleppo. The governor was to be his young son, al-Zahir, whose guardian, an old comrade of Shirkuh's, was to be *emir*. There had to be a commander of the citadel and another commander of the constabulary corps, as well as a treasurer. Saladin made these appointments, left orders that the residents of the principality, who had twice

fought him, were to suffer no retaliations, then hurried on his way.

Al-Adil's troubles in Egypt were not confined to that land, and furthermore, they amounted to one of the most spectacular and astounding episodes of the entire Frankish occupation of the coastlands.

In 1182 Reginald of Châtillon organized a fleet of armed row-galleys, got them afloat in the Red Sea, and set them to plundering and sinking Moslem shipping with such ferocity that neither Moslem vessel nor port was safe.

Al-Adil's fear was that these lawless freebooters would reach Mecca, the Holy City of Islam, and raze it. Meanwhile, however, these men, said to have been slaves and prisoners and the most bloodthirsty of Reginald's soldiery, joined together by a bond of common degradation and blind avarice, pillaged and butchered on land as well as at sea, almost unopposed.

They left piles of corpses and blackened ruins as far south as Aden, and meanwhile, al-Adil, working in desperate haste, had Egyptian warships taken overland on rollers and launched into the Red Sea to prevent Reginald's reivers from marching upon Mecca, and to destroy them at sea, if possible.

Aden was not far from Mecca. Here, finally, the Egyptian fleet found the freebooters. It had not been a difficult trail; they had destroyed every town on the coast and black smoke marked each fresh massacre and devastation. In the fight which followed the freebooters were forced to take to the land, which was desert country inhabited by pastoral tribesmen. From these people Reginald's partisans stole horses and attempted to flee in the direction of Jerusalem. They were overtaken by the furious owners of their stolen mounts and all but a few were killed. The captives were marched to Mecca, allowed to see Islam's Holy City, then were put to death before the entire assembled population of Mecca.

It was over before Saladin got close, but the Frankish threat to sack Islam's holy of holies, the Kaaba where Mohammed lay buried, and drag "the accursed camel driver from his grave", was enough to kindle the Sultan's zeal anew. He crossed the Jordan on 29th September and marched up the fertile valley of Jezreel burning and pillaging. At the foot of Mount Gilboa,

where he made camp, word arrived that a force of Franks was nearby. He went at once to attack, and on 30th September, by reason of his superior force and ardour, defeated a small host of Christians. Guy of Lusignan, acting in the field for the dying leper King of Jerusalem, came down from the hills between Nazareth and the Plain of Esdraelon and at Alfula Saladin met him in battle.

This was no small Christian band such as had been overwhelmed on 30th September. With Guy of Lusignan were Reginald of Châtillon from Kerak, with his troops, Walter of Caesarea, Joscelin de Courtney, Balian and Baldwin of Ibelin, all Frankish knights of renown, and Henry, Duke of Louvain, as well as Ralf de Meleine of Aquitaine, from Frankistan (Europe). De Lusignan, not very popular with the other barons, had a force of 15,000 foot-soldiers and 1,300 knights. When the attack was made, Saladin's horse-archers could not break the spearmen's ranks and although both sides suffered heavy casualties, neither could rout the other. It was a drawn battle. Both armies pitched camp, and for a full week, although they were only a mile apart, the fighting was not renewed.

Saladin manned the mountains roundabout and finally, hungry and split by the dissensions among their leaders, the Franks withdrew, harassed on all sides by the Saracen horsemen.

That same month, October, with bad weather certain to arrive shortly, Saladin sought out Reginald of Châtillon at his mighty fortress, el-Kerak, and undertook an attack and a siege. With him was his brother, the Viceroy of Egypt, and al-Adil's Egyptian troops.

In Aleppo, meanwhile, al-Zahir's guardian, the *emir*-regent, was proving an inept administrator. Saladin and his brother discussed this; al-Adil was willing to yield up his Egyptian viceroyalty in exchange for the office of governor of Aleppo, and Saladin proposed making Taki al-Din, his seasoned and valuable nephew, the new Viceroy of Egypt.

These things were resolved while Kerak was under siege. Also during this period, the defenders of Kerak, by means of signal-lights, transmitted the news of their plight from castle to castle until it was received in Jerusalem, where the incessantly squabbling barons temporarily put aside their differences

and made up a great army for the relief of Reginald. When Saladin was apprised of the coming of this force and with bad weather creating misery among his troops, he lifted the siege and marched back to Damascus.

Reginald of Châtillon, "the most wicked and perfidious of the Franks", got another respite.

During the late winter of 1183—Saladin reached Damascus in December—and the early spring of 1184, Saladin made the appointments he and al-Adil had discussed during the siege of Kerak; Taki al-Din became Viceroy of Egypt, al-Adil became governor of Aleppo, and the child al-Zahir was returned to the care of Saladin's household.

But the "wolf that devoured human flesh and drank human blood", Reginald of Châtillon, remained free and active, his notoriety after the Red Sea escapade capable of striking terror into Mohammedan hearts a thousand miles away. At the first break in the weather Saladin once more organized an army, his Syrians and Taki al-Din's Egyptians, and marched forth.

When the Saracen host appeared before Kerak there was a spectacular wedding ceremony in progress. Reginald's stepson, Humphrey of Toron, was being united to a half-sister of the King of Jerusalem, Isabella.

The host of Islam established its colourful camp in preparation for battle or siege, whichever Reginald chose, and at night a Frankish soldier rode to the Saracen camp from the castle with a gift for the Sultan of wine and wedding cake from the betrothal feast. Saladin in turn ordered that no weapons were to be aimed at the particular battlemented tower where the newlyweds were. Then the battle was begun.

The village that huddled along the outside walls of Kerak was attacked with little trouble. The villagers were taken inside, and, as he had done before, on his previous siege, Saladin had his mangonels and the great catapults aligned to bombard the great walls continually with huge stones.

But the range was too great so Saladin had the moat filled, but not without difficulty. Aside from the deadly archers overhead, Reginald's troops were also wise in the ways of the Greek *Naffatun*—flame-throwers who used naphtha—hence the name—and who wore asbestos armour. Until his soldiers could be

shielded from the flaming "Greek fire" and the deadly arrows, by means of an overhead protective covering, filling the moat was a slow and costly undertaking, but eventually it was accomplished, and the war-engines could be brought closer.

At the height of the siege word arrived that once more an army was on its way from Jerusalem to succour the besieged and once again Saladin, who dared not turn his back on Reginald to face this fresh threat, had to break off and withdraw. He retreated by way of ancient Samaria, which his troops ravaged, and after sending Taki al-Din back to Egypt, the Sultan returned to Damascus, arriving there during the hot time of year, September 1184.

Again Raymond had triumphed.

The following winter Baldwin of Jerusalem, wasted and rotting, escaped his misery by dying, and at once the eternal factionalism flared anew. But the barons were unwilling to have to fight and wrangle at the same time, so they did little to antagonize the Moslems for a while, and devoted themselves to a wholehearted series of intrigues to see who should become regent for the new King, the infant Baldwin V. The durable Raymond, Count of Tripoli, triumphed eventually, but before that, Reginald of Châtillon, who was averse even to truces, rejected the idea of a formal peace, when it was proposed, as did the fierce and aloof Masters of the Temple and the Hospital, so there was still killing and raiding, but no general warfare, and in fact Raymond of Tripoli eventually sought a formal peace for four years with Saladin. He not only achieved peace, but also secured from the Sultan a promise of support if Raymond sought the crown of Jerusalem. In return the Count set free all his Saracen captives and slaves, and when one of those periodic droughts came, in 1185, Raymond sent surplus food to Damascus.

For Saladin the return of the prisoners was the crux of all this negotiating; in particular it mattered who wore the crown of Jerusalem. He was dedicated to evicting all Franks, and if he could free Arabs in exchange for lending political, not armed, support, to a pretender, it would not deter him in the least when the time came to attack Jerusalem.

Still, Raymond of Tripoli was now a man of age and, pre-

sumably, some wisdom. Under his leadership the barons might not, either collectively or for very long, have been induced to be at peace, but under Raymond they might have come closer to it than under any of the other barons, such as Guy of Lusignan, or the great-hearted fighting brothers of Ibelin, Balian and Baldwin, or even the exalted Patriarch of Jerusalem, who, aside from keeping a mistress within a stone's throw of the Holy Sepulchre, was also fiercely opposed to any Christian-Moslem accommodation.

Institut kurde de Paris

Syria, a Crucible of Events

For a short while there was a time of 'little wars', skirmishes, forays, raids, but of no great battles, and if this was of small consolation to those who died of wounds or putrefying infections arising from them, for the lords and barons, the Kings and Sultans, it was a period of welcome relative tranquillity.

Even though, as Stanley Lane-Pook said, "It was no real peace whilst the Patriarch Heraclius scoured Europe to beat up recruits, whilst English Knights from the Cheviots to the Pyrenees took the Cross, whilst the two great Military Orders [of the Temple and the Hospital] were burning to strike a blow for the faith", it was still a period of limited activity.

For Saladin, ruling from Damascus, there was time for *mall* (polo), and for those lively conversations he so enjoyed. There was also time for his household, his children and his numerous other relatives. Some were missing; his brother, Bourri, had died not long after the successful siege of that castle Saladin had offered to buy from Baldwin for 150,000 gold dinars. Farouk Shah, his loyal and warlike nephew, the Viceroy of Syria, had also died more recently.

But the Sultan had his little time of pleasure. During this period he met the Cadi, Baha ed-Din, sent as an emissary by the Caliph of Baghdad, who wished to exert some influence, temporal as well as spiritual, something no Moslem pontiff ever managed to do on the scale of the Roman Popes. While Saladin received the Caliph's emissary and was impressed with

him, he was not moved by the Caliph's aspirations and on that score at least he and Baha ed-Din differed. But Saladin wanted the Cadi in his camp and accordingly offered inducements. However, for a while at least, Baha ed-Din, a biographer of Saladin, one of the Sultan's confidants and most trusted friend and companion of later years, enjoyed Saladin's hospitality without becoming actively associated with him.

By now, beautiful and drowsy Damascus had been transformed into a capital of empire, a flourishing, bustling seat of increased trade, commerce, and prestige. There were few days throughout the year when *atabegs* and their colourful retinues did not enter the gates, or when ambassadors and renowned scholars were not made welcome in the Arab custom, which dictated that all the labour and cost of an honoured guest's visit should be cheerfully borne by his hosts.

Saladin's interest in medicine, in all the sciences, in education and law, and general administration, induced men of great knowledge to seek the safety of Damascus to perfect ideas or to have their own ideas improved upon by the most learned men of the time, who found the freedom and stimulation of Saladin's court conducive in all ways.

While Saladin lived his capital was great. "The Bride of the Earth", as the Arabs called Damascus, was deserving of that other title: "Garden of the World", for its fertile and well-watered upland plateau was really a garden in a sea of desert. There were pines and poplars, cedars and mulberry, citrus and fruit trees, shade full of fragrance in summertime and a series of ingenious canals that carried water from the river past every residence.

There was the splendid Omayyad Mosque, where Saladin went to pray, two free hospitals, monasteries, twenty colleges, "two Meydans [greenswards] like pieces of silk brocade rolled out, for their greenness and beauty". There was a clock with brass falcons to strike the hours by day and a red light that was timed to dwindle against marked glass by night.

A sojourner from Spain, the Moslem Ibn Jubeir, saw the Sultan play polo on the greensward—too furiously and recklessly everyone agreed—and saw his sons taught on warm summer evenings to shoot the bow and practise horsemanship.

But Saladin, like all great sultans, had obligations. He had to be present in the Council of Justice, much of the time as an arbiter. He and his close companions, the Arab al-Fadil, Imad ed-Din, and, eventually the Cadi Baha ed-Din, among others, not only had to govern an empire and hold it together, they also had to make it strong in order that when Saladin decided the time was opportune for vanquishing the Christians, his kingdom could stand the strain as well as sustain the effort.

But administering could at least be done from a chamber, not a saddle. Saladin cared for his enormous correspondence in comfort, and when the work day was finished he entertained great men and completely enjoyed it.

He also kept himself apprised of the conditions and the activities of the Franks, but while each fresh contingent to land on the coasts from Europe consisted of his avowed and vehement enemies, the Sultan could see that something quite different was occurring to the native Franks of Syria and Jerusalem. The same fierce Christian warriors who wore Arab robes over their hauberks (a long chain-mail shirt falling below the knees; plate armour was not worn until the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries), had long ago adopted Saracen swords, Arab horses, and the manners of Islam. They commonly grazed their kine and sheep on the same pastures, spoke Arabic, married the daughters of their Moslem equals, played polo and chess together, and in time, could probably have become thorough Saracens. Among these men Saladin could have found fast friends—had they been left alone, but that could not be. Europe still simmered with the Holy Zeal, as well as with an equally fanatical and unholy avarice, not just for land, but for Moslem wealth, of which there was a great abundance at this time in places like Damascus, Cairo, Beirut, Aleppo, Alexandria, Gaza, and across the Red Sea towards Mecca. So, while the Sultan enjoyed peace, and understood the need to prepare for war, his Frankish neighbours were enjoying more peace than were their distant kinsmen in Europe, and were, while in the process of becoming Orientalized, learning a great deal that was conducive to comfort, luxury and co-existence.

The Spanish Mohammedan Ibn Jubeir saw a wedding extravaganza in Acre on the Frankish coast that he commemorated in

his diary. A princess of Christendom came forth from her church among a glitteringly resplendent cortège of guests, both Moslems and Christians, after which the entire mixed group went to celebrate at the manor of the bridegroom, and Ibn Jubeir noted in shock that "all this happened without a sign of disapproval. May God preserve us from such seductions!".

On his way to Damascus from Acre, the Spanish Mohammedan encountered another anomaly, the 'Tree of Balance', a mighty oak which marked the boundary beyond which neither Moslem nor Christian was supposed to pass into the land of the other, but which in fact was more a landmark than a sentinel-tree.

He found—horror of horrors—Mohammedan farmers tilling Christian soil and living amicably with their infidel overlords. Ibn Jubeir, on the matter of law at any rate, was not biased; he was of the opinion that despite the great legal traditions of the Saracens, there actually was more common justice in the realms of the Franks. He even found Moslems serving as local *emirs* and mayors for the barons, a situation existing nowhere else in Islam.

He met Franks as fluent in Arabic as any Arab, and who kept their accounts, recorded in their journals and read their books in Arabic. Mosques and Christian churches were often side by side, not infrequently trading companies were owned jointly by a native Frank and an Arab. Acre particularly, because it was a jutting sea-promontory, a great seat of trade, had almost no discrimination. It must have been a startling sight to the Spanish Moslem, to find such an easy familiarity existing between these sworn and adamant enemies. Even more deserving of his disgust must have been the sight of pigs in Islam, where pork-eating was most strictly prohibited and where good zealots attacked these animals with drawn swords as furiously as they did non-believers.

He did, in fact, deplore the "state of impurity" prevailing in such towns as Acre and Tyre, for, pigs and infidels notwithstanding, he also saw Moslem captives in chains doing manual labour. And within sight of these unfortunates he also saw rich Moslem merchants growing richer through trading associations with Franks, quite unmindful of their fellow-religionists

in chains. Ibn Jubeir, it appears, despite his opportunity to do so as a Sojourner, never acquired an understanding of the true, basic nature of Man, Moslem or Christian.

Also, slavery was the custom of the times; Cairo, Damascus, other Saracen cities, had chained slaves, mostly Christians, doing the same kind of back-breaking labour. Even Saladin, whose magnanimity and compassion were great, looked on this state of affairs as, not necessarily desirable, perhaps, but certainly acceptable and practical. If captives were not to be put to death, then it was only reasonable that they should work, rather than lie idle and be wholly supported by taxpayers.

Ibn Jubeir may have also felt disapproval of the Sultan's policy of making treaties with infidels, of allowing them to engage in trade, separately or in partnership with Mohammedans, for trade brought wealth, and wealth ensured strength and power. Most certainly there were other Mohammedans who looked upon this policy of the Sultan's as near heresy, and on the other side, in the Kingdom of Jerusalem and elsewhere throughout the Frankish enclaves, there were enough barons such as Reginald of Châtillon who thought they detected weakness in Saladin's wish for peace, to make a renewal of hostilities inescapable. But it is improbable that the barons had any idea how Saladin was also preparing for war, in this time of peace. They certainly had no inkling of the stunning disaster they would ensure when they once again abandoned peace for war.

In the year 1186 the infant King of Jerusalem, Baldwin V, died, and at once the internal struggle which invariably followed such an event, commenced. It ended suddenly when the Patriarch Heraclius crowned the unpopular late-comer Guy of Lusignan, King of Jerusalem. The barons were not only dumbfounded, they were also furious. At once Raymond of Tripoli, who had been an aspirant for the crown, undertook to organize the barons for a coup, or, if that failed, an open rebellion. He had in his favour the fact of his peace with Saladin and the possibility of having the truce extended, but most important, there was that promise of support if Raymond sought the crown, and the doughty Count could be expected to rely on that promise.

The barons, however, excepting those such as Reginald of Châtillon who supported King Guy, met together for the purpose of electing the infant king's successor, and chose Humphrey of Toron, whose wedding to Isabella, Princess of Jerusalem, Saladin's siege had enlivened a short while before. Raymond of Tripoli was helpless without allies and in the end went home to his castle at Tiberias, where stood the ruins of the great city built by Herod Antipas during the time of Jesus. When Humphrey of Toron refused the crown all the conniving came to nothing; Guy of Lusignan remained King of Jerusalem, distrusted by the people, cordially disliked by the barons and unable even to control his one strong supporter, Reginald of Châtillon. The latter disclaimed any part in the earlier treaty Raymond, the former regent, had made with Saladin, and began anew to harry and lay waste. When remonstrances were sent him by the Moslems, Reginald sent back a provocative answer: "Let your Mohammed help you!"

At this point Saladin sent a pointed message to the new King of Jerusalem: either the prisoners and the wealth taken by Reginald in violation of the peace treaty were to be restored, or the Sultan would march.

Guy could not have punished Reginald if he had wanted to. Not only was Reginald the King's strongest supporter among the barons, he also controlled a rich fief which was guarded by impregnable fortresses. Saladin had himself failed several times to reduce the renegade Châtillon in his main castle and Guy could hope to do no better. So Reginald continued to sack and plunder.

But King Guy was not deceived by the ensuing lull. He went zealously to work at perfecting the defences of Jerusalem. From Europe came a bare trickle of fighting men, never enough, really, to more than offset battle losses, or the retirement of Crusaders grown old and grizzled in the interminable battles. The Knights of the Temple, however, no friends of de Lusignan's, received a large grant of money from England's King, whose conscience required some assuaging after the murder of Thomas à Becket, and no doubt with some thought in mind about acquiring this money, or at least a part of it, Guy cultivated the Master of the Temple, and in consort, these

two decided to win back Raymond of Tripoli, by force or appeasement.

What followed was one of those fateful quirks no-one seems to have either anticipated or been able to forestall. El-Afdal, Saladin's eldest son and a budding warrior, probably presuming upon his father's formal amity with Raymond of Tripoli, appeared at Tiberias with a party, seeking permission to go forth upon the Count's fief to hunt. Raymond, unwilling to antagonize the Sultan by refusing, agreed, providing the Saracens would be off his territory by nightfall, and also providing that they avoid all acts of hostility. El-Afdal agreed and led his companions out over the plain.

Guy and the Master of the Temple had already sent ambassadors towards Tiberias to try and placate Raymond, and although these men were warned not to cross the open country toward Tiberias until after nightfall, or until El-Afdal and his party were gone, being Knights of the Temple and the Hospital, they chose not to obey, gathered up some light troops at Nazareth, and pushed ahead to find and fight the Saracens.

In a battle so savage it was said to have "turned black hair white", the Master of the Hospitallers and every other Christian was killed, except the Master of the Temple and one or two others.

Raymond saw El-Afdal's party returning from their 'hunt' with Christian heads on their lances. Later, the knight Balian of Ibelin brought Raymond the news.

One man inadvertently involved, Raymond of Tripoli, was now in the worst possible position as the result of an event he had never for a moment anticipated: on the one hand, he had, seemingly with treachery, sent Saladin's son into an ambush, while on the other he had allowed Saracens to ride across his land while an embassy from the King of Jerusalem was coming to see him, with the most dolorous results for the King's ambassadors.

As for the Templars and Hospitallers, who were unyielding foes of Islam, they would be the first to recall Raymond's pact with the infidel Sultan and could be excused for believing that Raymond had deliberately invoked Saladin's aid against his own king.

Raymond never had to make the decision King Guy had sent the ambassadors to help him arrive at. It was made for him: he could either fall in with his companion-of-the-pact, Saladin, in which case he would be driven out of his fief, ruined and no doubt excommunicated, or he could prove by his stand with Guy of Lusignan that he was loyal. He had to choose the alliance with Guy, a man he most heartily detested. He also had to become engaged in a new war for which he had no sympathy.

On Saladin's side, there was a sound reason for the lull that followed what in Moslem eyes could only be seen as an example of Frankish treachery when El-Afdal had been attacked after being granted permission to hunt unmolested on Raymond's fief.

The *atabegs* who had acknowledged Saladin's power were restive, and this condition in the east could not be allowed to prevail when the Sultan moved against the Franks in the west. In the event of a full-scale contest, he would also have to rely on the levies of these fiefs.

Accordingly, he marched, first to the fief of his brother-in-law Kukaburi, then against that perennial seat of dissension, Mosul. But it was late summer, the heat was almost unbearable, and when a party of women came from the town to beg him to lift his siege, he did so and returned to Damascus.

Mosul's lord at once became especially active in the fields of deception and rebellion, so Saladin returned. He laid siege to Mosul three times. The third time he fell ill with a fever and rode the two hundred miles back to the fief of his brother-in-law, Kukaburi, delirious a good bit of the time.

He was half-dead. Al-Adil hastened forward with a physician but he continued to sink. Finally, believing he was soon to die, Saladin made al-Adil the guardian and protector of his family, called together his *emirs* to swear fealty to his sons, and composed himself for death.

He lay inert and wasting for weeks; his family despaired of his life, but imperceptibly he began to improve. It was a long siege, and even when danger appeared minimal Saladin was still too weak to rise from his bed. But throughout all this the siege of Mosul continued and as the Sultan began to recover,

an embassy arrived from Mosul to seek terms. The city was in dire condition; its lord, hopeful for a while Saladin would die, now knew otherwise and he also had another reason for sending an embassy. Baha ed-Din, the Cadi who had formerly sought to treat with Saladin as an ambassador of the Caliph of Baghdad and for whom it was known Saladin had immense respect, was available to carry the offer from Mosul.

Saladin could afford to be magnanimous and he was. The *atabeg* of Mosul was to acknowledge Saladin his sovereign, was to see to it that Saladin's name was put upon minted coins and pronounced in the Friday prayers, and the *atabeg* was to furnish the Sultan with soldiers for the *jehad* when the Sultan called for them. As soon as these terms were accepted, Saladin, weak and emaciated, lifted his siege. He went to Aleppo by slow degrees, remained there a while, then, slowly again, he went back to Damascus. His eastern borders were secure, not entirely as a result of his actions, but because of his arrival with an army. Many dissenters let their outcries dwindle to a whisper just at the sight of the Sultan's arrival.

4th July 1187

The summer of 1186 was the last peaceful summer of Saladin's life. By his own efforts he had unified or pacified Syria and Egypt, which was never as recurrently troublesome, was willing to continue to act in consort with Syria in fresh undertakings.

There were still Mohammedan dissenters, or, more distantly, Moslem kings, princes and war-lords, whose personal domains were beyond reach of Frankish raiders, who would not rush forth to support the Sultan even in holy war, unless of course he could convince them through a few solid victories that the Prophet's cause would persevere and possibly even triumph. But at least if these reluctant supporters procrastinated, they dared not flaunt in open rebellion. Thus, Saladin, although never completely able to disregard them, had no very imminent cause for worry when he finally sent forth his call to Islam.

Jihad!

The warriors came from Asia Minor, Egypt and Syria, by the thousands. They rode and walked through the blazing sun of springtime from Iraq, from Mesopotamia and Armenia, from Iconium, Sinai and Gaza. They came in row-galleys, dhows, in the great-sailed vessels of the seafaring lands of Islam, bringing arms, animals, kitchens, women and children. Clouds of dust stood over their great straggling columns, and when the Franks heard, they ordered a swift conscription, then they waited.

Even the Zengid princes were on the march. The lords of Mosul and Sindjar, as well as their relatives from Harran, Irbil and

Jezira, were moving towards the place of the Sultan's banner.

Around Damascus, winter wheat was harvested by early summer, which was fortunate, because by June 1187, the levies were arriving, all available fields were taken over, bivouacs after the custom of Araby were set up. Tents of every imaginable design and colour formed squares and wide avenues, horses by the thousands grazed the countryside, and fierce armed warriors thronged the countryside and the city.

Islam's camp numbered upwards of 100,000 men; the greatest array of Moslem might ever assembled on the near side of the mountains for a thrust into the country of the Christian barons.

The best Guy of Lusignan could do to match this array was 20,000 troops and 1,300 mounted knights, and Saladin needed no-one to tell him this; it had been the cornerstone upon which he had been trying to erect Islam's invincibility, through unity, for so long. Islam was the stronger.

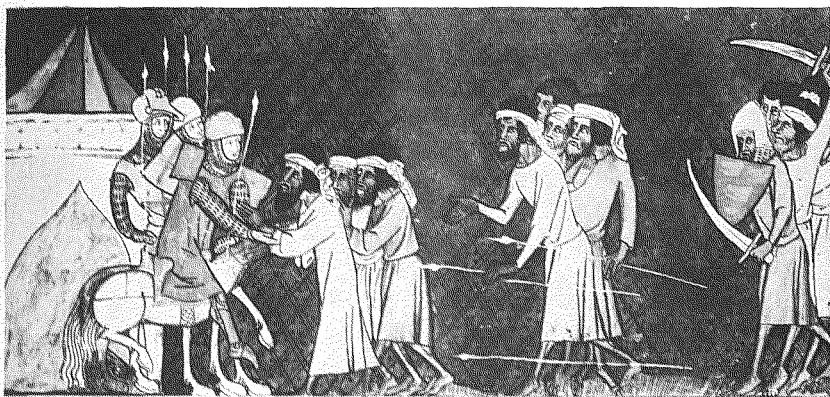
He had the troops mustered in June, and made his dispositions for the march. He would command the centre. His brother, al-Adil, would command on the left, while Taki al-Din would command on the right.

The great army moved out on a Friday, at the hour of holy prayers with the cries of Islam's priests invoking Allah's support, heading south towards Lake Tiberias, also known as the Sea of Galilee.

Frankish outriders saw the Sultan's approach long before he came close. They must have stared in awe, for the camp of Islam roused an overcast of dust to high heaven, and its legions covered the land from dawn until dark. They carried the news to the barons, assembled and waiting beyond the hills, beyond the heat-dancing arid plains, about ten miles from the lake. The Franks did not move.

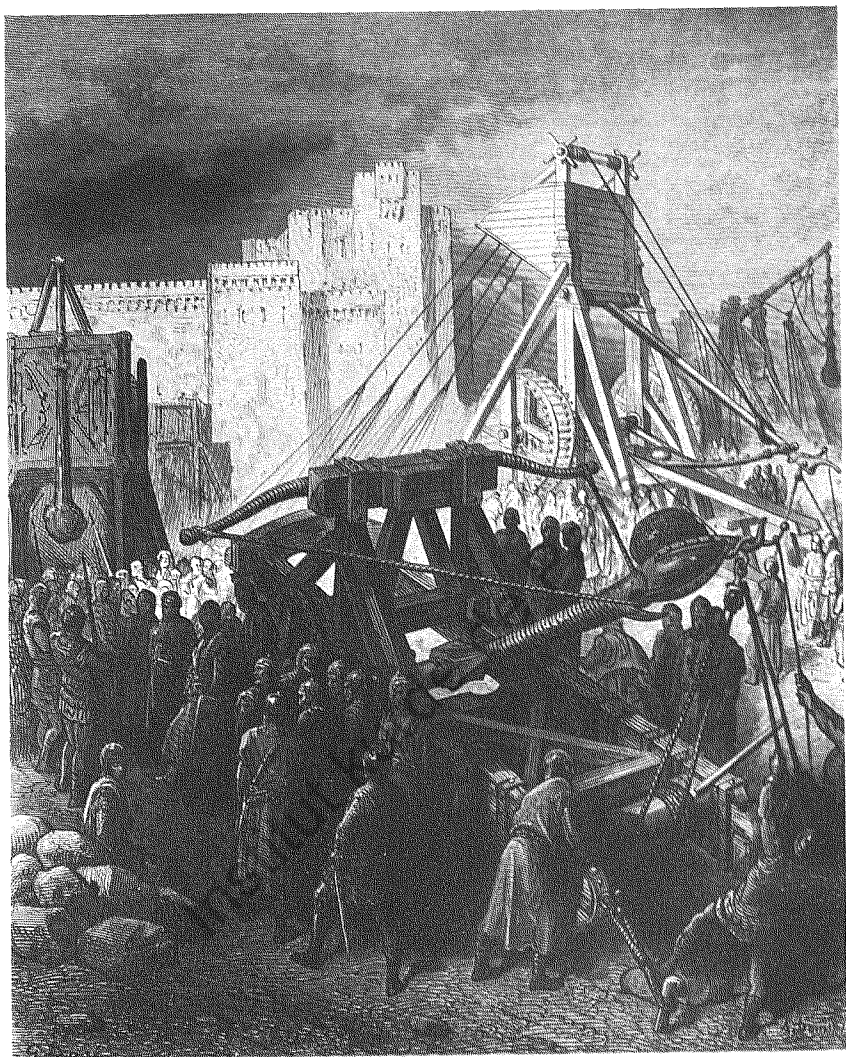
Saladin reached the Jordan River, crossed over, marched beyond the lake and made camp in a southwesterly direction, with his back to Islam, facing Jerusalem. There was no reason for much caution. Saladin vastly outnumbered his foe, and even granting the great courage of the Christians, bravery alone could not possibly overcome numbers, when blind fanaticism as well as sound leadership were on the side of the greater force.

"When the Franks saw us," wrote an Arab chronicler of



(above) 'Treacherous attack by Saracens', an illustration from the late fourteenth-century manuscript *Chroniques de Saint-Denis*. (right) A Knight Templar, after an effigy in the Temple Church, London





Crusaders attack a city with siege engines: in the foreground is a ballista, a form of heavy crossbow for hurling boulders, iron bolts or naphtha. Engraving by Gustave Doré from *Histoire des Croisades* by J. F. Michaud

what ensued, "they understood that this was a struggle of all Islam against all infidels."

The Moslem bivouac was at Hattin, close to the Horns of Hamah, where Saladin had won his earlier victory over the partisans of the House of Zengi. (The Crusaders believed these hills to include the Mount of Beatitudes.) Here, west of Tiberias and the Sea of Galilee, Saladin was within the sphere of his enemies. Hereabouts he expected to draw them out in battle, despite the fact that because the hills sloped steeply towards the lake—which lay six hundred feet below in a great sunken place—a rout would be inevitably disastrous for him. The slope downward was very abrupt and the lake itself was no ally of fleeing armies.

The objective, of course, was Jerusalem and the holy city, but once the Moslems saw the glittering arms of Christianity dead ahead, waiting to break Saladin's back before he could reach the enclaves, a number of prudent *emirs* wondered if it would not be better, since they had the greater force, to divide the army and strike out in many different directions, to attack the relatively defenceless fiefs, thus drawing the Franks away in small bands.

There was nothing wrong with the idea, but Saladin had not schemed so long, nor worn himself down so many times to achieve unity—and this moment—to see it vanish in a series of forays. Now, he said, was the time of "Moslems against infidels. We ought not to scatter such an army until we have strained every effort in the Holy War."

The field ahead was ancient Armageddon and all the great nations of antiquity had been here before: Rome, Greece, Assyria (and centuries later the British of Lord Allenby tramped through). The town of Nazareth, upon a nearby raised hillside, overlooked the lower plain of Esdraelon, and not very distant was where the Sermon on the Mount had been preached. Between the two camps was the arid desert, separate from Esdraelon which was a fertile, cultivated locale and the countryside nearer Tiberias, where Moslem horsemen cared for their animals and their weapons.

Saladin wanted to draw the Franks out upon the arid wastes. He rode forth to reconnoitre and two days later went down to

Tiberias, invested the city and made a feint at Raymond of Tripoli's castle, where the Count's lady at once sent a rider pell-mell to the Christian camp at Saffaruya to tell Raymond that his Lady and her slim corps of defenders were under siege. They were not; in fact by the Sultan's orders the Frankish messenger was allowed to pass unmolested, and the result of this little stratagem accomplished Saladin's purpose.

King Guy called a council as soon as the messenger from the Lady Eschiva brought his news. All the knights were in accord with Guy of Lusignan about riding to the relief, excepting one: Raymond of Tripoli, the grizzled campaigner of many fights with Moslems, told the council pointedly that the moment they entered the desert, they would have no water on ahead until they reached the Sea of Galilee and in order to get there, they would have to ride through the greatest army of Islam ever assembled against them, while once they left the wells of Saffaruya, they would be unable to return except in flight.

The horses and foot soldiers would suffer unbearably, out in the scalding desert heat; even the bravest among them would be too debilitated to fight well. Raymond of Tripoli was talking most earnestly against succouring the Lady Eschiva at Tiberias—who was his wife. "Let the Sultan have the castle," he told the knights. "It can be recovered later. If we do not advance, neither will he. Saladin is too wise to lead his troops over those ten miles of waterless desert; he only hopes we can be made foolish enough to attempt it."

Reginald of Châtillon, veteran of many sieges and skirmishes with Saladin, scorned a man who would advise against riding to save his own home. He accused Raymond of cowardice. "Advance without fear," he told the council. "If the Sultan's army is as great as [Raymond] believes, the more fuel the greater the fire!"

Raymond's logic prevailed, but after nightfall Reginald and the Master Templar, in private with King Guy, convinced their sovereign that Raymond of Tripoli was not to be trusted. For one thing, he was known to have been an ally of Saladin; for another, no man who would abandon his own wife could be trusted.

The following daybreak King Guy's order for muster went through the Christian camp. Initially, the march went well, the heat was no worse than usual and there was enough water. Among the retainers who accompanied the Franks was a raucous old demented Arab crone. She rode alongside the columns taunting the troops. She said she had put a curse upon the leaders. She foretold disaster and, as the heat increased and the water gave out, she screamed that no Franks would survive, even to return to Saffaruya. The suffering became intense; men cast aside heavy accoutrements, metal became too hot to hold, horses collapsed, men fell and could not arise. When the old crone was encouraged by this disastrous dissolution of Guy's army, and screeched the louder, she was pulled from her donkey and hacked to death by a battle axe.

Saladin's horsemen hung on the Frankish flanks, worried the sides, and downed men in the ranks. Stragglers and crazed deserters were easy prey. The Franks kept going, the Sea of Galilee their only objective. When nightfall arrived the soldiers sank to the ground where they halted. Raymond had been right when he had said the battle would be lost before it was properly begun.

There was no way for the Frankish army to get water after nightfall. Half-crazed soldiers tried to dig for it, some sought to sneak away in the darkness. They were completely surrounded by Saracens and when the late night, at least, turned cool, the Saracens set fire to the sedge bringing back the heat and also providing light for Saracen archers to aim by.

Saladin's supply corps placed camel-loads of arrows at spaced intervals so that no bowman had to walk far to refill his quiver. Saracen drummers kept up a furious beat throughout the night, and Raymond of Tripoli, whose four grown sons were with the King's army, rode through the Christian camp crying, "Alas, Lord God, the war is over; we are dead men! The Kingdom is undone!"

Dawn came. It was Saturday, 4th July 1187; to the Christians it was also a minor holy day. The Christian army was only half-way to the lake and as soon as it was light enough to see, the knights got to horse. Simultaneously, the Saracens, who had been awaiting first light with impatience, joined the battle.

Arrows came at such close quarters and so thickly that there was no way for the Franks to get clear. Horsemen in particular were targets and as the dehydrated soldiers tried to form, the Saracen hordes charged from all sides.

The Franks fought so savagely that, although sick from thirst and overwhelmingly outnumbered, they drove off their attackers time and again, but it could only have ended one way—as Raymond had foretold.

When the dead and dying lay in heaps all around, with all hope gone, Raymond of Tripoli led a desperate band in a wild charge through Taki al-Din's sector and miraculously escaped. Elsewhere, Guy of Lusignan and a handful of knights made a stand by the royal standard. The fought so fiercely that not even the greater numbers opposed to them could make headway for a period of time, but eventually the standard fell, and this signal that the battle was over prompted Saladin to dismount, bend "himself to the ground and give thanks to God, weeping for joy".

The fragment of the 'True Cross' which had been carried by an emissary of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, along with King Guy, his royal standard, and all the Franks still able to stand, fell into the hands of the Sultan's troops. It was the custom that prisoners belonged to the Saracen who captured them, and, while in Europe this obtained only when lords captured lords and villeins captured villeins, in Islam when a lowly Arab captured a great lord or a belted Christian knight, the prisoner remained his captor's chattel, his slave.

Of King Guy's 20,000 men only a remnant remained. Saracens went over the battlefield appropriating arms, armour, clothing, supplies and money. At their camp they engaged in lively barter. A Frankish knight brought more than a common soldier, but there was so much plunder, so many horses and despairing captives, many wounded, that no soldier of the Sultan was without a great reward.

Saladin had no personal captives, but he posted a generous reward of fifty dinars, gold, for every Knight Templar and Knight Hospitaller and before long his soldiers led up about a hundred of each, claimed the bounty and Saladin had two hundred personal prisoners. These Franks, the most unrelenting

opponents of Islam, the most vaunted, foremost and unforgiving of all Christian warriors, were known among the Saracens to hold Mohammedanism and the Prophet in bitter scorn. They had been putting Saracens to death by the axe and sword for over half a century without leniency and not as armed adversaries, but expressly because they were sworn to exterminate infidels.

Saladin's war with these stern, brave men was personal; it was quite different from his war with most Syrian Franks. To the latter he often extended clemency, even friendship. To the former, who would have put him to death in an instant if their positions had been reversed, he gave death.

Before his assembled soldiers, and their prisoners, he had every Templar and Hospitaller slain, excepting only the Grand Masters of the Temple and the Hospital. They along with King Guy of Jerusalem, and a small band of knights whose valour the Saracens had admired, were ultimately sent to Damascus. But there was one other captive yet to die: Reginald of Châtillon, captured at the side of Guy of Lusignan.

Saladin had Reginald brought to his tent and told him, with guards present, that he had resolved personally to slay the Lord of Kerak for seeking to raid Mecca, the holy city, for ignoring treaties and truces, for attacking defenceless caravans, and because, "You insulted our Prophet, and it is my duty to avenge him". Saladin then swung his sword, and although Reginald sought to elude the blow, the blade hit him on the shoulder and cut off Reginald's arm. As he fell, one of the Sultan's guards stepped up and decapitated him. The body was rolled out of the tent.

King Guy, who had witnessed this execution, "trembling at the sight" and probably certain it was his turn next, was told by the Sultan that it was "not the custom for Kings to slay Kings. But that man [Reginald] went beyond the limits. He deserved his death".

The benumbed captives were forced to work, even the wounded, while the great Saracen army remained in camp, but they at least had water and they were alive, unlike the Templars and Hospitallers whose execution had been especially savage. They had been lined up, bound, while *emirs* and *atabegs*

and holy men walked up and repeatedly plunged curved swords into their bodies until they were all dead.

Arab chroniclers said that a year later it was still possible to see the mounds of white bones where "30,000" infidels died in that great triumph for Saladin. There had not been thirty thousand to begin with, but the disaster was as great as if there had been. The Franks had been decisively beaten and now the fruits of Saladin's years of planning and patience were ripening. The Kingdom of Jerusalem lay defenceless and leaderless and the principalities were vulnerable. Tiberias, with its ancient walls, its blue-water lake behind, and its oleanders and blessed tree-shade—where Raymond's wife kept a despairing and grieving watch—was at the mercy of Islam's mightiest Sultan and conqueror.

What the First Crusade had established and what Frankish courage and ingenuity had caused to flourish for half a century afterwards, was now ended.

Saladin's legions overran the Frankish coastlands until only Tyre north of Acre and Christendom's holy city, south of Acre, still stood as Frankish cities.

There were the great *kraks*, but most succumbed to attack and siege when there were no longer Frankish armies to march to their relief. The Templars and Hospitallers held out most stubbornly; surrender might mitigate the suffering and starvation of most defenders, to whom clemency was occasionally extended, but for the fighting Orders there was no such hope at all, so they remained fortified up, as dangerous to their attackers as they had always been.

Eventually, the custom of ransom was invoked. King Guy and many of the barons who had survived with him, were set free, but what they returned to was complete disaster. There were no longer enough soldiers to hold Jerusalem itself. Saladin's long-held dream of vanquishing all the barons and restoring their lands to the faithful, was on the way to complete fulfilment.

Damascus was distant from the Sea of Galilee; too distant for the Sultan's headquarters, but poised upon the edge of the Christian kingdom at Tiberias was the castle of Raymond of Tripoli. Hitherto this mighty fortification had held eyes that

kept watch towards the east, towards Islam. Now, as Saladin moved to capture it, Raymond's battlements were to serve as a nerve-centre for the Conquering Sword of Islam and sentinels would keep watch towards the west, towards the demoralized land of the beaten Franks.

There were shortly to be resounding repercussions throughout Europe over the vanquishment of the King of Jerusalem and his Latin barons, but before the zealots could strike their cymbals in a great outcry and lamentation, Christendom was to receive a still greater blow at the hands of Saladin, who, unwilling yet to disband his great army, knew exactly how to keep its morale high.

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Fall of the Frankish Kingdom

Saladin's horsemen arrived at Tiberias where there was no-one to oppose them, fired and pillaged, then departed as swiftly and as suddenly as they had come. Later, in the deathly quiet, they returned, but riding slowly, and this time they went directly to the castle where they stated their purpose: by order of the Sultan they were to escort the Lady of Tiberias and her retainers to safety, but she did not have much time because the Moslem troops which were to garrison the castle were already nearby.

Lady Eschiva made haste and when she eventually departed—in her own carriage driven by her own driver—and her terrified retainers of both sexes were bunched up around her, the Saracen horsemen kept other Mohammedans from coming close enough to cause any indignities, and eventually handed over their charges to still other Moslem horsemen, who finally told Raymond's wife she would be escorted to her Lord at Tripoli; and it was done.

Meanwhile, Saladin gave his enemies little respite, while at the same time he gave his troops an opportunity for booty, which was the surest way, in those times, to keep armies marching.

On 8th July, four days after his great victory of Hattin, he appeared before Acre, and two days later, stout walls notwithstanding, he joined in the public prayers within that city. Here he freed 4,000 Moslem slaves. Here, too, he sent for al-Adil and the Egyptian legions, for the reduction of Jerusalem, his objective from the outset, was shortly to be undertaken.

Detachments from his great army, swelled now by bands of Moslems from all the Frankish fiefs, former farmers and traders under the barons, fanned out inland as well as up and down the coast. They occupied Nazareth, Haifa and coastal Caesarea, where Pontius Pilate had headquartered during the disturbances in early-day Jerusalem. Al-Adil, coming north, occupied Jaffa and reduced the strategic Frankish castle known as Mirabel.

Saladin led the siege of Toron, one of the most formidable of Frankish possessions and carried it in the last week of July. Over on the coast he called for and received the surrender of Beirut, Jubeyl, Sideon and Sarafenda. Only Tyre stood fast.

The Sultan pledged himself to the Franks in each surrendered city to respect their lives and property and his word was never broken.

Towards the end of this swift campaign of occupation, Tyre, Jerusalem and Ascalon, were almost all that still remained in Frankish hands of the Kingdom, excepting the castles, such as Belvoir and Hunin, occupied by the Hospitallers, and Safed and Belfort, the latter between Tyre and Caesarea Philippi (Baniyas), held by the Templars.

What had begun at the Battle of Hattin, on 4th July, ended in the same month upon the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, with all of northern Jerusalem subject to the Sultan of Syria and Egypt. The city of Jerusalem lay ahead, and Tyre, where Raymond of Tripoli had sojourned only shortly before, but who had now gone north to Tripoli, remained to be reduced.

Tyre had strong walls and lofty towers. Saladin already understood how his troops disliked long sieges, particularly now, after their easy and vigorous conquests inland and along the coast, but Tyre was a challenge. Had he known how demoralized were the fortified Franks, he would no doubt have undertaken an earlier action. As it was Balian of Ibelin, a renowned Christian warrior (with his squire Ernoul, who left a most blood-chilling and graphic description of the disaster at Hattin on 4th July) came forth and asked safe passage from Tyre to Jerusalem. Saladin granted this request on condition that Balian remain only one night in the holy city. Balian went on his way, probably with little intention from the outset of keeping his word. Nor did he keep it.

Reginald of Sidon, commanding in Tyre, with almost no food and supplies and with a garrison consisting largely of the demoralized Franks from Hattin and elsewhere, many of whom were wounded, could hope for clemency providing he did not resist, and toward this end, he sent word to Saladin that he would surrender the great seaport.

While these negotiations were under way a stranger to the stricken kingdom, Conrad, Marquis of Montferrat, sailed into the harbour totally unaware that a siege was in progress. Very soon afterwards, however, he heard the stunning news. At once he put about and, with Saracen ships in pursuit, headed towards Constantinople, where no-one knew yet what a great disaster had befallen the Franks on the far shore of the Mediterranean.

Meanwhile, Tyre surrendered, all Christian banners were replaced by the pennants of Islam, and Saladin appointed his eldest son, el-Afdal, governor of the city. The Sultan was then free to turn his attention towards either Ascalon, on down the coast, or the holy city, which was in the same general direction, but inland.

By now, too, a good bit of that earlier zeal and vitality had dwindled. The Kingdom of Jerusalem was prostrate, there were no Frankish armies to challenge Mohammedan horsemen and the enormous plunder had made of each Saracen soldier a trader. Also, of the few great barons still alive and free, Raymond of Tripoli, although he was accused of deserting King Guy at Hattin, was the most seasoned and knowledgeable, the most likely to serve as a rallying point—and he died shortly after being reunited with his lady, at Tripoli. Indeed, the fortunes of the Franks had never been so low, nor had the fortunes of Saladin ever been so exalted.

But now, when Saladin had only to set his legions on the southward road, which he did, came the first blow of retaliation. Conrad of Montferrat, a young but fierce and unrelenting warrior whose father lay in chains in Damascus, returned across the sea with a fleet from Byzantium, and a host of willing fighters. He struck at Tyre, and el-Afdal immediately had trouble with the Latins within his city who had, only a short

time earlier, been importuning Saladin to spare them and their seaport.

El-Afdal, too young perhaps for the position he held, withstood the forces of Conrad until great numbers of Latins within the city rose up against him, then he sent word to Saladin that he could not hold out much longer, and began to consider the effects of surrender.

Saladin arrived at the eleventh hour, but even these reinforcements failed to daunt the attacking Christians, who had been strengthened by thousands from within Tyre.

Saladin made a proposal: he would, he said, release Conrad's father from captivity in exchange for the young Marquis' promise to leave Tyre and sail away. Conrad's reply was short: he would not stop attacking if the Sultan were to put his father to death before his very eyes!

Conrad took the city and held it. Saladin, whose troops could not be relied upon to endure a lengthy siege, gathered his army and marched away, back down the coastline towards Ascalon. It was one thing to starve out an isolated, land-locked castle and something very different to try and starve out a seaport, when Saladin did not have complete control of the sea behind it.

This abandonment of Tyre caused echoes of censure, but as a matter of fact, even if Saladin could have carried a long siege to a satisfactory conclusion, he could only have done so at a cost the seaport was hardly worth, *at that time*. He owned the north and had a schedule for conquering the south; he was strong enough, for the first time since becoming Sultan, to reduce Jerusalem, the seat and symbol of Christian power. Once the entire domain of Middle-Eastern Frankistan was his, there would be plenty of time to take Tyre. Of course the fallacy of this reasoning lay in the fact that the fall of Jerusalem would cause a great uproar in Europe, would cause another vast outpouring of zealous *cruciati* in the historic Third Crusade, but Saladin could no more foretell events than could the Christians, or anyone else; he therefore acted in accordance with what was correct for him *at that time*. One coastal city surrounded on three sides by Islam was not very important.

But the Marquis of Montferrat, "one of those demons", noted

an Arab chronicler of the times, "which the sea is constantly vomiting upon our shores", clung grimly to his conquered city, and viewed it, not as a precarious perch surrounded on land by Moslems, but as a foothold of Christianity from which to launch a war of reconquest. For both sides the unknown factor was Conrad himself.

The Marquis was almost unknown in Islam, although in Europe where he had achieved distinction in Italy and in Byzantium where he had also demonstrated great valour and craft, Conrad of Montferrat was recognized as a formidable antagonist. But to Saladin he was merely a thorn in the side, and to the rest of Islam he was little more than an inconvenience. In Damascus, where the price of a Christian slave had dropped as low as three dinars (approximately ten U.S. dollars by current value) and where "The spoils of oxen, sheep and goats and mules were so great that no-one wanted any more", even the seaport of Tyre itself was unimportant.

If Saladin could have seen the future he might have sacked Tyre because of what it subsequently became in the renewed war. But he might have chosen not to sack it because when the Third Crusade began, its hordes did not require a single seaport-city from which to launch forth their holy war and whether Tyre stood or fell would make only a very little difference. The coastlands were long and vulnerable, with or without Tyre.

For Saladin there was a far more critical situation to be faced; armies during his epoch, whether of the East or West, were poorly paid, and generally, while they could be mustered in great causes, they did not fight for these but for plunder. A lean and hardened Saracen warrior, whatever his caste, could only hope to acquire sudden wealth and substance through conquest, through the ransom of his prisoners or through the confiscation of their goods and chattels. The poorest Turk or Bedouin could, with luck, emerge from the kind of triumphant campaign that followed the Battle of Hattin and the over-running of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, not only honoured but wealthy. He could accomplish these things only through warfare. But—and this was Saladin's dilemma when he wisely chose not to besiege Tyre—once the soldiers had more riches

than they had dreamed of, they wished to return to their homes. Moreover, they had now been waging constant warfare for several months during the hottest time of the year and were tiring of it.

Saladin's answer was to keep his great army moving. He left a small corps to watch Tyre, and went down to Ascalon, which was far more strategic, should reconquest be attempted by the Europeans, because it guarded the sea-approach to Jerusalem—*al-Quds*, the Holy.

Al-Adil was off Ascalon with an Egyptian fleet, as well as a land army. There was no way for Ascalon's Franks and mercenaries to triumph, but Saladin did not want a ruined city, and as for captives and corpses, he already had plenty of both, so he tried negotiating with the predominantly civilian populace. He even sent for King Guy and Gerard of Rideford, Grand Master of the Templars, to plead with the defenders. Guy was led on foot beneath the battlemented walls. He told the defenders his freedom could only be purchased by their surrender and they answered him, according to the Arab Ibn al-Athir, "in a most disobliging manner, and said many things to him that were painful to hear".

Saladin then attacked with troops, naval vessels, and siege engines, and Ascalon resisted with great valour for fourteen days, finally capitulating on 5th September with full honours of war. There was no retaliation against the defenders and Saladin sent King Guy to Nablus to await his release from captivity. At about the same time he sent an élite corps of Saracen horsemen to Jerusalem to escort Queen Sibylla to her husband, if she chose to go. She did, and the hapless monarchs were reunited under most poignant circumstances.

Now, at long last, the Lord of Islam was ready to put his great army on the march to Jerusalem. His yellow banners soared over two-thirds of Eastern Christendom. The mighty castles that had dominated the coastal fiefs for nearly a hundred years, which were the pride and strength of Christianity, belonged to Moslems, and the carefully nurtured wealth of the usurpers went in a steady stream back towards Damascus, along with great bands of the neck-chained usurpers themselves, too benumbed by the magnitude of their losses to resist further.

In Jerusalem, where the calm of demoralization and despair existed, and where even the Queen had given up hope before abandoning her city, the flood of refugees had so overwhelmed accommodation that people slept in the streets.

Balian of Ibelin, granted freedom to reach Jerusalem by Saladin, on condition that he remain in the city only overnight, commanded. He had told Heraclius of his oath, and the Patriarch had replied in these words: "I absolve you from that oath. It were a greater sin to keep that pledge than to break it. If you abandon the city which is in such straits, you will never recover from the dishonour."

Balian of Ibelin, a knight of considerable experience in battle as well as in persuasion, made his choice, broke his word and, granted time to prepare during Saladin's siege of Ascalon, melted church silver into coinage and used this money to buy supplies from every available source in the countryside. To raise faltering spirits he harangued demoralized soldiers of the Cross, knighted and otherwise, mustered civilians into companies for the battlements, and even created knights out of tradesmen to instil a martial spirit. Later, he was to explain to Saladin that his failure to keep his word arose from the fact that he had been kept in the city "by force", by Patriarch Heraclius, but prior to the arrival before Jerusalem of the great army of Islam, no-one laboured as freely or as hard to organize a defence.

But demoralization was widespread and deep. Jews wailed at their Wall, as they had never failed to do in calamitous times since the destruction of Solomon's temple, but perhaps not always with as much justification, because no matter how the battle went, to Moslem or Christian, they were the true pariahs, infidels to both sides.

Some Jews and even some Franks preferred Saladin to fire and sword. Nor did it do much for morale that on the day Ascalon fell there was an eclipse, when "the sun hid his face and the day became almost as night", a sure sign of Divine displeasure, or a black portent of disaster.

Balian was not ready when the Saracen vanguard, colourful, handsomely mounted and full of pride and triumph, appeared beyond the great walls, but at least he had made good progress,

and he would not have really been ready no matter how much time he might have gained, for, aside from the massive fortifications, he had very few dependable or experienced warriors to rely upon in comparison to the hosts of Islam which kept flooding out over the countryside in the autumn heat and brilliance.

Saldin did not want to raze the holy city. He invited a delegation to visit him to see if there might not be a way to avoid battle and destruction. He told the delegation, "I believe that Jerusalem is the House of God, as you also believe. I do not want to besiege the House of God or put it to the assault". He then made his offer: "I will give you money and you may go beyond the city five miles and establish yourselves there, and I will supply you with . . . an abundance [with] prices lower than anywhere else in the country. There shall be a truce until Pentecost, and if you receive help by that time, you may defend yourselves. If not you must abandon Jerusalem and I will conduct you safely to the land of the Christians, your persons and your possessions."

At this time, Balian of Ibelin sent word to the Sultan that he had been forced to break his word. Saladin replied that he understood the circumstances, and offered a Saracen escort to take Balian's wife and children to Tripoli, on the coast, where they would be safe from harm and delivered from the hardships of a siege. (During the battle that was shortly to begin the Sultan met frequently with Balian of Ibelin in frank amity; these two men evinced great mutual respect and liking.)

The Christian delegates from Jerusalem decided that they could not, in conscience, accept the Sultan's very generous terms. They could not yield up the city where "God suffered death and shed his blood for us". This was the kind of statement that convinced the monotheistic Moslems that the Christians, who claimed to be worshippers of the One, True God, were actually polytheists, worshippers of more than one god.

Saladin's recourse was assault. "Islam was going forth to seek her bride, Jerusalem," it was announced. "Strong in resolution and fortified by divine grace," the legions advanced. Saladin, who had not seen Jerusalem before, found it a town "as large as a city" and within it was a multitude "equal to

that of Judgement Day", estimated to be no less than 60,000 men alone, not counting women and children.

No-one could doubt that a fierce defence would be offered. Despair may have been the prevailing mood prior to the arrival of the Saracens, but like most fearful anticipations, the dread turned to something far different under the actual stimulus of attack.

Saladin came up slowly and inexorably. He had siege and assault weapons, horse and foot, flying squads, engineers, communication corps, field hospitals, and Moslem priests. His baggage train was long and slow but there was no particular need for haste; the reduction of Jerusalem, aside from being the Sultan's crowning goal and glory, was also to be the end result of a long campaign.

An indication of what lay ahead occurred prior to the arrival of the entire Moslem army. A band of advance horsemen made a feint before Jerusalem's walls, but instead of being intimidated, the people wrenched open the gates and poured forth in a great howling mob, attacked the vanguard, killed its leader, downed both horses and men and put the survivors to ignominious flight.

The Fall of Jerusalem

Saladin faced Jerusalem on 20th September 1187 and for five days, although his strength was awesome, when his engineers sought to set up their siege engines, the Christians routed them.

The Sultan's initial stand was made facing the wall between David's Gate and the Gate of St Stephen, with the sun in the eyes of his archers and engineers, the troops who manned his twelve great catapults and his mangonels. While in this position he and his soldiers were surprised at the determination of the Christians. "They fought like demons." Also, half-blinded each day until the sun passed overhead, the soldiers of Islam were greatly hampered, so the Sultan took his army towards the east, above the Valley of Kidron, and at once the defenders, wishing with all their hearts Saladin would abandon the siege, filled their churches to give thanks.

The following morning they discovered that, under cover of darkness, the Saracens had emplaced their catapults so close to the walls that they were able to hurl great stones over into the city.

From the direction of the Mount of Olives the Sultan could look down into the city while his bowmen kept the defenders from manning the walls and towers in order that the catapults could continue to batter both city and walls. The defenders had no engines, and even if they had had them, it is doubtful that they could have contributed much; mangonels,

catapults, arbalests were essentially offensive not defensive weapons.*

Saracen sappers, protected by ranks of archers who kept the battlements cleared as well as by a shield-wall, got to the wall and proceeded to mine it by drilling holes to fill with combustibles which were then fired. In time segments of the east wall fell and shortly thereafter the yellow banners appeared on the Mount of Olives, and at once Balian was accosted by the desperate and fanatically zealous defenders who wanted to charge forth through the breached walls and die fighting for the Glory of God. Balian was agreeable but Heraclius was not. Of what consolation would it be to God or anyone else in Christendom if the men all died heroes and the women and children were butchered, or worse, by infidels?

Balian sought an audience with Saladin, and while the fight raged, "the tumult . . . like a storm at sea", Saladin met with the commander of Jerusalem.

When Balian met the Sultan and asked for terms Saladin told him: "You are too late. The city is mine. You refused terms before the siege began, why should I grant them now? . . . I have not forgotten how the Franks took Jerusalem ninety years ago, nor how they massacred all our people until the roads ran with blood. I tell you that as they did to us, so will I do to you!"

It was not a promise, only a threat. Saladin never in his life ordered a massacre. But Balian of Ibelin answered in a way that not even his squire, Ernoul, was so sure was *not* a promise, when he said: "Know, great Sultan, that we soldiers . . . in the midst of God knows how many people who are slackening the resistance in the hope of your clemency, believing you will grant it to them as you have granted it to other cities . . . when we see that death is unavoidable, we will kill our children and women, we will burn our wealth and our possessions, and leave you nothing as loot, nor a man or a woman to enslave.

* The arbalest was a winch-wound bow of spring steel, not wood, and vastly superior to the orthodox 3-foot longbow of the times. Longbow arrows could not penetrate a hide shield let alone a hauberk, but this weapon was relatively quick-loading. An arbalest quarrel or bolt could penetrate chain mail, could cut through a horse and kill a man on the other side—its 'muzzle' velocity exceeded that of many firearms up until very recent times.

And we will demolish your mosques, all your holy places, and we will slay the 5,000 Moslems who are in our hands, and slaughter every beast and mount that we have, and then we will charge forth upon you . . . and not a man among us will fall before he has slain his likes. . . !"

While this consultation was going on, the defenders routed the Moslems at the breached wall, and Saladin was called upon by his *emirs* to come at once. He asked Balian to return the following morning, and went out to the battlefield with his commanders.

Balian returned to the city, where great fires burned, the result of Greek fire—*naptha*—being hurled into the city by Saracen catapults. The battle raged without respite until night-fall, when it became too dark for spearmen and archers to see, and a fearful silence fell, broken only by the lamentations of the widows and the cries of the wounded and dying.

Saladin returned to his camp after evening and called a council of *emirs* and priests. He did not want any more destruction, and in all probability he believed Balian of Ibelin's grisly promise should the city be taken by the sword. The result of this meeting was reflected the following morning when Balian returned to the Sultan's tent.

Saladin, who had vowed to take Jerusalem by the sword, offered his terms: "You will surrender the city to me," he told Balian, "at the point of the sword in order that I may fulfil my vow. I will then grant you fifty days in which to raise money to ransom your lives and safety. I will promise that no evil shall come to any of the population of Jerusalem during that time, and when all is finished I will send them to Christian lands under the protection of my army."

Balian's answer was conciliatory but realistic: "For every one who can pay there are hundreds who do not possess two dinars. The city is filled with destitute refugees. For the love of God, O Sultan, be moderate in your demands."

Saladin said that men could purchase safety for five pieces of gold, women for two gold pieces, and children for one gold piece. As for the destitute, well, he would accept 50,000 dinars for them all. (Afterwards, convinced of the inability of the Franks to amass that quite considerable sum, he reduced it.)

Balian returned to the city and, with Heraclius' aid, he managed to induce the Templars and Hospitallers, who had much wealth, to open their coffers, and eventually, with the tumult subsiding, Balian sent the keys of Jerusalem to the Sultan, who went at once to pray and give thanks for the triumphant ending of this final great undertaking.

William of Tyre noted that the "Templars and Hospitallers gave, but they did not give as much as they should have", and it appears that Patriarch Heraclius gave nothing from his own fortune and only a very little more from the wealth of the church, which he appropriated.

Finally, when all the ransom had been collected by al-Adil, the Sultan's brother, and it was found to be too little, which meant that those who had not been ransomed would become Saracen slaves, al-Adil asked the Sultan for a favour: one thousand Christian slaves. Saladin agreed, and as soon as al-Adil had his slaves, he granted them total freedom. Balian of Ibelin and Patriarch Heraclius asked a similar favour of Saladin, and when it was also granted, they emulated al-Adil, freeing several thousand more destitute Christians. Finally, the Sultan said that since his brother, Sir Balian and the Patriarch, had all performed their works of charity, "now I will do mine", and ordered the gates opened and everyone who had not been ransomed and who was beyond the age of mid-youth, was set free. All those who remained, girls and young boys, became the property of the conquerors.

And now began one of the most bizarre exoduses in history. The thousands of Christians (not all chose to depart; many of the Franks who were natives remained voluntarily, and were welcomed in their choice by the Sultan) were divided into three parties, one under Balian and Heraclius, one under the Templars, and one under the Hospitallers. There were strong detachments of Moslem horsemen in front and behind each group, as escorts, whose orders were to see that no-one molested the Christians while they crossed Moslem lands. No-one did, but when the first two parties of wretched people were finally set before the walls of Tripoli, the citizens of that place would not take them in and in fact came out to attack and plunder them, even though they, too, were Christians.

The third party of refugees were taken to Alexandria, and there, as well, the Christians treated them far worse than the Moslems had done. The Moslem governor of Alexandria fed, housed and protected Jerusalem's refugees for a length of time, waiting for Christian sea-captains to take the refugees to Christian lands. Because the refugees could not pay for passage, no captain would take them. The governor lost patience, had all the rudders removed from Christian ships in his harbour and refused to return them until the sea-captains agreed to take away the refugees. The sea-captains protested; they did not operate charitable excursion vessels. The Moslems then paid for the passage of the refugees and at last they departed from Islam.

There were a number of vignettes related to the battle and the fall of Jerusalem. A group of women from the city whose husbands and sons had not returned after Hattin, importuned the Sultan for information and he established a council to try and find these men who, if found alive, were to be set free and returned to their families. To these women he also gave money to live on while waiting. The widow of Reginald of Châtillon asked to be reunited with her son, Humphrey of Toron, a prisoner in Damascus. Saladin agreed, providing the Lady Etienne-ette surrendered el-Kerak. She agreed, and although the hold-outs who garrisoned her castle refused to obey her orders to evacuate, Saladin freed her son anyway.

Saladin's sister came from Damascus with a caravan of camels carrying rose water to be used in the purification of mosques in the holy city. (One had been made into a Christian church, another had become a common storehouse.) Jerusalem had fallen on a Friday, which had significance, but even more portentous, it had fallen on the anniversary of the Prophet's night journey, as it was understood to have taken place by orthodox Mohammedans.

Saladin did not, as his predecessors the Christian conquerors of Jerusalem had done, deny those of other faiths their places of worship. The Jews went unmolested and Christians were allowed to keep their Holy Sepulchre. When protests arose over this decision, Saladin told his *emirs* that whether the Sepulchre were razed or left as it was, Christians would always come to

that site to worship "where their Lord lies buried", and it would therefore be pointless, as well as sinful, to demolish the site.

For over a month the Sultan most energetically supervised the restoration of Jerusalem; not just overseeing the repairs necessary after the battle, but re-creating Jerusalem as it had been since A.D. 637 when it was conquered for Islam by the Persians. As was his custom he instituted hospitals and schools, retreats for holy men and, perhaps with unconscious irony, he had the castle of the Hospitallers made over into a college for the study of Shafe'ite law.

Jerusalem fell in September. Though news travelled slowly in those days, by mid-October news of what had happened in the Holy Land reached Constantinople; shortly afterwards it was learned in the Latin West. The King of Byzantium who shared the chameleon-like ability of his line to change colour as events required, sent an embassy to Saladin seeking a treaty of amity. This was formally subscribed to. In exchange for allowing Moslems freedom of worship in Constantinople, Saladin gave the keeping of the Holy Sepulchre into the hands of the patriarchs of the Greek Church. This action angered European Christians almost as much as if he had given it into the keeping of Moslems. But there was nothing the Latins could do about it—for the moment, anyway.

Also, Saladin agreed to respect the territorial rights of Byzantium's king in exchange for that sovereign's aid against any fresh incursions into Islam by Europeans. This, by now, probably no thoughtful or informed Moslem doubted would eventually ensue.

There was also a message from Frederick Barbarossa, Emperor of Germany, written before the fall of Jerusalem, in which Frederick said that Saladin should ". . . take warning from Pharaoh and not touch Jerusalem", and that unless all things were restored to Christendom which had been taken from it, the Emperor and a mighty army would come and destroy the Sultan.

To this Saladin replied, "if you seek war, we will meet you in the power of God and when this is done we will cross the sea and take your lands. . . . We have taken Jerusalem, leaving nothing to you but Tyre, Tripoli and Antioch. . . . But if you

want peace, you have only to command the warders of those places to deliver them to us and we will restore to you the Holy Cross and we will liberate all Christian captives in our territory and we will be at peace with you."

Conrad of Montferrat wrote to Rome after the fall of Jerusalem that the Christian King of Byzantium had formed an alliance with the infidel Sultan, Saladin, that the Holy See was scorned by patriarchs of the Greek Church, and that those who professed Roman Catholicism in Constantinople were savagely persecuted. Conrad, who was an Italian by birth, and related to both the King of France and the Emperor of Germany, could also have been expected to write other letters to his illustrious kinsmen. But that was not really necessary because by November of 1187 it was known throughout Europe that the Christian Kingdom of Jerusalem no longer existed.

During these months Conrad had been adding to his forces at Tyre, but when Guy of Lusignan and his queen sought sanctuary there after being released as Saladin's hostages, the Marquis would not admit them. Guy had never been either popular or very successful, but least pardonable of all, he had never been strong. That above all else was what a lord had to be during the time of Saladin.

Montferrat was strong. He was also brave, resourceful and ambitious. Above all he was a good general. In the period of time he was allowed while Saladin had been busy elsewhere, first at Ascalon then at Jerusalem, Conrad had made himself Christendom's foremost baron in Islam and if his soldiers were woefully few in comparison to his foes, at least he had heightened their morale, improved their discipline, and repaired their fortunes, as best he could. In addition he had sent out a call for knights and while these would be a time in arriving, throughout the conquered lands Christians, with a baron to rally round, came to swell the number of Franks in Tyre.

Conrad's stronghold of Tyre, on its seaward promontory, was all but impregnable by land, it being possible to flood a fosse which crossed the narrow peninsula; while on the sea side there were great chains which could be emplaced to prevent hostile ships from reaching the walls.

Conrad did not need a great army to defend his city. He

would only need one if he marched inland. For withstanding the siege some of Saladin's partisans undertook after the fall of Jerusalem, he needed only resolution and vigilance, two things the Marquis of Montferrat had in abundance.

The siege was a failure and an exasperated Saracen leader implored Saladin to come at once and put an end to the bold knight commanding Tyre.

Saladin was willing. Leaving al-Adil to continue the supervision at Jerusalem, the Sultan marched towards the coast, and northward. He did not like sieges at any time, but he liked protracted sieges least of all and his troops, ready to abandon the campaign after Jerusalem, could not be expected to languish indefinitely.

For half a month he bivouacked near Tyre while the siege dragged on. Al-Adil came up from Jerusalem and eventually Taki al-Din arrived too. They sat and awaited an Egyptian fleet, unaware that the Marquis of Montferrat, a very worthwhile opponent, had foreseen a simultaneous sea-land attack, and while trusting in great measure to his stout walls on the land side, had also taken a unique precaution on the sea side. He had a number of flat-bottomed scows built which could manœuvre in very shallow water. Equipped with crossbowmen, these vessels could attack a ship or could glide to the shore and decimate an army.

When the fleet arrived and the siege lines were drawn closer, a Moslem arrived in Saladin's camp, a fugitive from Tyre, he said, and reported that the Franks were secretly preparing to flee by ship. At once a watch was kept, and the moment it was observed that the harbour-chains were lowered, part of the Egyptian fleet sailed in. The chains were raised behind them and Conrad's bowmen decimated Saladin's sailors, who could neither sail clear nor be succoured by the rest of the fleet beyond the chains.

Most of the vessels were sunk. Their crews died from drowning or from Frankish arrows. When a desperate sortie from the land side was attempted, Conrad opened his gates and hurled a charge against the unsuspecting Saracens, routing them.

It began to rain, the siege dragged on, Conrad's cleverness unnerved the Sultan's troops, and there was general unrest. The

soldiers wished to go home. They had been saying this even before Jerusalem fell, but now even the *emirs* had had enough. Tyre would not yield easily and winter was coming. Saladin finally yielded. The Egyptians went south, the Syrians went north, Saladin and his yellow-robed personal escort went up to Acre and the Marquis of Montferrat, with the same kind of good fortune that had kept Reginald of Châtillon alive for so long, emerged uninjured from the siege. He was more confident than ever he could survive now that he had forced the great lord of Islam to decamp.

Al-Afdal was made governor of Acre, which bode well for pleasant days, and the Sultan also had al-Zahir, his youngest son, with him; but two months of inactivity were enough and with a much reduced command, Saladin left Acre in the months of short days to march against the Knights of the Hospital at the castle of Belvoir, who had recently crept out of their fortress by stealth at night, and killed a company of Moslem soldiers to the last man. They had then gone back up into their castle with food and arms, the spoils of this fight.

Saladin could forgive most of his enemies, even those of the Christian faith—for whom he actually had pity because, as unbelievers, they were doomed forever to hellfire—but for the zealot warriors of the Hospital and Temple, he had almost no sympathy at all. It was not necessary for the greatest Sultan of all Islam to ride personally against one castle. He could have invoked *jihad* in the area and left Belvoir's fate to others. He probably should have. While it was certainly no disgrace not to be able to reduce a fortification by siege, it was no honour to fail, either, and that is what his attack on the high-perched fortification of the Hospitallers amounted to. He could neither get in nor entice the defenders to come out. It was March, cold windy, and patches of snow lay on the ground, a miserable time of the year to wage war, even on this much reduced scale.

Eventually he lifted the siege and marched away.

Confirming the Conquest

Iconium, which had always been nettlesome, also sent an ambassador to Saladin. The Seljuk ruler of Iconium, Kilij Arslan, a capable and aggressive individual—he had to be to survive and flourish between Saladin's expanding power on one side and the power of Byzantium on the other—was not especially troubled by Franks or Europeans. However, he was sensitive to pressure; and obviously, after the fall of the kingdom of Jerusalem, there was a risk that Saladin, who had already marched into Asia Minor once, just might do so again. Also, with his kingdom, which had not been friendly towards either Damascus or Constantinople in the past, now squarely between these two strong powers who had recently concluded a pact of amity and mutual assistance, it was simply good policy for Kilij Arslan to make overtures to one or both and accordingly the ambassador he sent to Saladin brought the proposal that a prince of Iconium—or Rûm—wed a princess of Saladin's clan, the House of Ayyub.

Saladin was agreeable; it can also be expected that he put no more faith in the professions of admiration and respect of Kilij Arslan than he did in the similar protestations of the Emperor of Byzantium. On the other hand, providing himself with two buffers, even temporary ones, between Europe and the eastern regions of the Mediterranean, was desirable. By early spring of the year 1188, he no doubt had heard that Europe was on the point of re-arming for a third crusade.

Otherwise, while still in the damp cold before Castle Belvoir, the Sultan received another visitor, Baha ed-Din, one-time emissary of the Caliph of Baghdad and, later when Saladin had been ill, a negotiator for the factious Lord of Mosul, Izz al-Din. Baha ed-Din, travelling towards Syria after making a pilgrimage to Mecca, brought no proposals and came to ask no favours. He liked the Sultan as a friend, and in turn was respected by the Sultan. They had a pleasant visit. Saladin, who kept a small notebook on his person, drew it forth to read excerpts he had copied from books he had read. Baha ed-Din, a lawyer and life-long student of literature, was captivated. It had been his intention to go directly to Jerusalem, but now he delayed that until the Sultan was also ready to go north, then the legalist rode with Saladin for a way before finally taking the road to Jerusalem, and later, Saladin sent a courier to invite Baha ed-Din to rejoin him when he could.

Saladin had sent forth an appeal for troops. They were to meet him in the vicinity of Damascus. It was his intention to then sweep southward down the coast, beginning at Antioch and Tripoli, and systematically destroy all Frankish pockets of resistance.

He had only been in Damascus, reunited with his family, a short time when he was informed that the armies of the *atabegs* of Harran and Sindjar were approaching. He marched at once to meet them, and the summer of the new year promised to be as auspicious for the arms of Islam as the previous summer and autumn had been, although some vague rumours of a great stir in Europe seemed likely to manifest themselves very shortly now, as something a lot more substantial than rumours.

Subsequent to the exodus from Jerusalem the Patriarch Heraclius had arrived in Rome, attired in black, to relate a terrible story of Saracen savagery and wanton massacre. It was also said that Heraclius carried with him a "representation of the face of the Messiah" showing a Moslem striking it bringing a gush of blood, which was "painful to the Franks" of Europe.

Naturally the story of the fall of Jerusalem stirred the West to a desire for vengeance, and to this burning wish was added fresh fuel when it was also told how the Eastern Greek Church, already suspect in Europe, had formed an alliance with the

hated Mohammedans. Reconquest assumed the obligation of a Christian duty; unlike the great, mindless outpouring of the First Crusade, and mustering for the third, and greatest, Crusade was founded upon something all Europeans understood in practical terms; the retaking of a land which had belonged to Christians.

The papacy made it a special obligation for all prelates to preach most vigorously for another holy war, and in a practical vein, to invoke the *dime saladine*, the substantial tax to support a great army with which to crush the Sultan, Saladin.

The efforts towards the Third Crusade were by far the best organized thus far. And without much doubt Europeans of all classes were ready to respond, as before, to the emotional illogic. Even great lords and sovereigns could not avoid involvement, although there was evidence that many would have liked to. They dared not, because Jesus himself had been profaned. Those who would have preferred to avoid taking the cross, could only have done so at the risk of being called traitors to God. It thus became imperative that the banners of all the sovereigns and great barons appear among the fresh hosts of Christendom.

Two Frenchmen, the King of France and the King of England, in the year 1188, were directly involved in the fall of Jerusalem. Their houses were represented in the Holy Land by most of the barons who had either fallen there, or who had been ignominiously marched, broken and destitute, to the coast and expelled. But neither of these great sovereigns was so secure at home that he cared to risk marching out of Europe. Still, if there was an alternative, it was unknown, so, reluctantly but sternly, they both took the vow as Crusaders at Gisors on 21st January. Henry II Plantagenet, old and already ailing, died in 1189 leaving the unified command to the King of England, Richard the Lionheart.

Events as great as this could not be concluded hastily, but even so, before the main hosts marched, a number of renowned knights left for the East, among them such nobles as the Count of Champagne, the Count of Brienne, and entire war fleets from such Catholic strongholds as Genoa, Pisa, the rich and populous seaports of Italy, as well as France and England.

There was still another powerful monarch to answer the call. The same Frederick of Hohenstauffen, called Barbarossa, who had threatened Saladin with retaliation if Jerusalem were assaulted. He took the cross in 1188 and raised an army said to have consisted of 100,000 troops. Frederick had been in the Holy Land before, with his uncle the Emperor Conrad, forty-two years earlier during the Second Crusade. He knew the route and what to expect when he got there. Also, his army was no great straggling concourse of women and retainers, villeins and knights. It was a great fighting force under the leadership of a seasoned warrior.

Frederick chose to approach the East by land, as other crusading armies had done, marching by way of Hungary and the Balkans, while the other armies went by sea. There were Germans, French, Italians, Danes, English, Flemings and the German Emperor's particular enemies, the Normans, all outward bound about the time Saladin was preparing for his final sweep through the subjugated lands between Syria and Egypt.

The troops of Sindjar and Harraan bivouacked with the Sultan's army while plans were under discussion by the lords of Islam, when the jurist Baha ed-Din returned from his visit to Jerusalem. From this time forward the great Sultan and the great legalist and scholar were companions.

Baha ed-Din's arrival was not the only one of interest. When the Sultan finally began his march towards the central coastlands, a Sicilian fleet put in at Tripoli and three hundred knights with their men-at-arms came ashore. These were the first troops from Europe to inaugurate the Third Crusade. The news travelled from battlemented watchtower to watchtower. At the Castle of the Kurds (the formidable Krak de Chevaliers), where Saladin made a feint the previous summer, and elsewhere, as the news arrived, the besieged Franks took heart. Meanwhile Conrad of Montferrat, daily expecting a great fleet from the West, received word that an army was landing at Acre down the coast.

The Sultan, at about this time, freed Guy of Lusignan, Gerard of Rideford, Master of the Templars, and a number of his other exalted prisoners, including the Marquis of Montferrat's father. In exchange for their liberty these captives were required to

take an oath before Saladin that they would never again appear in arms against Islam, and of course as soon as they were released they hastened to join the Third Crusade. Magnanimity was a sterling virtue, without question, but there were times when Saladin's variety of it amounted to something else.

The freed knights hastened to Tripoli, were quickly absolved from their oaths and joined in the preparations for reconquest. Interestingly, Guy of Lusignan, reunited with Queen Sibylla, appears to have had a little trouble with his conscience, for when he subsequently rode forth his sword was tied across the high swells of his saddle, indicating that he, at least, was not going forth armed. His horse, or more accurately, his saddle, was armed, but Guy was not.

By the time Saladin came close to Tripoli the Franks had not only taken heart from what travellers said was happening in Europe, but had also been reinforced by Frankish contingents as well as Europeans newly arrived on the coastlands. The great castle which dominated the town—formerly the residence of Raymond, now invested by his successor, Bohemond III, a son of the Lord of Antioch—overlooked the entire countryside and as soon as the Saracens were seen riding across the farmlands and pastures, the alarm was sounded, soldiers reached for their weapons and, as at Jerusalem, the defenders did not wait to be besieged but went out to give battle in the open.

Saladin probably knew of the landings southward, towards Acre. He may have thought Tripoli would yield despite the possibility that its garrison had been reinforced. (He and other Moslems had never been genuine enemies of Bohemond III, who was a rather easy-going individual.) And perhaps some kind of accommodation might have been reached before the arrival of the Europeans—but after their arrival there was no hope.

The Saracen vanguard met the Franks in a furious fight. One knight in particular, a Spaniard known to history only as the Green Knight, stood out in this engagement. He was in the forefront of battle from the beginning, and when a line weakened, he went to bolster it. He fought with enormous skill and endurance. As a horseman, he equalled anything in Saladin's

entire army. He was never wounded although much of his fighting was done at close quarters among the very ranks of the Saracens. Later when the battle ended, Saladin, who had observed the Green Knight's miraculous survival, sent a request for this great warrior to visit him in peace.

The Green Knight arrived and the Sultan offered him lands, wealth, an *emirship*, if he would join the Sultan's army. To these temptations the Spanish Catholic said that he had come to the Holy Land to kill Saracens, not join them. Nevertheless, he and the Sultan formed a liking for one another and when it came time for the Green Knight to depart Saladin made him a gift of horses and other presents.

The battle in which this unknown gladiator distinguished himself ended when the defenders of Tripoli retired to the city at nightfall. Afterwards, Saladin remained in siege position for about a month, with forays by his horsemen masking the area in all directions. But as usual, Saladin the horseman did not enjoy this kind of warfare, particularly when Tripoli showed no signs of yielding and with news reaching him of fresh troop landings elsewhere.

Northward, between Tripoli and Antioch (the two principalities were now united, Bohemond being from Antioch), Saladin invested a number of rather insignificant Frankish villages and feinted before several stout-walled castles, and most noticeable this year, as compared to the previous summer, was the Christian resolve. Even those places that had not been reinforced knew by now that the Third Crusade was under way. Laodicea, a very beautiful city with a great, grim castle, the *Krak* of Marqab, or Margot, overlooking it from a twelve-hundred-foot eminence (the *krak* belonged to the Hospitallers), was evacuated when news of the Sultan's coming reached it. The people went up to the impregnable citadel, and there watched with stony faces as the Moslems swarmed through their city, looting and destroying. There was nothing either they or their hosts, the Hospitallers, could do, but watch and pray for a chance to exact vengeance.

From Laodicea, the Italian admiral Margaritus, renowned as a great sea-lord, sent word that he wanted an audience with Saladin. It was arranged and the admiral told the Sultan: "You

are known to be merciful and generous. Your justice is well known, your power is great, and your goodness is apparent. Yet you have made the Christians suffer great evils. Desist now and leave them in peace. . . . If you will restore to them their lands they will help you win new kingdoms. If you refuse your situation will be most lamentable, because they will come against you with so mighty an army that you will not be able to stand against them."

Saladin's answer was perfectly in character. "It is my obligation to fight the Holy War. . . . If all the nations of the world combine against us, we will invoke God's aid and fight them, not concerning ourselves with their numbers."

The Italian's admonition was hardly valid; the Germans were still marching, the English, French, Normans, Spanish, Pisans, Genoese, and others were still coming, and no truce or peace could have stopped them, or pacified them, even had the great Sultan agreed to retire.

Laodicea was pillaged and Saladin considered again the Hospitallers' mighty castle-fortress, Hisn al-Akrad, the "Kurd's Castle", called by the Franks the "Krak des Chevaliers". He had besieged it before, unsuccessfully, and in the end he went elsewhere and reduced a number of less forbidding castles. At none of these places did he condone needless killing, and at least one castle provided amusement. At Sahyun, northward from Laodicea, although this was a mighty castle with three walls and a moat cut through solid stone a hundred feet wide and a hundred feet deep, a wall was breached by the constant pounding of Saladin's mangonels and the Saracens stormed through to discover the defenders, certain their castle could never be taken, sitting comfortably at dinner. When the Saracens burst into the great hall the dumbfounded Franks leapt up and raced to the tower where they barricaded themselves, and while negotiations were under way, the Saracens sat down and finished the warm and welcome meal. Later, given their freedom, the Franks marched out, on the road to Antioch.

Saladin's summer campaign saw the reduction of a number of great castles and almost without exception the Franks were allowed to ransom themselves and march away. Even at Safed, north of Tiberias, where he reduced a fortress defended by

Islam's particular enemies, the Templars, when the castle capitulated, the defenders were allowed to go free. Usually there was a ransom to be paid, but not always. At the village of Derbezah, where the Franks put up a spirited resistance before being compelled to capitulate, the survivors were allowed to depart as free men without paying ransom—but they and their families could take with them only what they had on their backs.

In substance, the summer campaign was a success, except that a few places, such as Tyre, had not been captured. But the number of hold-out castles had been considerably reduced and many coastal cities had Saracen garrisons where before there had been Franks. But in another way, the summer campaign lacked distinction; no great triumph, nor even a meeting in pitched battle, had occurred between the members of the Third Crusade and Islam. And finally, in one way, Saladin's march along the coast and inland pacifying the former Frankish hegemonies had produced a result that was to work against Islam. The Sultan's great humanitarian instincts had allowed hundreds of skilled and dedicated Christians, knights, villeins, artisans, to go and swell the forces of his enemies in places such as Tyre. Islam would have cause to regret this for many years yet to come.

Finally, with no indication that Europe's great armies were anywhere near and with the *atabeg* of Sindjar anxious to return home, with autumn's rains and biting winds over the countryside making life out of doors miserable for everyone, the Sultan decided to turn back towards Damascus.

He stopped briefly at Aleppo, inland from his recent conquest, Antioch, then resumed his journey southward to Hamah, and here he and his nephew, Taki al-Din, who commanded at Hamah, discussed restoring ruined Laodicea. At Baalbek, far southward from both Hamah and that tantalizingly formidable tawny-stoned sphinx, the Krak des Chevaliers—the "Kurd's Castle" to Saladin and his troops—the Sultan camped without entering the city and the following morning he "took a bath and proceeded to Damascus".

The month of Ramadan was getting close, the time when Moslems fasted from dawn until sundown. Customarily this

was a period of relaxation and enjoyment. It also coincided with a time of the year, in many places at any rate, when the weather was abominable. Campaigning in rain and mud was especially abhorrent to soldiers who were accustomed to waging war during the summer.

There were still a number of castles to be reduced, and while the Sultan was conscious of this he received some good news. Reginald of Châtillon's impregnable castle of el-Kerak, along with the castle of Montréal, had yielded to the forces of Islam. Now, at long last, Kerak could not longer menace pilgrims seeking to reach Mecca.

But when the Sultan also learned that desert tribesmen had taken the wives and children of Kerak's Frankish defenders, he sent forth a strong party to find these people and restore them to their husbands and fathers, then the same troops were to escort the Franks to a place where there were other Christians. This was done.

Al-Adil had brought the news of Kerak's fall. Afterwards, he and the Sultan rode southward towards Jerusalem. Al-Adil was on his way back to Cairo. Jerusalem was on the way, and the Sultan wished to see what progress had been made in the restoration of the Holy City.

When they reached Jerusalem, both Saladin and his brother went to worship, on a Friday, at the Dome of the Rock. They prayed again on Sunday. Otherwise they were satisfied at the work being done, and Saladin decided to ride as far as Ascalon with his brother.

The Egyptian Viceroy knew as well as did the Sultan that shortly now the hosts of Europe would again be swarming over Islam. It was al-Adil's duty to make all preparations in Egypt, exactly as his brother would do in Syria.

They had in their favour the fact that now the land between their two countries was in Moslem hands, with the exception of a few places such as Tyre, the low-hill fortress, the Krak des Chevaliers and such other hold-outs as Safed and Tibnis, but generally, they were in command.

There was, of course, the dilemma of the lengthy coastline. All that could be done about that was to keep close watch and maintain armed forces on both land and sea. It was the

naval power of Egypt that the Sultan had to rely on mostly, with respect to a European invasion by way of Byzantium. As for the land armies, he probably had as little regard for Egyptians as soldiers as most others had in his day and later; for land battles he had Syrian troops, the best in the East.

Institut kurde de Paris

An Echo of Events

As has been noted, the armies of Italy, France and the Nordic countries took the sea lanes towards Jerusalem, while the Germans marched overland by way of Hungary and the Balkans.

Frederick Barbarossa, unlike the French and Italians, had no animosity towards Byzantium. In fact for him it was in the Greeks' favour not to like Normans, for neither did he. But inevitably there was friction when the Germans reached Byzantium. The Byzantine emperors had never been able to avoid irritation with any of the Crusading armies, and in most cases there was justification, first on one side, then on the other.

Byzantium's current overlord, the Emperor Isaac Angelus, the same monarch who had entered into a pact with Saladin, lacked the craft and tact of the Comneni, his predecessors. He was also having difficulties with the Sultan of Rûm, Kilij Arslan, who, perhaps feeling secure in his alliance to the south-east, was being troublesome in Anatolia. Therefore, when Frederick and his great German army arrived, Isaac Angelus saw himself in a very bad position. As he was allied with Saladin it would be a breach of his treaty with the Sultan if he helped the Germans cross into Islam. If he did not, without any doubt they would become troublesome, as every other Crusading army had, and Frederick could take Constantinople by merely marching in.

There was one slim chance, admittedly risky, but at least plausible. If the German Emperor were set down in Anatolia,

Kilij Arslan would most probably attack him, and that should take care of the King of Rûm while at the same ridding Constantinople of the dreaded Germans. As for Saladin's reproaches, if the German Emperor got the better of the Sultan, they would be meaningless. On the other hand, if Saladin beat Frederick Barbarossa, Isaac Angelus could appeal to the Sultan's notorious magnanimity. To mitigate the outcome of his actions, Isaac Angelus sent couriers to Saladin at Damascus to inform him of the arrival and the strength of Barbarossa; then he expedited the departure of the Germans.

The Emperor Frederick, on the other hand, was not a man such as the French King who led the Second Crusade had been, to be diverted from an avowed objective. Kilij Arslan meant nothing to him, and, after making the acquaintance of Isaac Angelus, neither did the Emperor of Byzantium. He had crossed out of Europe into Islam for the express purpose of restoring the Holy Sepulchre. When he found Isaac Angelus evasive and unreliable, the forthright German's anger was aroused, and he pushed ahead, anxious to leave behind such a perfidious and untrustworthy monarch, marched out upon the Anatolian plateau, and at once Isaac Angelus saw the first part of his strategy go awry. Kilij Arslan did not attack the Germans. He allowed them to cross his land unhindered, because Kilij Arslan also had his own pet projects, and one of them depended upon seeing Saladin's great power being, if not broken, then at least curtailed. While Kilij Arslan was not strong enough to do this, there was a good possibility that Frederick and the other Franks could.

There was one skirmish, not far from Konya, but it did not amount to much, and afterwards when the German Emperor and the King of Rûm met personally, they got on surprisingly well, considering how different they were in all ways, including temperament and age. Frederick Barbarossa, gaunt, scarred warrior, was seventy years old but Kilij Arslan was much younger.

The King and Emperor formed an alliance, which, later on, other Moslems were to remember; it was not the first alliance between Christians and Moslems by any means, but such pacts were always anathema in Islam.

Frederick marched into Cilicia, his mighty army under perfect discipline, in the correct German style. He was a proud, vigorous leader, and what the outcome might have been had he led his troops against Saladin and the Saracens is open to conjecture. One day after a long, arduous march, Frederick Barbarossa halted his horse at the bank of a river, slumped forward and fell from the saddle, dead of heart failure. (There are two other versions of this event, one has the aged lord riding out into the river and being swept away to a drowning death. The other version has Frederick bathing in the shallows of the river, and suddenly collapsing of heart failure.)

Frederick's greatness, and the stunning shock of his loss, caused consternation among the Germans. His son, Frederick of Swabia, had neither the strength of character nor the almost mystical charisma his father had possessed. From the moment of Frederick's death, the German army began to disintegrate and neither his son nor the other German barons could arrest this steady and irrevocable process of decay and demoralization.

There was another monarch, Richard of England, whose character and prowess were as charismatic, but he was not on hand when Frederick died, so the Germans lamented with no one to turn to or look up to at the time.

Ibn al-Athir, the Moslem historian who wrote on the fall of Jerusalem and other places, including Antioch, said that "If God had not condescended to show his goodness to the Moslems by making the King of the Germans perish at the very moment he was about to enter Syria, men would write today that Syria and Egypt had once belonged to Islam".

The great German army disbanded. Many of the barons turned back and eventually led their contingents homeward. Others pressed on to Antioch. Moslem raiders captured some and sold them into slavery, and a pestilence took its share of others. Frederick of Swabia eventually got to Acre with about two thousand men and the body of his father, which was to be buried in the Holy Land.

The other Christians, Frankish and European, had great need of that German army, in exaggeration said to have been 100,000-strong. And the cause of Christendom had an equally great need for Barbarossa, the only European monarch of the Third

Crusade who took his vows seriously. It was indeed a great loss for Christendom and a great stroke of good fortune for Islam.

The other crusading armies were still coming, but the King of England paused in Sicily to lend his strength to the cause of his widowed sister Joanna, and Philip of France, perhaps because he was unwilling to allow King Richard out of his sight while they were still in Europe, also procrastinated. In fact, Philip did not reach the Holy Land, where he eventually landed at Acre, until three years after he had taken the cross, and in all that time the Sword of Islam had not been idle. Saladin's renewed and systematic conquest of the remaining pockets of Christian resistance was certain to succeed as long as only an occasional trickle of *cruciati* arrived in such places as Antioch and Tyre. Only two things kept the Sultan from hurling all of Islam's foes into the sea. One was the mighty walls of the towns and castles, and the other was the thorough dislike of both the Sultan and his troops for siege warfare.

Baha ed-Din, Saladin's confidant, became Judge Advocate of the Sultan's armies. He also became Saladin's adviser, and, near the close of one successful campaign the Sultan, perhaps half in humour, suggested crossing the sea to Europe to annihilate the infidels in their homelands. Baha ed-Din's heart nearly failed him, he had a great terror of the sea.

In the early summer of 1189 the Caliph of Baghdad abdicated in favour of his son, and Saladin, who seems never to have been over-fond of the former Caliph, sent his successor some valuable trophies including the Christian Cross taken from the Dome of the Rock after the fall of Jerusalem and the historic crown of the Kings of Jerusalem, plus some vaunted Christian captives who were forced to march into Baghdad with their proud banners reversed, a token of humiliation and submission.

Saladin's hope, it would appear, was that the Caliph, as religious lord of all Islam, would order all Moslem princes and war-lords to give Saladin material support, but nothing like this happened. Indeed, it was difficult to see how it could have, for even had the Caliph been so zealous in his own cause, it was common knowledge in Baghdad and elsewhere, that excepting Antioch, Tyre, Tripoli and a few dozen fortresses, Saladin had already triumphed. Even if more Crusaders were on the march,

there was, as yet, no sign of any great Christian armies on the horizon.

Islam was not quite apathetic, but it was unwilling to send armies at great expense simply to aid in the reduction of a few cities and castles. Saladin, on the other hand, could not rest; he had secured the Kingdom of Jerusalem, but places such as Tyre and its inland watchtower, Belfort, were a great annoyance to him.

Conrad at Tyre, meanwhile, had been incorporating into his army of refugees as many of the new arrivals from Europe as he could, and over a period of time had accumulated a respectable fighting force. Not large enough as yet to face Saladin beyond the walls, but quite capable of keeping him from taking Tyre.

It was these two places, Tyre and Castle Belfort, strong, growing stronger, and eventually becoming distinct hazards to Moslem shipping and overland trade, that ultimately drew the Sultan southward.

He had sent forth his call for troops, and meanwhile, before they arrived, he and his personal escort rode south-west from Damascus to the vicinity of Belfort, which lay a little less than twenty miles from the seaport of Tyre, and bivouacked on the slopes of Mount Hermon. In almost daily excursions, the Sultan rode over to study the castle, an event that did nothing for the sense of security of Belfort's defenders, under their lord, Reginald of Sidon, a native Frank who spoke Arabic better than most Arabs, and who was versed in Arabic literature and history.

Reginald's wife and children were safe in Tyre, which seemed to be a good thing in the light of the Sultan's arrival. None of Belfort's garrison believed the presence of the greatest Sultan of Islam, even though he had arrived with only his relatively small personal corps, did not mean an eventual assault.

As time passed Reginald of Sidon and Conrad of Montferrat became convinced Saladin was only waiting until an army arrived to open a new campaign. They decided, then, to seek the initiative and towards this end Reginald rode boldly forth to the Saracen encampment seeking a meeting with the Sultan, his sole objective to buy as much time as he could, in the hope

that meanwhile Philip of France and Richard of England would arrive. Reginald proved as good an actor as he was a schemer.

Saladin received Reginald in good faith. They dined together, spent many evenings in enjoyable conversation and when Reginald asked for a residence in Damascus and a pension in exchange for surrendering Castle Belfort, Saladin agreed. Reginald then said he would require three months to make the move and the Sultan again agreed. In the ensuing weeks, although his troops had arrived and a contingent of them was sent to watch Tyre, Saladin did nothing about Belfort but wait, even though his *emirs* grumbled that too much good campaigning weather was being wasted.

It was also noted that, far from acting as though he were shortly to hand over his fortress, Reginald was repairing gates and battlements, and was re-victualling his cellars. The *emirs* grumbled louder, but Saladin had given his word. Nor, evidently, did he seem willing to suspect that his Frankish friend, Reginald of Sidon, would not be equally honourable.

Finally, at the end of three months Reginald asked the Sultan for an extension of time. Saladin, reluctant to believe Reginald was deliberately attempting to dupe him, granted the request, but he also brought his camp closer to the castle, between Belfort and the seaport of Tyre, where, Reginald had claimed, Conrad had refused to allow Reginald's family to leave.

When the second period of time elapsed and Reginald came with still another request, the Sultan sent him to Belfort with a Saracen *emir* and an escort and when the ranking knight came forth to parley, saying he would not surrender the fort even though Reginald had commanded him to, he was seized by the Saracens and, upon pain of death, was ordered to speak the truth. The knight then confessed the entire affair had been a plot and Reginald was taken back to Saladin's tent.

The Sultan's displeasure was tempered by the personal liking he had formed for the Frankish commander. He eventually had Reginald sent a prisoner to Damascus, but they did not part as complete enemies. When Belfort fell, later, a victim of siege, Saladin had Reginald set free and even returned to him some of his former lands; years later, the Sultan and Reginald renewed their friendship.

Although the commander of Belfort became Saladin's prisoner he had bought enough time, not for Conrad to be succoured by the Kings of Europe, but for several fleets to arrive laden with supplies for besieged Tyre, and a new swarm of knights and men-at-arms.

As for the Sultan, he still did not know of the catastrophe that had befallen Frederick Barbarossa and the Germans. He knew that Europeans were on their way to wage war for the Holy Sepulchre, but not until he was before Acre the ensuing June did he hear that Frederick was dead and his great army was in confusion. Meanwhile, he had Conrad of Montferrat in Tyre on one side of him and the stubborn garrison of Castle Belfort on his other side and while he concentrated on reducing the *krak*, Guy of Lusignan, the last Frankish King of Jerusalem, the man none of the barons had ever had much respect for (certainly not after his disastrous ineptness had been demonstrated at Hattin), organized a small army near Tripoli, and marched to reinforce Conrad of Tyre. With him Guy brought his wife Sibylla, the former Queen. When they reached the walls of Tyre, Conrad refused to admit them, and of course that left them with their backs to the wall in a countryside swarming with Moslem warriors.

Conrad of Montferrat appears to have been one of those fierce and resolute men for whom each opportunity appeared as an omen. He may indeed, as was subsequently charged, have had some idea of creating a new Kingdom of Jerusalem with himself as monarch. But of one thing there seemed little doubt; each time anyone appeared at Tyre who could conceivably pose a threat to Conrad's command, he refused them admission to his city. Guy of Lusignan was no exception, but this did not in any way mitigate the former king's dilemma as he hovered in front of Tyre's impregnable walls with his army.

This force was said to have consisted of 9,000 men of whom 700 were knights, and of course Saladin learned of its arrival the same day it reached Tyre, if not before.

A day or two later, between skirmishes with Saracen horsemen, good fortune appeared when a fleet of ships arrived at Tyre bringing some of the Nordic *cruciati*, Frisians and Danes,

12,000 in all, large, fierce, resolute warriors, who joined Guy at once, bringing the number of his troops to a very respectable 21,000 willing and capable fighting men.

Saladin was stronger and had he attacked before the newcomers landed, he could without question have crushed Guy. He did not attack, and nor did he when Guy's reinforcements made him a more formidable opponent, although the Sultan still had the greater numbers. Saladin's reason appears to have been that he had no wish to assault Guy of Lusignan, and his 21,000 troops, only to have Conrad fling open his gates and rush upon the Saracen flank with another strong Frankish host.

But Guy could not tarry either, so he began a difficult march southward to the next large city, which was Acre, held by a Saracen garrison. The Christian fleet paralleled Guy's march, prepared to lend aid, either in fighting, if need be, or in evacuating the Christian army, should Saladin hasten forward.

Saladin sent a courier to Acre to warn his garrison there, and told his *emirs* in council that the army should march at once to Acre's aid. The *emirs* were contemptuous of both Guy and his army. Baha ed-Din reported that they answered by saying, "Let them get into position; we will cut them to pieces in one day". There was reason for this scorn; the *emirs* had vanquished Guy of Lusignan before. Nor was his host, even including the fresh soldiers from Europe, strong enough to inspire respect.

Still, the Sultan prepared to march. He left troops before Tyre and Castle Belfort. Other troops were farther north, in the vicinity of Antioch and Tripoli. He did not recall those contingents; even if he had felt a need for them, since he meant to move fast they could not have reached him in time. Finally, learning that Guy was only about a dozen miles from Acre, the Sultan started his wagons rolling one day, and the following day he led the army in an unrelenting forced march through the soaring heat of late summer.

The march was kept up all day long. It was not even halted at dusk, as was customary, but was pushed relentlessly throughout the night. There was a rest of one hour and the troops ate on the move. At the Sea of Galilee, south of Belfort, the army

turned towards the coast and although it was learned that Guy was already at Acre, there was no thought of slackening the pace. For two more torturous days the forced march was kept up and finally, to the relief and jubilation of the Sultan and his army, it was seen that the banners of Islam were still atop Acre's walls.

Guy had established his camp around a low hill facing the city. Although he had arrived two days earlier he had not attacked. Saladin went into camp south-east of Acre and the little river that supplied the city with fresh water, was now also obliged to water the men and horses of the two armies.

Saladin and the defenders of Acre had Guy and his troops between them. Beyond, was the sea, and waiting out there were the Christian ships. The Saracens fanned out in a half-circle, and meanwhile the Sultan sent supplies by camel-back to the city, along with words of encouragement for the garrison, which had been defiant when the Christians had appeared, but had not been very hopeful until they saw the Sultan's great army come into sight from the east.

Acre, like Tyre, was situated on a promontory and possessed a natural harbour. In historic times it had been one of King Solomon's "chariot cities" where he had imported the best horses from Cilicia. It had been a seaport for trade and pilgrimages, and for the accommodation of armies, throughout all history and on both sides of the harbour, walls extended into the sea. At the culmination of each wall was a tower. Between the two sea-walls was a great chain that could be raised to keep ships out. There were in all, thirty towers and two lines of fortifications to protect the city. Beyond Acre, towards the hills, was a plain which in certain times of the year became a muddy quagmire. The great tower at the north-east corner of the fortifications was known as the *Turris Maledicta*, or Tower of the Evil Word. Here, legend said, Judas made his infamous bargain.

Facing the harbour, one of the battlemented towers at the sea-wall had, in earlier times, been used for bloody sacrifices, and in consequence had earned a name appropriate to those rites: The Tower of Flies.

Haifa, known to the Crusaders as Caiffa or Caiphaz, lay

southward at the far end of the bight, or bay, of Haifa. The same hills one saw at Acre continued down as far as Haifa.

Of all the events that Acre had witnessed up until now, none could compare with the tragedies shortly to take place around this very ancient city in its swampy malarial setting.

Institut kurde de Paris

Acre

King Richard of England, during the course of his military diversion in Sicily, where he inspired great fear and subsequently when he undertook the conquest of Cyprus, was considered the first Knight of Christendom, after the passing of Frederick Barbarossa.

Of course the Byzantines resisted his assault on Cyprus, but aside from Richard's great army and his armada, both the army and government of Byzantium were on the verge of total collapse, so Richard's victory was certain. Of those who said he wasted his strength in these diversions, Richard's defenders could point out that the possession of Cyprus enabled the Christians to acquire a marshalling area opposite the coast of Jerusalem from which they could supply the forces of the Third Crusade.

As for the campaign in Sicily and Richard's general procrastination, a lot less can be said in his defence, but the nature of the man, which dictated his future triumphs and temporizings, was what made him what he was, and right or wrong, good or bad, nothing could change that. He may have arrived late, but at least he arrived, and there was no other great leader among the Christians who could equal his strength, his fearlessness and his great capabilities. He was the appropriate successor of Barbarossa, even though he lacked the German Emperor's singleness of purpose, and meanwhile with Richard's final arrival in the East, the situation at Acre was moving

gradually towards its unexpectedly long and terrible *dénouement*.

For the Moslems who had survived that gruelling forced march from the vicinity of Tyre, there was an overriding need for rest. They had been dehydrated by their exertions in the heat, and they were somewhat in disarray. Also, once they reached Acre, it became clear that the contempt of the *emirs* had fostered an illusion; the Franks were not going to be destroyed in one day. Nor was it likely that they were going to be driven into the sea, which they controlled, because the day after their arrival, the first day of September 1189, ships began arriving from Europe laden with supplies and great throngs of Crusaders.

The Christians were not strong enough, yet, to completely blockade the city. There was considerable disarray in their camp too, as the newcomers drifted in, and meanwhile, a week or two after the Sultan's arrival, Taki al-Din's right wing of the Moslem army pushed up to the gates, and Saladin entered Acre where he climbed to the ramparts, along with Baha ed-Din and his other *emirs* and studied the Frankish position.

The garrison was strengthened, the city was re-victualled, and although individual knights and companies from both sides sallied forth to skirmish, the general lull continued while both Franks and Moslems prepared for the battle to come.

As in most contests of this sort, curiosity also played a part. It was noted, for example, that when the heat and other factors made skirmishing obnoxious, the fighting men would frequently declare a truce, and sit together in the shade to rest and talk. Bizarre as this was, who could deny it was not actually the best of all ways to wage wars?

Baha ed-Din, who was not noted for his tolerance of infidels, said that upon occasion when the antagonists wearied of the inconclusive skirmishing, they would get together and arrange fights between the young boys of the opposing camps. Healthy wagering accompanied these affairs, along with much humour.

But sightseeing Christians were ambushed by Saracen horsemen who decapitated them for a reward, and Christian women attacked Saracens taken in the same way and "hacked off their heads with knives".

Saladin's troops were being reinforced almost daily and as the ships of Europe continued to arrive and disgorge fresh Crusaders, he had need of all the warriors he could get. The month of September passed in this way. It seemed that there would never be a battle; that both sides were more anxious to over-awe their enemies than to fight them.

Conrad of Montferrat came south from Tyre with his troops. Al-Adil started north to reinforce his brother and although the Egyptian fleet also sailed, by the time it was close the Christians controlled the sea.

On the Christian side, the knights of Europe, from Normandy, Italy, France, Germany, England, sailed in. Large troops of archers, spearmen, as well as princes, barons and bishops, also arrived.

The business of supplying both camps went forward at a busy rate. For a while this was the most concerted of all efforts; those thousands of men and animals consumed a staggering amount of provender.

The Crusaders dug an entrenchment around their great bivouac. The banners and oriflammes denoted individual camps beyond the trenchwork. Saladin's besieged garrison inside the city eventually had to withdraw its thin line of videttes beyond the walls; the long lull was coming to an end, compelled towards this course by the great crowding and increasing bellicosity of both armies.

On 18th September Saladin ordered a general feint with the intention of drawing the Crusaders out of their camp and beyond their entrenchment. It failed; the Christians would not leave their line.

The actual numbers engaged in this confrontation were great. It was claimed that no less than six hundred thousand Crusaders were engaged around Acre, and that may have been a fair estimate, in the light of subsequent events. One hundred thousand eventually returned to Europe and eighty thousand died at Acre. Saladin's strength had to be nearly equal to that of his foes, otherwise he could not have prevailed as well, nor as long, as he did. He had Kurds from the Tigris, Egyptians, the troops of Harran under his brother-in-law, the warriors of Sindjar by the thousands, troops from Mosul, the savage desert

horsemen, Bedouins, and of course his seasoned Syrians, the best veteran troops of Islam.

Finally, with the initiative passing to the Crusaders, on 4th October, with summer past, about sunrise, the Franks moved out of their extensive entrenchments and moved into battle array. Their army formed a two-mile semi-circle around Acre, with the city behind them and Saladin's great army in front of them.

The Moslems rallied at once, forming in a concave line facing their foemen. The mounted knights of Europe were directly behind the massed line of infantry. Guy of Lusignan commanded the Christian right and had the Holy Gospel nearby under a bright-coloured canopy. The left was commanded by the Master Templar and Conrad of Montferrat commanded the centre.

Opposite, in the Moslem line, Saladin commanded the centre, with Taki al-Din on the right and the Sultan's two sons, es-Zafir and el-Afdal on the left, with the levies from Egypt and the Kurds. Saladin's line was longer, reaching from the river on the south, to the sea coast on the north.

The Christian left, where those scourges of Islam, the Templars, stood, opened the battle by attacking the Sultan's right under Taki al-Din, driving the Moslems back under a relentless pressure that threatened Saladin's entire line. At once the Sultan took the Kurds and part of his troops from the left and hastened to his nephew's aid.

Conrad and his co-commander, Louis, the Landgrave of Thuringia, at once hurled an attack against the depleted centre of Saladin's line. First, the foot soldiers drove ahead, then they parted and the knights hit the Moslem line with irresistible force. The Saracens broke and fled. (Many of them did not stop running until they reached Tiberias on the shore of the Sea of Galilee.) The knights charged on into the Saracen camp, and some paused to plunder at the very entrance to the Sultan's tent, but meanwhile the Master Templar's attack on Taki al-Din had been beaten back (the Master Templar, Gerard de Rideford, was killed) and Saladin reformed his line, closing it against the return charge of the knights, who, being unable to break through and unsupported by the otherwise hotly-engaged Franks, were dragged from their horses and killed. Only a few got back to the Christian lines.

At about the same time the agitated garrison within Acre burst forth from the city and attacked the Christian rear, causing more confusion than damage, although it is possible that the Templars on the left were routed at this point by the Saracens from Acre, as some sources claimed.

Conrad of Montferrat, a valorous if not always a wise warrior, became engaged with a host of Saracens and, being unsupported, was about to be overcome when the man he had refused sanctuary at Tyre, Guy of Lusignan, came to his aid and managed to save Conrad's life.

The battle raged over a mile-long field and during the height of it some non-combatants, the desert tribesmen who served as retainers and attendants in the Moslem camp, sure that Saladin was being defeated, plundered the Moslem camp, loaded themselves down with everything they could carry including money, jewels, spare weapons, horses, even clothing, and fled. Later, after the battle ended and bone-weary Baha ed-Din rode back to the ravaged encampment, what he saw he said "was a catastrophe worse than defeat".

Eventually, when Saladin imposed strict discipline, his Moslems were able to rout the separate Christian contingents, driving them slowly back towards their encampment as they rallied on one another, and towards evening the exhausted men of both sides were willing to end the fighting.

The results of this battle were inconclusive since, as each side intended, neither had been driven from the field. Casualties were actually unknown although the Franks said they had lost 1,500 men, and the man who had charge of gathering up the corpses, as well as Baha ed-Din, said there were 4,000 Franks slain. On the Saracen side it was also alleged that 1,500 had died, and that, too, seems an inconsistent figure.

Acre had not fallen, both armies returned to camp, the wounded and dying were cared for in an atmosphere of filth and stench, and the Sultan fell ill again of a fever. Eventually, too, because many of the slain had been thrown into the river, the water as well as the air became so polluted that Saladin moved his camp.

He sent troops after the absconding Bedouins, re-ordered his army, and, ill though he was, urged in Council that the Franks

be attacked again before additional Crusaders reached them and while they were still battered and dazed behind their trenches and earthworks.

The same *emirs* who had been so contemptuous outside Tyre, refused to renew the battle at Acre on the valid grounds that, not only were their men and animals exhausted, but also because winter was close. They wanted to dismiss the troops and return to their homes, a prospect that very understandably dismayed Saladin, who could scarcely accede to any such proposals after having sacrificed so much for so long to ensure that Europeans did not procure another toehold in Islam. "You know," he told the *emirs*, "the enemy, if . . . left to hold his position till the sea is open [will receive vast reinforcements]. My judgement is to fight them. Each of you give his."

The Council, after much deliberation, conceded only to the extent of agreeing to a further move away from the coast, and after additional rest and regrouping, to renew the fighting, and Saladin, ill and haggard, yielded. He was a very tired man. No single soldier of Islam had worked so unstintingly for so long, in all weather, under all kinds of hardships, to reach this crucial point in the Holy War; Saladin was past fifty, well beyond the average lifespan for those times. He was not and never had been, a robust man. But, as extenuating as all this most certainly was, it did not alter the basic fact, which was simply that if he had ordered a renewal of hostilities at this time, he very probably could have thrown the *cruciati* into the sea, while, if he procrastinated and the oncoming fresh levies from Europe arrived, he could not win a clear-cut victory.

About this time, Saladin learned of the death of Frederick Barbarossa and the dissolution of the great German army. Also, he heard that the renowned French lord, Henry of Champagne, had reached Acre, and with his army of French knights and troops, had increased not only the numbers of the Crusaders, but had also heightened their morale. Henry assumed leadership of the Christian camp. Frederick of Swabia, Barbarossa's son, also reached Acre, with about two thousand German troops, all that were on hand of Frederick's original force.

Then the rains came, and shortly thereafter the cold, the wind and the mud. Skirmishes took place, and in one such affair

Saladin distinguished himself by personally charging the Franks crying that he would die in exchange for infidel deaths. Another time the Crusaders tried to capture him while he was out with only a small escort. They were intercepted by a flying wedge of horsemen and beaten off. But none of these events contributed anything decisive, nor could even greater, more concerted efforts have altered the situation, because it was next to impossible to wage full-scale war in the bitter cold and the mud, and nothing less than a great battle could have decided the issues because both Islam and Christendom were too strong to be injured by anything less.

Eventually, when the stalemate had been in progress many months and the increasing strength of the Crusaders compelled it, the Saracens had to retire still further from the coast. When that happened, Acre was finally and truly under siege. It was by then no longer possible for the Sultan's troops to fight their way in. Supplies could not be sent by either land or sea. Communications between Acre's garrison and the rest of Islam's camp were confined to carrier pigeons, or to an occasional daring swimmer who came round the sea-walls after nightfall. The siege that had begun in the late summer of 1189 continued through 1190 and even longer.

Henry of Champagne brought 10,000 troops with him. In the spring of 1191 Philip Augustus finally arrived, at Easter, with another impressive array of European chivalry and meanwhile Saladin, on guard against fresh incursions up and down the coast, skirmishing almost daily with strong bands of Crusaders foraging in the countryside, perceived how wrong his earlier assessments had been, when he had felt confident that he could vanquish any of the armies sent against Islam from Europe. What he beheld at Acre was like a floodtide of pennons and armour, war-engines, fleets and troops, that was unending. When he called for all Islam to unite, some of the desperation he certainly felt must have infected his emissaries, for in response the warriors of Syria, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Cilicia, even Rûm, marched southward, and during the interim the sluggish inertia of the Third Crusade gathered a formidable momentum.

Acre caught the full brunt of the new zealots. Tall towers

of wood were erected, higher than the battered walls, fire-ships carried forward a vigorous action from the harbour and although the Egyptian fleet eventually responded gallantly, the best it could achieve was a painful delay.

Crusader rams and siege engines smashed at the walls, the covered towers were moved closer and an incessant battle ensued. Within Acre supplies ran low, casualties mounted, fires raged, and although Greek fire was used against the covered towers to prevent Christians from climbing the ladders to reach the overhead ramparts, the defence weakened as the overwhelming force of the Crusaders was set against the city.

Saladin could do little. He met the Germans in open combat and easily turned them back, but he did not have enough troops to assault the main crusading force. Eventually the Franks, with two great battering rams, one with a plough-shaped snout and covered by a 'sow' or hide awning which protected the men operating it from overhead stones and arrows, attacked from the front. Meanwhile ships in the harbour beyond attempted to breach the Fly Tower.

The defenders rallied, charged out and routed the ram's crew and dragged the burning ram inside the walls. But this was a sortie, not a victory, although the resistance continued as stubborn as ever. A large fleet appeared coming steadily from the north-west, and then, finally, the besieged lost hope, for the newcomers were England's Cross Bearers, a fresh army of great size and strength. Still the garrison inside Acre did not yield. The English landed, among them two renowned prelates, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Hubert Walter, Bishop of Salisbury. At once they engaged the Moslems while Acre still held out, its defences tottering in many places, its defenders including everyone within the city able to hurl a stone or bend a bow.

The fighting was widespread and confused. Some English knights, although surrounded by Moslem horsemen, could not be routed and fought clear, leaving in their wake one dead knight who particularly astonished the Moslems: his horse was completely covered with chain armour from poll to fetlocks. The Saracens had never seen anything like that before. Also, the English did not rout; their method of combat was not dissimilar to that of the Germans; they fought as one great force,

maintaining unyielding discipline and while not impervious to the arrows, lances and scimitars of the Saracens, were not demoralized either by them or by their own losses.

The summer of 1190 passed, as had the previous summer and autumn, with no signal victories for either side, but it was, from the Crusaders' viewpoint at any rate, vastly more successful than the summer of 1188 had been, for subsequent to the fall of Jerusalem the Christians had been reduced to the condition of supplicants or hunted refugees, and now, without any resounding victories yet, at least they were back in Islam in such strength that the Sultan could not defeat them.

As for Saladin, his recurrent fever prevented him from participating in many of the actions of the summer and autumn. He was often in the saddle, though—supervising, encouraging, commanding. He was to say later, when in great pain from sickness, that the only relief he could find was on the back of a horse.

Acre still stood when autumn turned to early winter, having been under active siege longer than any city, with the possible exception of Tyre, in Saladin's domain and Tyre had only been actively besieged intermittently.

Winter brought surcease, but it also brought great misery to the Crusaders, who had lost some of their most renowned leaders. Baldwin, Archbishop of Canterbury, died in November, "grieved unto death at the licence around him", it was subsequently claimed, but more probably of the rigours attached to an undertaking usually reserved for the young; he was an old man even before he left England.

Guy of Lusignan lost his wife, Sybilla, the last Frankish Queen of Jerusalem; the English knight Ranulf de Glanville also perished.

Conrad of Montferrat survived, and as soon as the Moslems withdrew, he returned to his stronghold of Tyre and did nothing to ameliorate the sickness and near-destitution of the winter-bound Crusader camp at swampy and unhealthy Acre, for which the English barons cursed him with great feeling.

Supplies were as low outside Acre as inside its battered walls. Knights killed and ate their horses, common soldiers fought with the dogs, and one another, over bones. Animals dying of

starvation and disease were consumed, entrails included. Supply ships lay in distant harbours, unable or unwilling to risk the winter seas.

The Moslems fared better; it was their land, and although, as was customary, the troops marched away as soon as the land became a quagmire, Saladin and his personal troop stayed on, contriving from time to time to smuggle supplies into Acre, while at the same time keeping watch on the wretched Franks.

Institut kurde de Paris

Richard Coeur de Lion

By the first months of the new year, 1191, two nearly simultaneous events occurred which were harbingers of the future. In February Saladin was able to get a new commander into Acre, along with reinforcements, and on the other side a supply ship arrived with corn for the lean and bedraggled Crusaders.

The *cruciati* still owned the coastlands around Acre, as well as the sea, while the Sultan sat, vulture-like, atop the surrounding hills, waiting for the far-flung levies to return. Occasionally one side or the other made an armed sortie, but excepting these brisk little swirling engagements, mostly by mounted men, there was not much activity for as long as the weather remained inclement. But that would not be forever and when it turned warm enough again for serious campaigning, Saladin was to discover that the loss of Barbarossa had been offset by the advent of another great Christian leader, Richard Coeur de Lion, King of England.

Islam's warriors straggled in, as before, fit and ready, eager for plunder and prisoners, Syrians, Persians, Egyptians, Seljuk Turks, Kurds, Armenians, and the wraith-like desert Arabs. The hills blossomed with pennons and separate but united tent cities. Holy men and lawyers were present and as the springtime advanced, Saladin's camp overflowed into the vales and meadows. Merchants by the thousands flocked in and set up shop. Kitchens capable of feeding thousands at a sitting, and the flocks and herds to supply them, were established. Musicians

and blacksmiths, physicians and barbers, scribes, and the women to look after the men, intermingled with scarred veterans and fresh recruits.

Although he was still none too well Saladin took upon himself his customary share of army administration. At least the weather was now warm and pleasant. The Crusaders too were enjoying the changed season and were stirring in preparation to renew the siege of Acre. But as yet no-one seemed willing to begin the real grim business of war.

In Cyprus the King of England was at long last ready to leave pleasure behind. As before, inertia gave way slowly to a gathering momentum. Richard put to sea, eventually, and had his first opportunity to carry battle to the Saracens when he found, overtook and sunk, a large ship from Beirut, loaded with war-engines and about seven hundred recruits for Saladin, off-shore from Sidon.

Two days later Richard was at Acre which was "then girt round on every side by an infinite number of people from every Christian nation under heaven. . . . Beyond . . . lay an innumerable army of Turks swarming on the mountains and valleys, the hills and the plains, and having their tents, bright with coloured devices of all kinds, pitched everywhere. . . ."

The siege had progressed well before Richard arrived. So well that Acre was ready to be carried, but the French monarch waited until Richard arrived to take part and Saladin, meanwhile, hoping to cause a diversion, sent troops to harass the Franks from the rear. At this time the English King and the Syrian Sultan shared one distinction: each was brought low by a bout of fever. The Crusaders called it 'Arnoldia', and the Saracens called it their equivalent of colic. But, although ill, neither great lord yielded entirely to his sickness. Richard supervised the construction of a 'castle', another tower close to the walls of Acre, ordered the setting up of mangonels and catapults, and, these things, along with a great earthen causeway pushed ahead towards the walls by the French, threatened Acre even as Saladin, also ill, continued to seek a way to divert the Crusaders from the rear.

But Saladin's illness was of long-standing. Nor did he possess the physique of the English monarch. His physicians were

adamant about the Sultan's need for a respite. They put him on a diet of barley-water and rice, and forbade him to take part in any military operations until his condition improved. His illness came at a very bad time.

"King Richard's stone-slings," wrote a chronicler, "were plying night and day, and it is a known fact that a single stone discharged from one of this King's engines slew twelve men." Richard, like Saladin, was prostrated by his illness for a time, but unlike Saladin, his allies under the King of France and others, did not procrastinate, but pushed the siege with all fury and resolution.

The defenders used Greek fire to particular advantage against Richard's 'castle', as well as against the bold Crusaders who attempted to reach the ramparts by the high earthen causeway.

The ill Sultan was in an agony of despair, although it seemed that Acre, under siege now two years, might miraculously survive. Richard had himself carried to the fighting line on a cot and amid shouts of pleasure from the troops, "... worked a crossbow, in the management of which he was very skilful, and slew many of the foes by the bolts and quarrels he discharged".

This, of course, was good for morale, whether he actually killed any Saracens or not, but what was more likely to bring down the walls was the corps of sappers who tunnelled under them, filled their tunnels with combustibles, then started a great fire.

The walls did, in fact fall, but when the Crusader men-at-arms surged forward, the defenders turned them back with Greek fire. Acre was costing the Crusaders far more than it was worth. Daily men fell by the score and on the great camp's flanks harrying Saracens killed more men. By a slow process of attrition, the young King of England was losing far too many men and too much time. Philip of France, not as decisive as Richard, had made no move to quit the siege, but finally Richard did; he sent an ambassador to Saladin's camp to arrange for a meeting. The Sultan refused on the grounds that as long as Richard was attacking Acre, there could be no basis for a talk, but if the attack ceased, then the Sultan would be pleased to meet the King of England. At the same time Saladin sent

Richard fruit and sherbet, the latter to help against the fever. Eventually, the Sultan also sent fresh fowl to Richard, whose fare was normally not much better than the weevily grain and seafood of his troops.

Then, Karakush, Saladin's commander at Acre, formerly Shirkuh's slave, the engineer of Saladin's public works in Cairo in better times, sent word to Saladin that Acre could no longer resist.

At once, the Sultan ordered an increased assault against the entrenchments and earthworks, beyond which lay the great Crusader camp, and as a diversion it was at least partially successful, but while the Christians held Saladin's army at bay, French sappers broke away more of the battlements. Finally Karakush, along with another *emir*, Meshtub, the leaders of Acre's exhausted and decimated garrison, proposed a truce and asked for terms, saying that the two Christian Kings should honour the valour of the garrison in the same way Saladin had done, so many times, by allowing the defenders to march out unmolested, taking with them their families and possessions. There were three thousand defenders still alive.

Philip Augustus was agreeable but Richard was not. The order sent to Karakush was for unconditional surrender and this so enraged the garrison that it sent Saladin a brief message when he asked that the defenders hold out only a little longer, saying, "... we will fight until we fall". And they fought on another five days, but at the end of that time they capitulated.

Richard offered no objection this time. The temper of the troops as well as the barons was getting very short. Acre's fall was complete, and by dawnlight the day after, for the first time in two years, there was a hush along the ruined battlements where the gonfalons of Christendom hung in the newday heat.

It was 12th July, very hot even on the coast, with no breeze stirring. Both the great camps were quiet as the gaunt and hollow-eyed defenders walked out, attired in the best apparel they had been able to find in the ruined city, bearing themselves, even the wounded, with dignity and pride. An order was passed throughout the Crusader encampment "forbidding anyone to insult the Turks by word or deed". Even at the entrenchments no fighting was to take place, if Saladin's troops

came. Thus the vanquished Saracens became the prisoners of their foemen. Philip Augustus acquired Karakush, who had been a slave before. Richard received Meshtub, a proud *emir*, otherwise the prisoners were divided among the Franks, as far as they went.

There were also the terms of the capitulation, and here again the prickly temperament of Richard Coeur de Lion manifested itself, but this time in a way that shocked even his own barons.

Acre was to go to the Crusaders, together with all its materials of war, all the stores and furnishings (of the former palace of the Templars, plus the royal palace), all the Saracen ships in the harbour, 200,000 gold pieces were to be paid by Saladin (who had no hand in the terms at all, until after they had been imposed on the defenders), the 'True Cross', taken at Hattin, was to be restored, 4,000 gold pieces were to be paid Conrad of Montferrat and, finally, 1,500 Christian captives, plus 100 knights and barons, also in captivity, were to be returned to the Crusaders.

In exchange, the defenders of Acre would be freed from captivity when the terms had been met. For the first time in his life Saladin was being treated as a defeated lord. He had not lost a battle in almost fifteen years, and at fifty-three years of age, the idol of his people, he was being humiliated by a King of England no older than one of his nephews. Indeed, Acre was a turning point.

Saladin, the man of honour, could not repudiate the terms of that galling treaty without endangering the lives, not only of Acre's garrison, but the hundreds of other Saracen captives at the Christian camp. Also, had he repudiated it, he would have dishonoured the brave men who had acceded to it. He agreed, and at once a number of *emirs* came forward to offer themselves as hostages to guarantee that the terms would be met.

Saladin moved his camp away from Acre, southward to Shefar'am, inland from the lower end of the Bay of Haifa, and here, with Crusaders constantly appearing as though anxious to wage war, the Sultan waited for the commissioners of both sides to complete the transactions involved in the treaty.

For a month there was wrangling among the men entrusted with carrying out the stipulations of the agreement. Saladin

brooded, but Richard had other troubles. Conrad of Montferrat, for example, was troublesome, not only in Acre itself where he gained favour by championing the householders and shopkeepers in their pleas to be allowed to keep their stores and buildings, something Richard was against, but also in the countryside where Conrad, still apparently harbouring illusions of a new kingdom of Jerusalem with himself as monarch, stirred up opposition to Richard.

Acre's wretched inhabitants became antagonistic, not only towards the King of England, but also against the English men-at-arms, whom they viewed as supporters of a tyrant.

Then the old antipathy between Philip and Richard broke out again, but now it was exacerbated by Conrad joining with Philip against Richard, and those two had a combined force greater than the latter's.

But the greatest blow came when Philip, pleading illness, abruptly left the Holy Land bound for home. At once Richard suspected Philip's intention was to take Normandy and Brittany, Richard's French possessions. Philip swore under oath this was not his intention, but Richard did not believe him, and from this point forward the King of England's zeal in the cause of the Holy City waned. He kept thinking of home.

The French army, now under the Duke of Burgundy, was also under Richard of England, but inevitably the antipathies of the kings and barons filtered down to the soldiers; the French, although more numerous, were not as valuable for what lay ahead as Richard's other allies, the Danes and Frisians and Germans.

Richard denounced Philip's departure as being against "the will of God and to the eternal dishonour of his kingdom". He also said that Philip did "shamelessly fail his vow" in not persevering in his original intention of abetting the reconquest of Jerusalem. But setting aside his disgust with Richard, Philip was certainly ill. The fever which had laid him low some time before, was the same ailment that had killed his liege baron, the Count of Flanders, not to mention hundreds of other less exalted soldiers and retainers. But Philip did not succumb. Yet Richard's suspicions were not unjustified—Philip did, in fact, acquire Normandy for France some time later (in 1204).

Richard was also irritated by the slowness of the peace commissioners. At the end of July, when the first adjustment was due, Saladin offered to return the 'True Cross'. (At least it was the remnant said to have been taken at the disastrous Battle of Hattin.)

Saladin also had the money, but before delivering it, he notified Richard that, since he had given hostages to ensure that he would keep his word, it now seemed fair that Richard should reciprocate to the extent of sending Christian hostages to the Saracen camp as a guarantee that Richard would release the defenders of Acre.

Reasonable as this may have seemed to some—and undoubtedly Philip Augustus would have acceded to it—Richard Coeur de Lion was enraged at what appeared as a reflection upon his honour. Richard's ambassador said that the word of a Christian was all the pledge the Sultan needed, and Saladin, with a lifetime of broken pledges by Christians to sustain his doubts, thought otherwise.

While the negotiations were going forward Richard declared that the treaty had been settled earlier, that Saladin by his latest moves had broken it, and without warning had the three thousand captives, the survivors of Acre's defence and fall, taken outside the city and massacred.

This was done in full sight of the Moslems still encamped on the hills around Acre, who, with great cries, rushed forth to try and save the victims, but by themselves they were nowhere nearly strong enough and were beaten off. The following day the decapitated bodies were found where their executioners had left them.

The Crusaders who did this execution were the same men who had suffered so long before Acre, many still with red scars and wounds. They rejoiced at the hacking and lancing, that the "divine grace permitted them thus to wreak vengeance" for all their sufferings and losses during the siege.

Saladin, justified by the laws of retribution then in common practice, and with the 1,800 prisoners then in his camp who were to be released in accordance with the terms of the treaty, received news of the butchery with shock and outrage. But he did not order retaliation. He sent the prisoners back to the

dungeons of Damascus and had the gold distributed among his troops, and although he had always been a man of good heart and compassion he did not forget Richard's savage act.

Conrad of Montferrat, finding that his ambitions for himself, and the former kingdom of Jerusalem, as well as his other intrigues, had thoroughly alienated the King of England, withdrew about the time of the massacre at Acre to his walled city of Tyre, and took with him not only his partisan troops, but Saladin's engineer, Karakush, and other captives he was sure would be worth a ransom.

The fate of the 'True Cross' from this time forward grew progressively more obscure. It was returned to Damascus after Richard's perfidy, along with the luckless prisoners, and exhibited at the Omayyad Mosque, an object of contempt. From Damascus, it was said to have been sent to the Emperor Isaac Angelus at Constantinople, although the Bishop of Salisbury was said to have seen it in Jerusalem two years later, which could perhaps have been explained by the fact that Isaac sent it to Jerusalem, where it may have been thought to rightfully belong—except that Jerusalem was then in Moslem hands and to return it there would have been an invitation for further acts of indignity to be committed against it.

King Richard was supposedly shown a fragment of it at Beyt Nuba, and after the Battle of Hattin it was sent to Baghdad where the Caliph buried it on 4th June 1189 at the threshold of a holy place so that the followers of the Prophet could walk over it—an act of scorn.

It was said to have gone to the Battle of Hattin on an ornamented staff, secured by a mounting of red gold and encrusted with jewels. (It was also said to have been buried there by at least one Crusader, when defeat of the Christians was imminent, and when he returned to exhume it, the Cross was gone.)

Baha ed-Din said he showed the 'True Cross' to some Christian knights in Saladin's camp prior to the massacre, who fell to the earth before it, but whatever its fate, after the massacre it was never seen again exactly as it had been described by those who followed it into the Battle of Hattin, at least not by Christians of repute. Pieces of it kept turning up throughout Christendom and elsewhere for centuries after Hattin, and with

the passage of time this particular cross was lost. Genuine or not, it had had an enormous value to Crusaders, to all Christendom, and could have brought a ransom greater than that demanded by any King or Emperor.

Acre, while Richard remained there, was rebuilt stronger than before. All this was undertaken before the massacre. The walls were made higher than before, and were greatly reinforced so as to be able to withstand the kind of an assault that had breached them—and this was done by the men who had done the breaching.

King Richard personally supervised much of the work. He had about 300,000 Crusaders available as labourers, knights and barons of course excluded.

Otherwise, although there were constant forays and skirmishes, the Holy War languished while the men who had suffered such hardships the previous winter and who had shed so much blood throughout the siege, indulged themselves with orgies and drinking bouts that horrified their priests. Sin and lawlessness were rampant, so was disease. Not a day passed when fresh graves were not dug and whatever the dead left behind—arms, armour, horses, money, women—was taken by those yet alive. Gambling flourished. So did sudden bloody outbursts between the factions and nationalities.

Discipline hardly existed. The Crusader camp overflowed Acre and spread in three directions beyond. Then, finally, when King Richard was ready, three days after the massacre, the order was given for a grand muster. The barons were to gather their forces and march two miles below the city and rendezvous with Richard at a river crossing, and, in the German tradition, Richard decreed that the only women to accompany the army were to be cooks and drones. This was received with the same sullen disapproval as was the order to march itself. The men of the Third Crusade, unlike their predecessors of a hundred years earlier, had a waning enthusiasm for the Holy War, but their leader, Richard of England, was steadfast, at least in this respect. He was now embarking on his attempt to regain the Holy City.

The rebuilt city of Acre was left in charge of a strong garrison; it was to serve as a centre for supplies and communications as

did conquered Cyprus. There were still trickles of men on their way from Europe, and there were also the ill, wounded and disillusioned, awaiting transport back to Europe. Richard had reason to believe he could acquire other coastal cities, but Acre was one place destined to live prominently in his mind for a long time yet to come.

It was hot in August, even on the coast, when the mighty army finally and very reluctantly left Acre. It was even hotter inland, towards Jerusalem, and the horsemen who sat motionless atop the hills watching, could be counted upon to do their utmost to make it even hotter.

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The Third Crusade

Saladin knew that the King of England would follow the coastline, if he were *en route* to Jerusalem, not entirely because what little relief from the heat could be found there, but also because to cross the hills separating the coast from the inland countryside would be needlessly difficult. Saladin was right: Richard started towards Ascalon, and had about eighty miles to travel before turning inland.

The Sultan had no intention of wasting his strength in interminable engagements, particularly in an area where Richard could call for reinforcements, so he sent word ahead for each Moslem city to avoid combat, then he sent out harrying parties. He was sure Richard would halt before Ascalon. If the Crusaders possessed that strategic place they could threaten Cairo as well as Jerusalem. Otherwise, acting on al-Adil's advice, the Sultan made no concerted attempt to halt Richard, only to harass him.

The English King, like Frederick Barbarossa, was a demanding disciplinarian. He kept his troops aligned and in good marching order.

Because of this, Moslem raiding parties had only negligible success and suffered casualties when they became too bold or reckless.

The march to Jaffa (modern Tel Aviv) from Acre took nineteen days. Ordinarily the trip required no more than three days. Saladin tried several times to entice individual Christian

contingents away from the main army, but Richard had been adamant about this sort of thing, so no-one was cut off. Saladin was compelled to admire the will and ability of Richard—now known in Islam as El Malek Ric—if not necessarily his character and temperament. He was also compelled to respect the dogged perseverance of those thousands of men marching under a blazing sun heavily armed and wearing steel hauberks. As for the hordes of Moslem horsemen who never ceased annoying the large Christian army, they had as little effect upon it as mosquitoes.

Saladin thought that the area around Caesarea, where there was a wood amid some hospitable hills, would be a good place to take a position and force a major battle. He felt himself strong enough to offer the challenge, but another event intervened which was not altogether displeasing to Saladin, except for the results.

At the village of Arsuf, north of Jaffa, where there was a forest and some crooked hills, when King Richard led his army down through a narrow pass, some Moslem horsemen burst forth from concealment among the trees and attacked. Saladin at once appeared and sent additional troops in support. The English King commanded his line to stand steady, not to break, and, as Baha ed-Din reported this engagement, the Crusaders' "infantry drawn up in front of the horsemen stood firm as a wall, and every foot-soldier wore a thick gambeson and a hawberk [*sic*] so dense and strong, that our arrows took no effect, whilst their cross-bows wounded both our horses and their riders. I saw soldiers with from one to ten arrows sticking in them [in the heavy cloth gambesons], still marching on".

Richard's orders were explicit; the lines were not to break, and everyone was to continue marching, but in the rear where the knights of the Hospital were under fierce attack, enraged by their foes, the Hospitallers suddenly turned about and charged the Moslems who, caught unprepared and scattered, turned and fled.

Richard had no choice but to turn back and join the battle, which he did, leading his knights in a savage counter-attack, "slaying [Saracens] right and left with his sword. Nor was there any loitering but right and left as of old the Philistines fled

from the face of the Machabee, so now did the Turks scatter and flee from the face of King Richard, till they gained the mountain heights. . . ."

Saladin tried vainly to rally his routed troops in the woods. Behind them the Crusaders sent up a great shout of victory, and the Sultan sat his horse in shock and dismay; it was the first time in more years than he cared to recall that he had seen Islam's warriors so completely routed.

Richard marched on, to the village of Arsuf, victor in the battle of that name which took place on 7th September 1191.

Saladin was inconsolable. Baha ed-Din tried to no avail to comfort him. But this mood passed, and by the following day, while the Crusaders were celebrating the Feast of the Virgin in Arsuf, filling the village and overflowing up and down the shoreline, Saladin moved down to challenge them. However, not only did the Crusaders refuse to be drawn away from their rest and celebration, but some of the Sultan's *emirs* had lost heart the previous day and could not be persuaded to attempt another battle so soon. The day following, Richard resumed his march, still maintaining his close-order, and although Saladin challenged him again, the Frankish army would neither halt and align for battle nor break ranks when Moslem horsemen harassed it, and eventually Richard reached Jaffa, while the Sultan drew off, taking his army to Ramla to the south-west. Here, the disenchanted *emirs* met with Saladin in Council and proposed the razing of beautiful and strategic Ascalon, a proposal that caused Saladin great anguish. "I would rather lose all my children," he said, "than cast a stone from its walls." But Ascalon had always been Jerusalem's seaport. If the Crusaders took it, which they most certainly would do, they would possess a seaside centre of operations against the Holy City that would very probably ensure a reconquest, and if Jerusalem fell into Christian hands again, not only would the lifelong labours of the Sultan be negated, but with this kind of encouragement, Christendom would most certainly take fresh heart and send forth another great holy outpouring from Europe. Destruction of Ascalon was sanctioned.

Saladin went down to the coast with his army, set up his camp, and while Richard was relaxing at Jaffa—and started

yet another of his rebuilding undertakings—the Sultan supervised the destruction of the 'Bride of Syria', the seaport city of Ascalon, whose wailing residents trudged away, many towards Egypt, carrying with them all they could take. The great walls were undermined and torn down, houses were burned or razed stone by stone. Imad el-Din, the scholar from Ispahan, Saladin's faithful friend, the renowned legalist, sat in the rubble and wept. He railed at the troops who were engaged in the destruction, but it was a job, once started, that did not cease for three weeks, and at the end of that time there was nothing left for Richard to conquer or take pride in. Saladin's grief was great, but the city's destruction was "the will of God". It was also necessary for the cause of Islam.

There was, during the destruction of Ascalon, a meeting between al-Adil and the leader of the *cruciati* to discuss terms for a general peace. Richard had never for a moment forgotten Philip Augustus's departure and what he suspected were the French King's intentions in France.

This was not the first such meeting. Even before the Battle of Arsuf, Richard had made a proposal. If the Moslems would return the coastal cities, he had said, he would return to the West. Al-Adil had refused. At this second meeting Richard made essentially the same proposals, but now he had victories behind him, which was meant to add weight to his proposals. The King of England and the Sultan's brother dined together and exchanged gifts, and al-Adil's procrastination was not because he had to consider Richard's terms, he had to delay the Crusaders at Jaffa until all the sad work at Ascalon was finished. Which is what he did.

Richard wanted to meet Saladin. This too was refused. The Sultan declined, as he had done before with others, on the grounds that kings should not become friends while their troops were killing one another. (Saladin and Richard Coeur de Lion, romancers to the contrary, never met in person.)

The peace meetings came to nothing; Richard languished two months at Jaffa, Saladin completely destroyed Ascalon and the hot summer passed. When Conrad of Montferrat heard what had happened, he denounced Richard for not marching at once to save Ascalon. He was so incensed at Richard—or perhaps so

jealous of his successes—that he sent an embassy to Saladin offering to become the Sultan's ally and disavow both the Franks and the Europeans, if Saladin would give him, as part of his fief, Sidon and Beirut.

There was another interesting proposal made about this time. Richard of England suggested that the Sultan's brother, al-Adil, marry Richard's widowed sister, Joanna, the Queen of Sicily, and that the Moslem lord and his Christian lady should then reside in Jerusalem as King and Queen, thus joining East and West, Moslem and Christian, in the Holy City.

Al-Adil took this proposal, along with others, to the Sultan, who treated the entire affair as a macabre joke. He agreed to the proposal of his brother marrying an infidel in the same bitter vein that al-Adil made it. When the Queen of Sicily heard of her brother's proposal she denounced Richard, al-Adil and the entire idea; when Richard offered a substitute for his sister, the Sultan's brother, with an admirable emulation of wounded pride, refused to have any bride but Joanna. It was an exercise in polemics from first to last, in everyone excepting Richard and on his part it was evidently an offer made in good faith, one of many impromptu expediences prompted by his growing desire to be extricated from what he clearly saw was likely to become an endless odyssey in a place he did not admire, the Holy Land.

Most certainly Saladin was temporizing. He wanted the rains to come so that the great campaign for Jerusalem would not have to be fought this year.

He had suffered the worst humiliations of his career during the summer of 1191. He was also troubled by increasing ill health. What he needed was a half-year of winter to regain his health, and to also rekindle the flame of *jihad* throughout Islam. More and more, on both sides, God was coming to be an excuse, not an inspiration.

Finally, Richard went down to Ascalon and beheld the ruin. Richard was by nature a stonemason. Another monarch might have turned away in dismay. With winter approaching, Richard seemed to welcome an opportunity to undertake another, this time very worthy and ambitious, rebuilding programme.

Saladin, meanwhile, as soon as the rainy season arrived, allowed those of his troops to depart that he did not believe would be needed. He had great faith in the efficacy of mud, something the King of England had yet to learn about in Syria. The troops were glad to depart. Except for a very few, it had not been a very financially rewarding summer for them.

In other quarters, notably Tyre, denunciations against the Crusader king proliferated, and even among Richard's own barons a few zealots were critical of a leader who employed his time in overseeing the reconstruction of an infidel seaport when the Holy Sepulchre cried out for succour. Jerusalem lay as straight as the arrow's course inland and north-west from Ascalon, and as soon as it was reported that many of the great Sultan's legions had gone home, the road was presumed to be open all the way to Jerusalem.

In December, Richard did in fact undertake a march on the Holy City, where Saladin had gone shortly before. He got as far as Ramla, being harassed most of the way by the Sultan's troops, and halted, a scant eleven miles towards Jerusalem from Jaffa, where he encamped for a month and a half before starting out once more through a hostile countryside that consisted of a kind of clinging soggy earth that made progress a nightmare. Less than another dozen miles onward, practically within sight of the Holy City, at Beyt Nuba, Richard gave up in disgust and turned back.

The rigours of this expedition were described in the *Itinerarium Regis Richard*, King Richard's Itinerary, thus: "We were discomfited by heavy rain and unwholesome weather, owing to which very many of our beasts of burden died. Indeed, so great was the tempest and such the downpour of rain and showers, coupled with blasts of violent winds, that . . . our tents were torn up and whirled away, whilst our horses perished of cold and wet. A great part of our food and biscuit was also spoiled; and the swine flesh, commonly called bacon, grew rotten. Our armour and breastplates became fouled with rust and could not be restored to their original brightness by any amount of rubbing; our clothes began to [rot] and wear out and very many people, from long sojourn in a foreign land, lost health and were afflicted with great ills. This comfort alone

sustained them: the hope that they were at last on the point of visiting the Lord's Sepulchre; for beyond measure did they desire to see the city of Jerusalem and finish their pilgrimage."

This overriding desire to finish the pilgrimage was indeed all that now kept the great Christian host together. The French thoroughly disliked Richard and his English barons. The men-at-arms of the common battalions, who suffered most during the periods of stagnant peace or in battle, were antipathetic to all barons, French, English, German or Norman. Richard himself, while courageous and in many ways very capable, was not a greatly admired leader. Only the desire to reach the Holy Sepulchre kept these suffering and anguished Crusaders facing towards their objective. Therefore, when Richard decided to turn back, on the advice of his barons, the Hospitallers, Templars, and Franks, he sacrificed the only means he had for holding the army together.

"The wiser men," said the *Itinerarium*, "did not fall in with the too hasty zeal of the common folk; . . . having a sharper view of the future [they] dissuaded King Richard from going towards Jerusalem at the moment; because, they said, if he were to lay siege and set himself with all his might to take Saladin and the Turks cooped up in the city with him, the Turkish army that lay on the mountain heights outside would be making sudden attacks. Thus there would be a double danger in every fight from the enemy in Jerusalem and the enemy outside."

When Richard gave the order to turn back, to the loud lamentation and the "great grief of the common people, [who] all groaned and sighed at finding the dear hope of their heart . . . cast aside", he brought about the complete demoralization of his followers, who had only hung on this long for that one unselfish reason. From this time forward the Third Crusade began to disintegrate.

The suffering was not finished. The army turned back towards Ascalon. "As our men plodded on wearily," noted the *Itinerarium*, "bitter snow drifted in their faces, thick hailstones rattled down, and pouring rain enveloped them. The marshy land gave way too beneath their feet; baggage, horses and men sank in the swamps . . . battered, so weary, and so worn,

cursing the day on which they were born . . . they at last reached Ascalon. . . ."

The French, under the Duke of Burgundy, abandoned the Crusade; nor were they the only ones. Entire contingents quit Richard's camp, some enticed by Conrad at Tyre, going north to join him, others going all the way back to Acre seeking ships bound for Europe.

If the Moslems saw in all this the mysterious workings of Allah, their own prospects were not altogether brighter. Their great Sultan, anxious for a time, in Jerusalem, until he knew Richard had turned back, was ill again, for the same terrible weather that smote his enemies caused a creeping and irresistible dampness to bring on a recurrence of his illness. Nor did it help much when he insisted on fasting.

Four times now the holy month of Ramadan had come and gone, and the Sultan still lived in the field, sharing every hardship and privation with his soldiers.

At Ascalon, both Saladin and Baha ed-Din had been brought down by a fever. At Jerusalem the Sultan, too ill to ride, nevertheless worked from dawn till sundown when it had been expected Richard was coming to lay siege. His physicians despaired. One observer saw the Sultan in rain and cold, carrying large stones in his arms like the commonest labourer, slipping and sliding in the mud, helping to rebuild and strengthen the fortifications of Jerusalem and inspiring everyone, even his *emirs* and courtiers, to do likewise.

Not all of Saladin's tribulations were physical. While he was at Jerusalem a courier brought news that made the Sultan cry out in anguish. His redoubtable nephew, Taki al-Din, had died. But his favourite nephew and most outstanding field-marshal was not the only one; over the previous four years, one after another, his most valued and trusted generals had departed, one by one. At the Battle of Arsuf alone, the previous September, he had lost, by count, thirty-two *emirs*, and now many of the new commanders were not the kind of men he needed. Their voices were quite often raised in dissent when propositions put forth in Council involved nothing more than zeal for the Holy War. Fanaticism was on the wane; the new war-lords were more practical than their departed predecessors had been, and

while none would deny that it was the duty of the faithful to bow to God in all things, there were also the practical considerations to be remembered and during the previous summer, very little wealth had been acquired either through ransom or plunder and this was, from the practical and perhaps pardonable, viewpoint, a matter equally as worthy of thought, as *jihad*.

It had been a long war, intermittent perhaps and necessary, but still long; men could not spend their entire lives at battle without there being something involved besides spiritual satisfaction.

Inevitably, as the old *emirs* departed, as the earlier concepts waned, and as men half the great Sultan's age came into positions of subordinate power, proposals that had been anathema before, found a general and almost casual acceptance. Conrad of Montferrat, for example, who had persisted in his solicitation for a treaty and a pact, was taken seriously in his proposals. Conrad's ambassadors were Reginald of Sidon and Balian of Ibelin, a pair of disenfranchised knights who would gain more by serving Conrad than Richard.

Saladin and al-Adil had scorned Conrad before, but now the Lord of Tyre was listened to through his envoys, even though his proposal to be granted two Moslem communities, among other things, was exactly the kind of thing Saladin had been waging war so long to prevent: Christian hegemonies in Islam.

Conrad was not a novice in his intrigues, for even though Richard disliked him, the Lord of Tyre encouraged dissidents in the Crusader communities until he had a very sizable backing, then, when Richard, more anxious than ever to return to England, would have put up Guy of Lusignan, the former King of Jerusalem, for that position again, Conrad's partisans proved surprisingly strong, and Richard was forced to accept Conrad as the new King. To Guy, whose supporters arose in near-rebellion, the King of England gave the island of Cyprus, which was not much smaller than Conrad's new realm, and that healed the breach so that Richard finally felt himself free to leave for home.

Then occurred one of those events with which the times abounded. Conrad of Montferrat, returning at night from a

banquet in Tyre, was accosted by two men in the robes of Christian monks. They stabbed the Marquis to death. When they were then captured and taken to the castle and disrobed, they were found to be *fedawi*, the Faithful Ones of the Old Man of the Mountain. They were put to torture in an effort to learn who had paid to have them go down to Tyre from the Lebanon—something they would not, in all probability, have known—and before they died, swore King Richard had seen to their hire. They were crucified and died with the absolute conviction that they would thereafter dwell in Paradise. But it was unlikely that Richard, who was so impatient to see the last of Islam, would have done anything that would delay him, even though he disliked Conrad; nor would he have had to make use of Moslem assassins if indeed he had wanted to have Conrad killed.

Conrad was never crowned and that meant that Guy of Lusignan remained the last King of Jerusalem.

Saladin was also accused of this murder, a more likely probability. But Saladin, who had ordered Christians beheaded from time to time, and who had slain other Christians—such as Reginald of Châtillon—by his own hand, in battle and elsewhere, had never condoned assassination. Nor was his dislike of Conrad of Montferrat that strong.

Al-Jabal, the Old Man of the Mountain, master of the Order of Assassins was the only person who could have cleared up the mystery, and he never did.

Richard the Unpredictable

The English knight, Stephen of Turnham, appeared as an ambassador of King Richard in Jerusalem early in the spring of the New Year—probably in March, before Conrad was killed—seeking a meeting with al-Adil, who handled nearly all the Sultan's diplomatic exchanges with the Crusaders.

Al-Adil already had Saladin's sanction of the terms by which the Sultan would agree to a treaty of peace and they were far different from any previous terms Saladin had ever considered. The Holy City would be open to Christian pilgrims, whose own priests would be granted the Church of the Resurrection. The former Kingdom of Jerusalem would be divided between Christians and Moslems. The 'True Cross' would be restored and, if Richard insisted, he should also have Beirut, but only providing he would agree to demolish it.

Al-Adil apparently did not meet Richard, but conferred with Henry of Champagne, a nephew of both Richard of England and Philip Augustus of France. Henry had taken over Conrad's command—and also his wife, Isabel—and was considered by the Crusaders as heir-pretender to the Kingdom of Jerusalem.

Al-Adil apparently concluded his business satisfactorily. At any rate he was back in Jerusalem early in April, when Saladin's levies were again marching to join him at the Holy City. Perhaps if the treaty could have been ratified during the winter, it would have endured. Certainly Saladin's part of it would have been scrupulously observed, but in the springtime, in

better health and with another great army gathering around and growing greater each week, Saladin said, "If I were to die, it would not be possible to assemble such an army again. It is better now to carry on the war until we have driven them out or until we are struck down by death".

The King of England also seemed to draw fresh resolution from the springtime. In May he struck in force at one of the few fortresses Saladin had not had dismantled because they were too close, and two vulnerable. At this place, Darum, the defenders sought a truce on the grounds that they wished to ascertain from their Sultan whether to capitulate. King Richard's reply was, "defend yourselves, if you can". The Moslems fought as long and hard as they could. When the castle was breached Crusaders hunted down every defender and either hurled them from the battlements or killed them with axes and swords. Some were strangled and others, arms bound behind them, were led outside, forced to their knees and beheaded. That same night Richard celebrated at Darum, without a single Frenchman. The split between the king and the French under Henry of Champagne was almost complete, but if this schism pleased Saladin, it was now his turn. Taki al-Din's son, an *atabeg* in the east, led an open rebellion against the Sultan's allies, attacking them with his private army. The Sultan was initially stunned, then angered. He asked al-Adil to hasten to the area of trouble before civil war broke out, and almost as soon as his brother had left, Saladin recalled him: the Crusaders were marching on Jerusalem!

Richard had marshalled his army, much depleted but still large and aggressive, now that word passed, the assault against the infidels who claimed the Holy Sepulchre was to be undertaken. Even the French were inspired anew, but the army had to wait a full month before Henry arrived and in that interim, thanks to the treachery of a Moslem, Richard heard that a great caravan *en route* north from Egypt, was to pass close to Ascalon. He went to investigate personally, attired as a desert tribesman. Upon learning that the informant had told the truth, Richard returned for an adequate force, then rode in stealth to the caravaneers' night encampment and burst upon the sleeping Moslems.

The loot from this foray was well worth the king's personal involvement. There were literally thousands of horses and camels, tons of valuable merchandise, loads of corn and wheat, costly velvets and embroidered attire, chests of jewels, silver and gold. There were also what remained of the armed guard, five hundred warriors of Islam.

It was the horses and camels that were needed most. After their acquisition and with his people delighted by Richard's craft and courage in this raid, the King of England finally advanced towards Jerusalem. The next Crusader camp was made at Beitenoble, twelve miles from Jerusalem. It was the prospect of this advance that inspired Saladin to recall al-Adil.

The Sultan waited. He had done all that could be done, and he now had another great army. He was ready. It was almost the month of June, the heat was becoming increasingly oppressive and Saladin had made certain Richard's thousands would suffer the full and relentless torment of the weather by demolishing all the cisterns on the Crusader line of march and filling in all the wells and springs.

The *emirs* who rode out often, as did Saladin himself, to harry the oncoming Christians, feared Richard's strength and resolution. His strength they had cause to fear. His resolution was another matter. He had been receiving news from home all the previous winter, none of it reassuring, and he was more than ever anxious to return to England. But he was now within a dozen miles of his objective and strong enough, his barons were certain, to take it. What great monarch would have turned away at this juncture?

Across the rocky landscape Saladin was equally strong, had the walls of Jerusalem as an additional ally and was possessed of a far greater resolution. He had no intention of yielding up the Holy City even if he perished there. When some of the *emirs* seemed to lack zeal, the Sultan's great patience was strained, but he cajoled and harangued, and meanwhile the Crusaders came up and made their camp at Beitenoble, by which time it was too late for a single Moslem to change course.

Saladin, who never made the pilgrimage to Mecca which was every orthodox Moslem's solemn duty, had Jerusalem, another

Moslem sacred place. It was also the symbol of all he had fought for so long. It was to him, the rallying cry of Islam. He would never willingly or knowingly surrender it.

When he heard that al-Adil, in answer to his recall, was on the way back, Saladin rode out to meet him. On another day, in Council, he told his *emirs*: "You are the defenders of Islam. Remember that the blood of the Moslems, their treasures and their children, are now under your protection, and there are none but you who can defend them against this enemy. If you yield—God forbid—they will roll up this land as one rolls up a parchment."

To Baha ed-Din he said the *emirs* were opposed to being enclosed behind walls, as the butchered defenders at Acre had been; they wanted to go forth and do battle in the open, and even if they lost Jerusalem, which never had meant as much to them as it had to Saladin, they were not especially averse to the loss if that was the price for remaining alive and able to fight again in some other place.

The rocky height upon which Jerusalem stood would be, if the *emirs* were correct, a great crypt. And if the Sultan were right, it would be the relentless—and waterless—Moslem rack upon which the Crusaders would be broken and crushed.

The night before Saladin felt certain Richard would make his attack, the Sultan did not sleep, and in the morning Baha ed-Din, looking into the grey face, said the Sultan might profit by going to pray. Saladin went; it was Friday. Later that same day, in the afternoon, when Baha ed-Din came to the common prayer, he found the Sultan still on his knees.

Beyond the walls a Moslem outpost, commanded by Jurdic, the same staunch henchman who had ridden out with Saladin many years ago, to apprehend the perfidious viceroy of Egypt, Shawar, sent word that a band of Christian knights had arrived on horseback upon a hill near his camp and after sitting up there for a while, had quietly turned about and had ridden back to their camp.

This was Richard Coeur de Lion's best and only look at Jerusalem, the Holy City he had come so far to liberate.

Saladin's spies were everywhere; among the hawkers and traders who visited the Christian camp, among the fawning

Arabs who served as menials, and probably also among the mercenary troops, as well as the women of Asia Minor, who lived in daily contact with the Crusaders.

They reported to the Sultan that the French lords wanted Richard to attack at once, now that he was in position, but that the King of England, perhaps with the disaster of Hattin in mind, objected on account of the lack of water. An army could not wage vigorous war under a blazing sun without water and while it was common knowledge there were many wells within the city, the Crusaders were outside it and there was no water out there, thanks to Saladin.

To this argument it was answered that water could be transported by cart from the direction of Ascalon. Richard thought this was folly; the Saracens round about in the hills could concentrate on destroying every such caravan and in the end the Christians would still be without water.

The irate Frenchmen said they had come to Islam to recover Jerusalem for Christianity and water or no water, they were not going to depart before they owned the city. The equally adamant *Inkitar*, Richard of England, would not budge. In the end it was decided to put the decision to a vote.

Three hundred knights were selected to choose twelve from their number, who in turn were to select three among the twelve to decide the issue. Among the three hundred knights were Franks, Templars, Hospitallers, and Europeans. When the decision was finally made, it surprised everyone, including Saladin, who learned of it by the Crusaders' actions, and the French who were so confident of their ability to take Jerusalem were stunned. The Holy City was not to be attacked; but two hundred and fifty miles away, over the desert, all of rich and supine Egypt lay open to conquest. The army should march there and conquer the whole country instead of decimating itself against Jerusalem, which was just one city.

The French barons reacted with fierce indignation, but to no avail. The following morning Richard the Lionheart set his great army in motion, back towards Ramla, in the direction of Ascalon.

Saladin was amazed. He rode out with his *emirs* to make certain this was not some Christian ruse. When he was satisfied it was

not a trick, he gave thanks to God for answering his prayers of the day before.

The dust of the retreating army had scarcely settled before an ambassador arrived to see the Sultan, from 'King Henry of Jerusalem'. It was the ambassador's duty, he said, to inform the Sword of Islam that Richard of England had given the new King of Jerusalem all the lands the Crusaders had thus far conquered and now it was asked that Saladin return all the other constituencies of the former Kingdom of Jerusalem in order that, in Henry's words: "I may make peace with you, and become as one of thy children."

Saladin's anger, rare though it was, could not be restrained at this totally tactless audacity. The Sultan ordered the ambassador to stand up before him, which the ambassador did, filled with fear at the expression on the Sultan's face. He was told that Saladin would treat with Henry of Champagne on the same basis as with his predecessor, Conrad of Montferrat, only with respect to Acre and Tyre. All other negotiations would be entered into only with Richard, King of England.

Henry's ambassador departed, no doubt in great relief and shortly afterwards Saladin heard from Richard Coeur de Lion. In substance Richard said that he and Saladin could not continue indefinitely as they had done and that the best solution to the continuing bloodletting and devastation would be a durable and equitable peace. "But do not think," he said, "that I am weak. . . . Be not deceived by my withdrawal from Jerusalem. The ram backs for bucking."

Saladin, who had accepted compromise because in Council his *emirs* had insisted upon it, was at heart as obdurate as ever; he had never willingly yielded an acre of Islam to the infidels unless he knew he could re-take it later. This was still his thinking during the summer-long correspondence he exchanged with Richard. As for Tyre and Acre, let the Crusaders first depart, then he would decide their fate.

Eventually the bargaining reached a stalemate. Richard, whose forces had been greatly depleted by the departure of the alienated French, as well as illness, death, and desertion, insisted on retaining his rebuilt seaport of Ascalon. But he no longer entertained any hope of acquiring Jerusalem. On the

other hand Saladin was unyielding in his earlier conviction that Ascalon could not be left in infidel hands. He offered Lydda instead, but insisted that Ascalon must be razed.

Richard went up to rebuilt Acre while these exchanges were taking place. He and his army were eager to go aboard ship and return to the West. Richard proposed attacking Beirut before departing and as soon as Saladin heard this, he gathered his troops and in a lightning strike was before Jaffa the evening of the day he left Jerusalem, 27th July.

But the defenders of Jaffa were veteran warriors to the last man and although outnumbered, they held Saladin's troops to a standstill for three days, and meanwhile a courier rode in all haste to Richard at Acre.

Eventually, after sustaining heavy losses, Saladin's enraged Turks and Kurds breached the walls and the defenders, extolled by Moslem chroniclers for their great valour, called for terms. Saladin, unable to restrain his maddened troops, sent back word for the defenders to fort up in Jaffa's great citadel because he could not guarantee anyone's safety. This was done, the town was entered, and Moslems roamed the streets sword in hand, killing all they encountered, including every pig. They broke open all the wine barrels pouring their contents into the streets. They threw the corpses of slain Christians among the piles of dead swine, they broke into every store and residence plundering without discrimination. At the peak of this confusion and devastation word arrived in Saladin's camp that Richard was coming from Acre, and this made it mandatory for the Sultan to possess the citadel, otherwise he could not fort up in the town.

Negotiators were sent to seek an accommodation with the refugees and troops within the citadel, who had been watching from their battlements as Saladin's soldiers killed and plundered throughout the city. The defenders refused to leave their walls. By nightfall they were still refusing, and Baha ed-Din went to his tent full of uneasiness. Usually, the troops responded to an order from the Sultan without delay. At Jaffa, they had ignored every command. If Richard was indeed coming, without discipline the Moslems would be no better off than sheep.

The following dawn thirty-five Christian ships appeared in the harbour. One was a red galley with a red banner upon which was the heraldic lion of Richard of England. As soon as the King landed he cried out to his barons, "We came here to die, and since die we must, woe to him who does not follow!" He did not wait for his boat to run on to the shore but leapt into the shallows, sword in hand, and when the waiting Moslems surged forward he hacked through them amid a great cry from his barons and men-at-arms, who came behind him. Said astounded Baha ed-Din, "under our very eyes", and despite the great crowd of Saracens lining the shore to hurl them back into the sea, "in an hour they had all landed".

Within the city the citadel's holdouts now charged from their castle, but Saladin at once rallied a force and drove them back to the citadel. Now, the Christian patriarch came in peace to ask terms for the citadel's defenders, and at the moment Saladin was granting a truce, the Crusaders on the beach broke the Saracen line, scattered it, and the first man to rush into the city was King Richard.

At once Saladin ordered the camp struck and the retreat undertaken. The Moslem army withdrew leaving Jaffa in ruins, but as they fell back the triumphant outcries from within the city reached the ears of every warrior of Islam. They had always respected Richard the Lionheart in battle. On this particular day they had that respect bloodily reinforced by deeds. The ram had indeed backed before it bucked. Saladin marched away.

At dusk Richard sent for Abu-Bekr, al-Adil's chamberlain, who had met Richard during the earlier lengthy and unproductive negotiations. Abu-Bekr found the King of England banqueting in the citadel with his barons, and some captured *emirs*. He was in high good humour and said to Abu-Bekr, "Your Sultan is mighty, there can be none greater in Islam. Why, then, did he make off at my first appearance? . . . Great and good God, I would have thought he could not take Jaffa in two months and he made himself master of it in two days. Greet the Sultan from me and tell him that I beseech him in God's name to grant me the peace I ask [of] him. . . . There is no

advantage either to you or to me in permitting the present state of things to continue”.

Richard, who had actually been in the process of departing for England from Acre when word had arrived there of Saladin's attack on Jaffa, was very earnest in his solicitations for peace. Saladin understood this. He also understood what his *emirs* were grumbling about, which was, in effect, that the armies of Islam were depleted and exhausted from this endless warfare, the treasuries were almost bare from supporting it, the *emirs* themselves were greatly burdened by having to come each spring and spend themselves poor against a foe that did not have the good sense to acknowledge defeat. The Sultan himself, obviously in failing health, should be attending to the many important civil affairs of his kingdom instead of living in a tent like a common Bedouin, year in and year out.

As he certainly confided in Baha ed-Din, such was the enemy that he could not be accommodated without great caution, although the above considerations were just. Ascalon, for example, if left in his hands, would become a centre for aggressive operations against not just the Holy City, but against all Egypt, as well as the Lebanon and Syria.

His reply to Richard was plainly stated, as were most of his written thoughts. He never did as Barbarossa had done, make a parchment turn hot in the hands of the beholder. “If the King can spend the winter here,” he said to Richard, “far from his people and two months’ journey from his native land, while he is still in the vigour of youth and at an age that is usually devoted to pleasure, how much easier it is for me to remain here not only during the winter, but the summer as well. I am in the heart of my own country, surrounded by my household and my children and able to get everything I want. Moreover, I am an old man now; I have no longer any desire for the pleasures of the world. I have had my fill of them and have renounced them forever. The soldiers who serve me in the winter are succeeded by others in the summer. And, above all, I believe that I am furthering God's cause. I will not cease therefrom until God grants victory to whom He will.”

Three days after Saladin had retreated from Jaffa subsequent

to Richard's arrival, he marched back again. At daybreak the Christians saw his tents and animals and armour.

Richard accepted this appearance as an invitation to fight, and although he was short of horses and some of his troops had departed during the lull after the recapture of Jaffa, Richard was willing to give battle.

Institut kurde de Paris

Almighty God, Look upon this Soul . . .

The arrival of Saladin's horsemen had been discovered quite by accident before daylight by a Genoese for whatever reason took a Genoese beyond camp right after arising in the early morning. He ran back and sounded the alarm, the men-at-arms turned out as did some of the knights and barons, with little more than their weapons. "Some had no breeches . . . each picked up the weapon nearest to hand and sallied forth."

There were fifty-four knights of whom only fifteen had horses. There were several thousand foot-soldiers. Henry of Champagne was there, as was the Earl of Leicester, among other good fighting men. As dawn showed Saladin's cavalry swinging forward, one thousand to a division, seven divisions in the van, Richard made his dispositions. First, there was a hastily arranged entanglement of tent-pegs and baggage, behind that the spearmen, down on one knee in the customary position to accept cavalry, had their lance-butts set hard in the earth, their shields overlapping in front. Between each spearman was a bowman, the English with their deadly cross-bows. Behind each bowman was a soldier to draw and load a second bow.

Six times Saladin's horsemen charged this line; six times they were driven off with losses. At the height of the battle King Richard rode up and down between the lines seeking personal combat, lance in hand. No-one rode to oblige him, but a Saracen archer killed his horse and he then went into the nearest mêlée on foot, and Saladin, watching from beyond his

line of horsemen, sent forth a fresh horse. The Saracen who came to Richard repeated the Sultan's words: "It is not proper that so courageous a warrior should have to fight on foot." Richard accepted the horse, gave the Saracen some money, mounted and continued to fight.

Finally, Saladin could see that his horsemen were not going to be able to break the Christian defence and sent an order for his foot to advance. The troops refused to move. Saladin went to their *emir* and was told to use his personal corps, the soldiers who had got the plunder from Jaffa, before. Saladin then ordered the army to withdraw in the direction of Ramla and as the men drew off there was very little talk. That night al-Zahir was reluctant to go to his father's tent even though he had been willing to charge the Christian line earlier; had in fact only been restrained from doing so by Saladin's hand on his shoulder.

The *emirs* were fearful of Saladin's wrath. The foot soldiers were especially apprehensive. It was a dispirited, sullen camp.

Saladin punished no-one. He invited the *emirs* to come to his tent and share with him some fresh fruit that had just arrived. He did not mention the mutiny, and neither did the *emirs*.

The day following, King Richard went to al-Adil's camp, and during the course of this visit conferred upon al-Kamel, al-Adil's son, the rank of knighthood. It was done in formal ceremony with Richard's knights in full armour, the entire impressive ritual being performed with all the pomp and form of a sacred rite. (Forty years later, when al-Kamel was Sultan of Egypt, he conceded Jerusalem to his Christian friend Frederick II, Emperor of the Romans, so-called, in actuality King of Sicily. Al-Kamel also married Saladin's daughter, in the years ahead.)

Whatever the real purpose of Richard's visit, after he had returned to Jaffa he fell ill, and in the extreme discomfort of his fever (it was August, a bad time for a fever indeed), he sent to Saladin for some of that Saracen novelty, sherbet. Saladin complied, not once but innumerable times, and when the recuperating monarch expressed a wish for apricots and peaches, Saladin sent them too.

Richard recovered, eventually, and was once again beset with

a great desire to leave the East. He probably had received more bad news from England. Finally, he told Abu-Bekr that if the Sultan would give him Ascalon, he would leave Syria, after which Saladin could do as he wished with the *pullani*, the Franks and European-Syrians, or that if the Sultan would not grant him Ascalon, then Richard would accept an indemnity "for the sums I have spent in repairing it".

The next day, an *emir* of troops masking Richard's camp sent a puzzling message to the Sultan, King Richard had changed his mind, he would yield Ascalon without demanding the indemnity. Saladin at once drew up a treaty to this effect and sent it to Richard, who received it in anger. In the presence of Saladin's ambassador and his own knights Richard denied ever making such an offer. A knight stepped forward declaring that the King had indeed made such an offer. Richard then said: "I will not break my word. Tell the Sultan that all is well, I accept the treaty. . . ."

Saladin's generosity led him to yield Lydda and Ramla, the places he had previously offered in exchange for Ascalon, neither of which were desirable from a strategic point of view, still, they were a form of compensation for the indemnity Richard had wanted, and thus one monarch helped another monarch preserve his pride.

Al-Adil brought the written treaty to Richard for the signatures and oaths—or witnessing—but the knights who would normally have given oaths had already eaten their breakfast before al-Adil arrived, and could not offer the oaths. They never took vows after eating. But the following morning they fasted until the treaty had been ratified, then Richard refused to give his oath. Kings, he claimed, were not required to do so. Nevertheless the treaty came into effect, and except for fifteen years when Frederick of Sicily owned Palestine, the Holy City remained in Moslem hands for 730 years as a result of this treaty.

When al-Adil returned with the treaty several Christian knights accompanied him, and when these men were presented to the Sultan, one of them grasped the Sultan's hand declaring that henceforth there should be peace. Saladin required the acquiescence of the lords of Antioch and Tripoli, but that was

no obstacle, and now the word went forth throughout the land that there was an end to war, and that traders could now go and come between the lands of Islam and the principalities of Christendom. Everyone rejoiced, but an Arab historian noted that the Europeans made peace when they were weak, and broke treaties to make war when they were strong. His comment was apt, for while the Third Crusade was the last truly great, historic Crusade, it was by no means the last one. And Saladin's outward joy was tempered by inner misgivings. "The infidels," he said, "will return out of the lands we have given them. You will see that every one of them will build a fortress on a hilltop. I do not know what may become of me. I cannot change. But I fear that the Moslems may be destroyed by this peace."

But it was done, and the Sword of Islam was in poor health. Also, the treasuries of his kingdom were bare. He and his people had been at war a long time. The treaty was formally ratified by the Sultan on 3rd September 1192 and was to endure for three years. The Third Crusade had first debouched in Islam in 1189. Before that, the First Crusade had torn Islam apart in 1098 and the Second Crusade had come in the year 1148. Excepting the first outpouring, Saladin had lived through it all. The month he ratified the treaty with Richard of England, he was old at fifty-four years, and when he entertained Balian of Ibelin and Reginald of Sidon, two of the knights who had returned with al-Adil from the Christian camp—both of whom had broken their word to him—Saladin was as courteously unassuming as he invariably was, but he could hardly have avoided the reflection that these two men, honoured among their own kind for their knightly virtues, were men of opportunity and convenience, typical of the best of their kind. The land deserved to have rest, but he could not believe it would get it.

Richard Coeur de Lion, still troubled with 'Arnoldia', went up to Acre and consulted a physician there. He was not too ill however to set in progress his means for leaving the East, nor was he so humbled by fever that his characteristic unpredictability and quick temper were mellowed. He decreed that, although according to the peace treaty Christian pilgrims were

now free to go to Jerusalem and to be unmolested there, they must have a visa, and he refused visas to the French. At once Henry of Champagne, self-styled King of Jerusalem, made a strong protest. So did others and the pilgrims who were already on the road were thoroughly bewildered, knowing not whether to press on or turn back.

Saladin settled the issue by taking the side of the Christians. The treaty guaranteeing the right of free passage to pilgrims of all lands was in effect, he said, and it could not now be changed, therefore Christians were entitled to visit the Holy Sepulchre without restrictions, and to give substance to his words he sent troops to escort pilgrims through the gates of Jerusalem, and required no visas of anyone seeking to complete a pilgrimage.

He also said his soldiers would escort the Christians back safely to the coast and no-one would be allowed to molest them, neither Moslem nor Christian, and it was done.

Richard protested, and Saladin answered, as he had done before when a similar situation had arisen during the war: "It would be a pity to turn these people away, when they have come so far. Moreover, the treaty forbids us to hinder them." Saladin extended this courtesy to the French, and that further angered the King of England, but he was on the verge of departing for home, and even had he attempted to put this matter to a test of arms, it is very doubtful that he could have triumphed.

Among the pilgrims who benefited from Saladin's compassion was Hubert Walter, Bishop of Salisbury (later Archbishop of Canterbury), and it was at this time he was shown the 'True Cross' (see Chapter 19). Saladin offered the Bishop his hospitality for as long as the Bishop remained in Jerusalem, and although they became friends later, spending some time together, at the time Saladin made the offer the Bishop declined on the grounds that, as a pilgrim, it was more fitting that he come in humility to the Holy Sepulchre rather than as an honoured visitor.

Later, seated together in discourse, the Sultan asked the Bishop what he would cherish most as a gift from the Sword of Islam, and the Bishop asked to be allowed a little time to consider, then, the following day, the Bishop made known his

desire: that two Latin priests and deacons should also be allowed to administer at the Holy Sepulchre, where up until now only two Syrian priests had been in charge. He asked for the same thing at both Nazareth and Bethlehem. Saladin then gave his oath that it should be done, as long as he lived.

At last on 10th October Richard Coeur de Lion sailed for Europe (and was subsequently arrested by the Duke of Austria for his shortcomings in the Holy Land) and not until then would Saladin consider leaving Jerusalem, where, until his last days at the Holy City, he had dwelt in an old convent near the Church of the Sepulchre, living simply with his corps of retainers. And during his residency at Jerusalem he converted many Christian churches into schools, mosques, and colleges. He also established several hospitals, and saw to the proper administering of the law. Many of the Christian castles and holy places were protected by law from molestation, as were the pilgrims who came in steady streams to weep and prostrate themselves at the holy places. Jerusalem under Saladin was an altogether different place to what it had been under the Christians.

When Richard was ready to sail away he sent back one last message: The treaty that was to last three years, he said, would not be violated, but he intended to spend the first year ordering his affairs in England and France, the second year in assembling another great Christian host throughout the West, and the third year in returning to conquer the land he was now leaving.

With tolerance and good humour the Sultan replied that if he had to lose his land, he would rather lose it to Richard than to anyone else.

Finally, it was time for Saladin to return home to Damascus. It was also time now, said Baha ed-Din, for the great Sultan to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. Baha ed-Din even proceeded to create an itinerary, to make lists of the supplies such a caravan of exalted companions of the Sultan would require, along with lists of the number and kinds of animals to be gathered.

There were delays; Saladin was the greatest Sultan in all Islam with a domain reaching from Egypt to the border of Rûm in the east and in the north and west as far as Armenia

and the land of the Kurds. He had neglected many of the internal affairs of this vast empire too long already, so the pilgrimage must wait. Baha ed-Din's disappointment can be imagined. Then word arrived that Damascus was suddenly cast into confusion and disorder because the governor had suddenly died, and a trip to Cairo the Sultan had been planning had to also be postponed.

But the departure from Jerusalem was not delayed any longer than it had to be. Most of the *emirs* and their troops had already departed. The Sultan's son, al-Zahir, was ready to depart, bound for Aleppo. After spending a solemn time in prayer at the Dome of the Rock, al-Zahir went in the evening to have a last visit with his father, and Baha ed-Din, who was present, recorded the Sultan's words to his son: "I commend thee to Almighty God. He is the source of all good. Do the will of God, which is the Way of Peace. Beware of bloodshed; do not trust in that, for spilled blood never sleeps. Strive to gain the hearts of thy subjects and watch over all of their interests, for thou art appointed by God and me to look after their welfare. I have become as great as I am because I have won the hearts of men by gentleness and kindness. Never nourish ill-feeling toward any man, for Death spares none. Be prudent in thyself. God will pardon the penitent, for He is gracious."

The following morning al-Zahir started northward on his long journey, and the Sultan watched him go across the autumn land and rejoiced in such a son. Shortly thereafter, Saladin began the trip which was to take him home, but he went from Jerusalem to the coast, and northward, redressing the grievances, many of long standing, that were part of the civil obligations he had been forced to overlook since before the coming of Richard. He dispensed justice and largesse all the way up to Beirut, and there, where the deep green of the outer sea blended with the coastal shallows of azure blue, and where the soft green of the Lebanon's many gentle hills lay inland, Saladin met fourteen Christian knights, the retinue of Bohemond of Antioch, the Frankish lord of a fiefdom that had suffered little during the Third Crusade. Bohemond had a request to make of the Sultan: he wanted sovereignty over the unclaimed rich tidewater plain lying north of Antioch, an

area which, in good years, produced an income of about 20,000 dinars. It was easy for Saladin to grant this request; Bohemond was a Frank, not a European, moreover Bohemond's wife Sibylla, half-Armenian and more sympathetic towards Saracens than Europeans, was a friend of long-standing of the Sultan—she may even have been, as some claimed, more than just the Sultan's friend—but in any case, when Saladin said he feared the Christians would return someday and build castles on the hilltops, he had not meant the *pullani*, he had meant Europeans. It helped too, no doubt, that Bohemond, Prince of Antioch, had been under Christian interdict since divorcing his first wife. (Not that excommunication ever made many great Christian lords hesitate; Richard Coeur de Lion had been under an interdict throughout his sojourn in the Holy Land and he acted no differently before or after.)

In making this grant the Sultan was acting entirely in character. He had not abandoned his policy, nor yielded one iota in his religious zeal, but the Franks were not Europeans, even in the loosest sense, not now, after two and even three generations of residing in Islam. It was always Saladin's policy to offer friendship to those seeking it, but especially to those in whom he recognized allies and future supporters, not necessarily *his* supporters, *Islam's* supporters.

Eventually, in the first week of November, the Sultan's entourage reached Damascus, and there was a great celebration. Children who had never seen the greatest lord of Islam were held aloft for a glimpse as the thin, lined man rode by. Al-Zahir, who had turned aside from his trip to Aleppo, was present, as was el-Afdal, and the Sultan's entire family. That first night there was a great banquet at the palace—with the disapproving ghost of Nur ed-Din hovering, probably because Saladin had thrown open the gates and multitudes came and went, some lords, some honoured warriors, and a great many who were common tradesmen and herders and humble people.

Al-Adil came, two weeks later, he had been at Kerak. Saladin, his sons and nephews, and al-Adil, went hunting. They talked away the days and part of the nights. Baha ed-Din also arrived, having been almost three weeks on the road from Jerusalem, and a few days later, when the Sultan rode out to witness the

return of pilgrims from Mecca, Baha ed-Din noticed he was not properly dressed for the biting cold weather and induced him to return at once to the palace. That night he was taken down with a fever, and for fourteen days he lay in a lassitude that brought tears to the eyes of those who saw him. Baha ed-Din and el-Afdal were with him daily. He had severe headaches, his body was hot to the touch. It was decided to bleed him. (Maimonides probably would have objected, but Maimonides was far away in Cairo.) After the leeching was done, Saladin's condition steadily worsened.

The same premonition that held the palace hushed and fearful infected the entire city. Trade was all but suspended, prayers were said hourly, great crowds filled the streets silently waiting, and finally el-Afdal called together all the *emirs* who were present and asked them to take the customary oath of allegiance to the heirs of a dying Sultan. It was done, but it did not mean much. When one man created a kingdom it never survived him as it was. Saladin's kingdom was no different from other kingdoms, although he was different from other kings.

His mind wandered, there were eventually more illucid moments than lucid ones. On the thirteenth day el-Afdal sent for an *imam*, and the holy man read from the sacred texts. When he said, "He is the God than whom there is no other God", Saladin said, "It is true".

The following morning the *imam* prayed; when he said, "In Him do I trust", the still figure on the bed smiled, "his face grew radiant", and Saladin died. It was 4th March 1193, in the fifty-fifth year of his life.

The body was washed and covered and taken out to the garden where the Sultan had played with his children, and where, one must assume, although it was not so stated, he had sat in sunshine and in twilight with the Egyptian mother of his children, the Lady of the Moon. After a prayer, he was buried in the summerhouse.

At death the greatest Sultan of Islam had one gold coin and forty-seven silver ones. He had long since sold all his lands and homes to support the Holy War, one way or another, either in ransoming friends or in paying the troops, or in founding

colleges or hospitals. (Once he paid two hundred thousand dinars to his brother's creditors.) He left no debts, only seventeen sons, a small daughter, several horses and some clothing.

Saladin's sister, the Lady of Syria, provided the tomb in which Saladin still lies. El-Afdal, his mourning son, provided a chapel nearby, over the door of which were inscribed the words: "Almighty God, look upon this soul and open to him the gates of Paradise for his last victory." And surely it was done.

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In any narrative of medieval times Henry Hallam's *History of the Middle Ages* is indispensable, as are Dana Monroe's books on *The*

Popes and the Crusades, The Children's Crusade, The Kingdom of the Crusaders. Other sources that may not bear on Saladin to the exclusion of other people or events, but which offer an excellent insight into the times, are R. J. C. Broadhurst's *The Travels of Ibn Jabayr* (Ibn Jubeir), a translation; Wallis Budge's two-volume *Chronography*; Barker's *The Crusades*, and L. E. Brown's *The Eclipse of Christianity in Asia etc.*

Butler's *The Arab Conquest of Egypt*, and any of the modernized translations of King Richard's *Itinerarium*, are also helpful.

The list is long and decreasing in particular value only as one approaches the end of the great Sultan's life, otherwise it continues to narrate events after his passing, and that of course carries one beyond the scope of this narrative, although the entire story of the Crusades is fascinating.

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ISBN 0 7091 4363 X
PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

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