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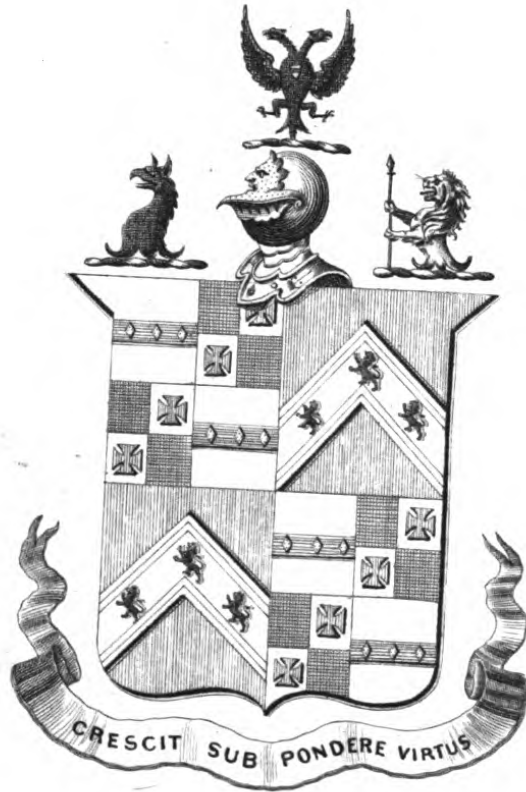


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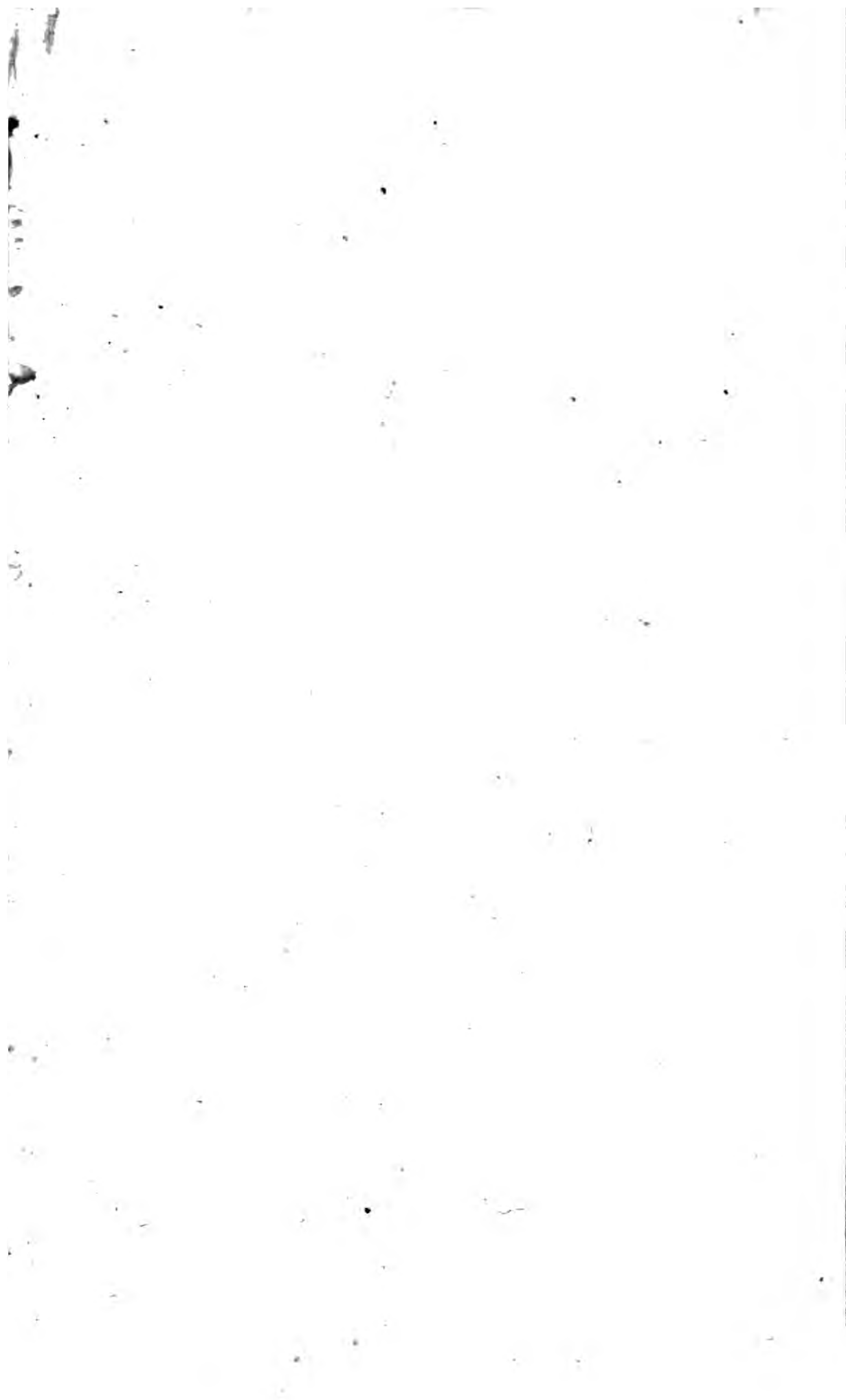


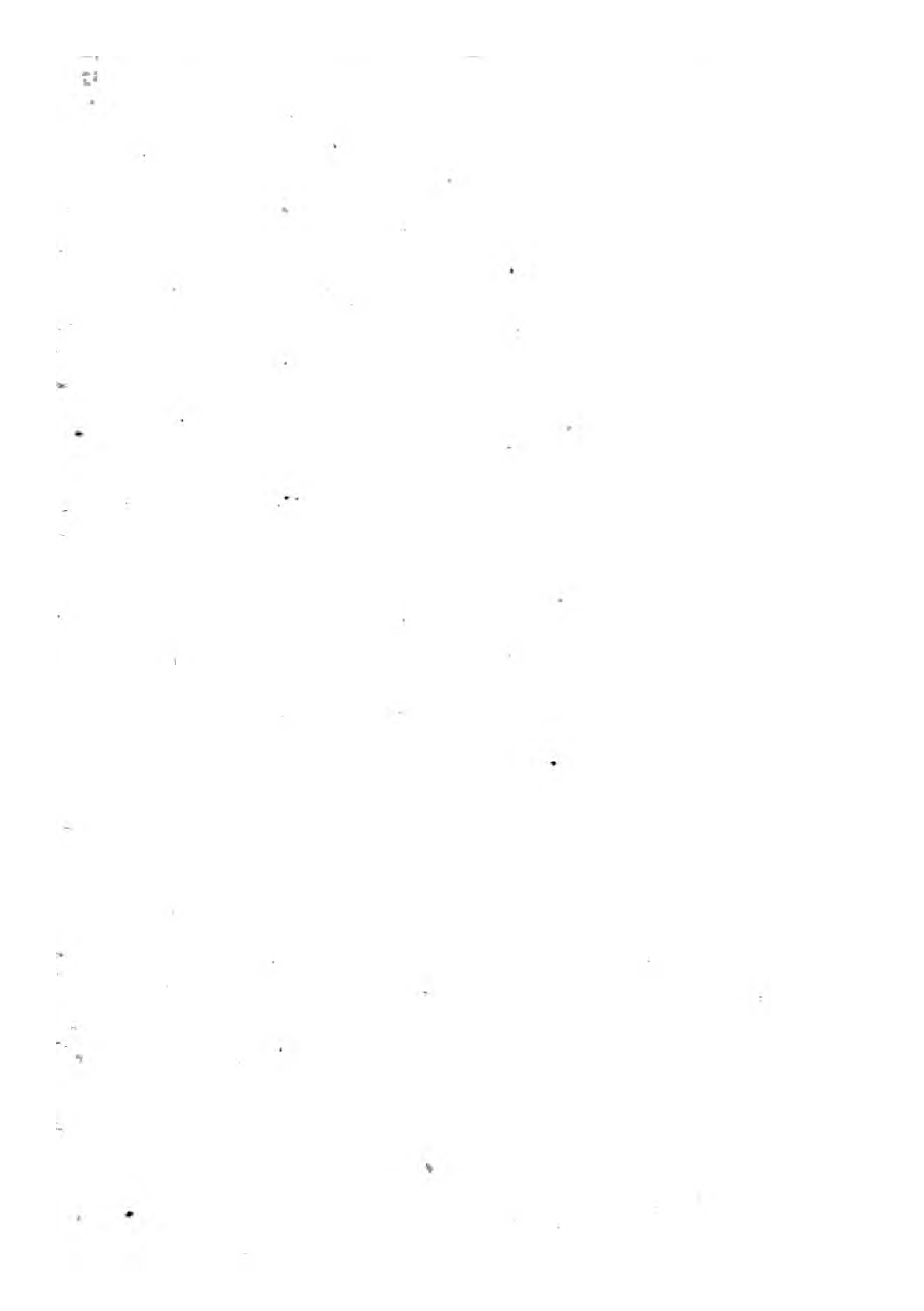


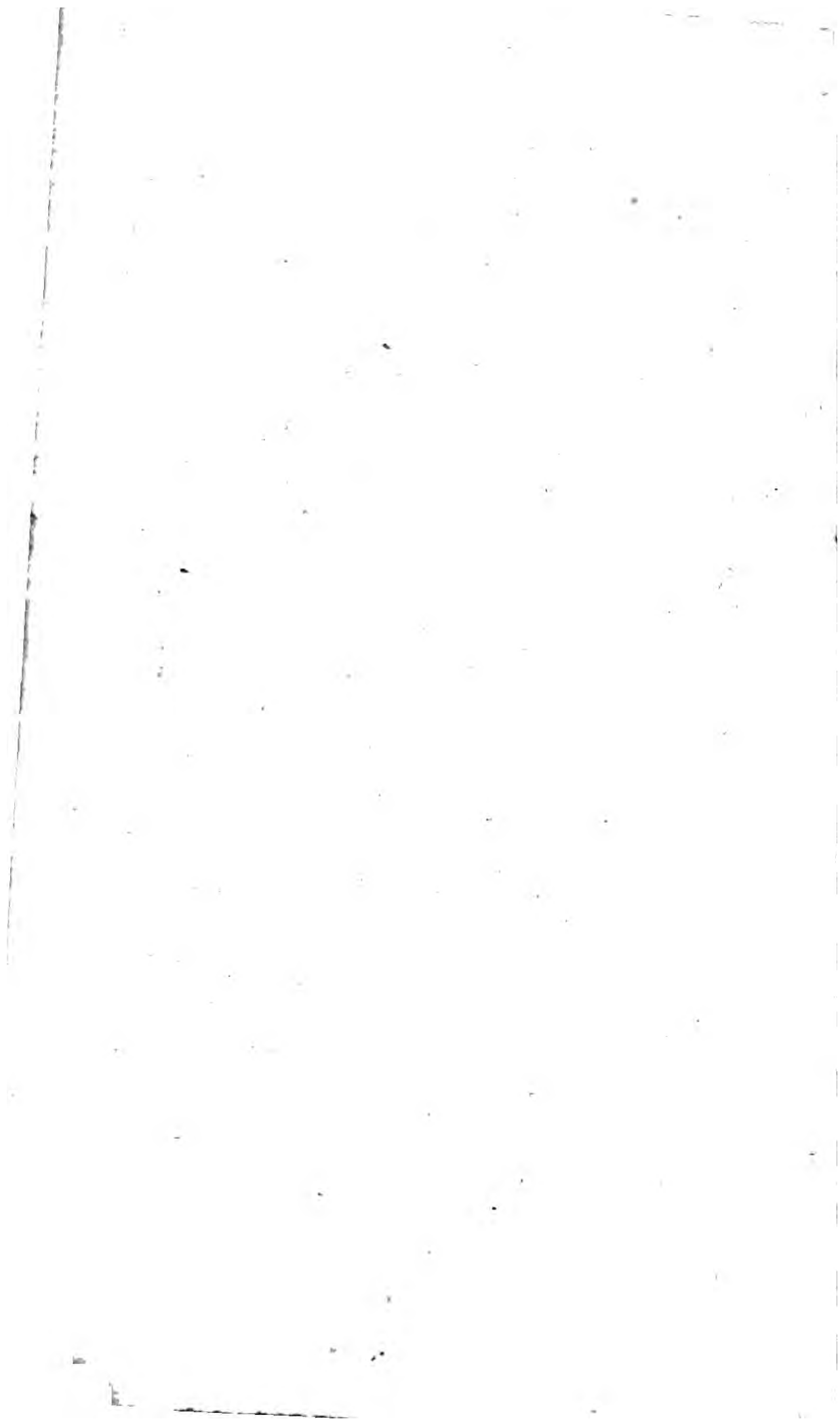
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THE
SARACEN,
OR
MATILDA AND MALEK ADHEL,
A
CRUSADE-ROMANCE,
FROM THE FRENCH
OF MADAME COTTIN,
WITH AN
HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION,
BY
J. MICHAUD,
THE FRENCH EDITOR.

FOUR VOLUMES IN TWO.

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INTRODUCTION.

Historical sketch of the three first Crusades.

IN the first ages of the church, and particularly since the seat of the Roman empire had been removed to Byzance, the practice of making pilgrimages to the Holy Land had introduced itself into the western world. The Calvary and the holy tomb of Jesus Christ were the objects of the pious veneration of the people: Judea, filled with religious monuments, was still the promised land of all the faithful, and Jerusalem was looked upon as the first mother-country of the Christians. Nothing could stop their zeal; neither the tyranny of the Abasside sultans, nor the violent dominion of the Fatimites, who disputed by turns the empire of Syria, could diminish the number of the pilgrims going to visit the holy places. At the end of the eleventh century, the Turcomans took possession of Jerusalem, and the fate of the Christians became consequently more deplorable. Their pious caravans were often attacked and stripped by the Egyptians and the Arabs; great numbers of those who had left their country and families to visit the church of resurrection, lost their lives before they could greet the holy city, and those who reached Jerusalem, after having escaped a thousand dangers, were still exposed to the insults of the new lords of Judea.

The pilgrims of the Latin church, who returned to Europe, related what they had seen and undergone in their journey: they recounted the insults done to the Christians, the profanation of the holy sepulchre, and that the Patriarch of Jerusalem and the holy bishops were dragged in chains. These accounts, swelled by fame, were propagated with

rapidity, and carried every where indignation and despair. Among the pious travellers, who had repaired to the Holy Land, there was one who was more struck than all the rest with the misfortunes of the Christians, and who, on his return to Europe, enflamed every breast with the sentiments that fired his own. On quitting the Patriarch of Jerusalem, he said to him, "I will arm, for your defence, all the warlike nations of Europe;" and he kept his word. Peter the Hermit, of an obscure birth, but of an ardent imagination, without treasure, without power, by the ascendancy alone of tears and prayers, succeeded to raise the west, and to impel it, with almost all its weight, on Asia.

Scarcely had he landed on the coasts of Italy when he ran to throw himself at the feet of the Roman Pontiff. Pope Urban III. received him as a prophet, applauded his design, and commissioned him to announce the approaching delivery of the Holy Land. The ardent missionary, his head bald, his feet bare, clad in a coarse gown, travelled over the provinces of Italy and France. Every where on his passage the women, children, and old men, broke out into loud cries; the people raised their voice to heaven, to beg of the Almighty to cast a glance on his favourite city, and the warriors swore to take up arms and set her free from the yoke of the Infidels.

In the midst of this general effervescence, the head of Christendom convoked a council at Placentia, to lay before it the interests and the perils of the church. Two hundred bishops, four thousand ecclesiastics, and thirty thousand seculars of all conditions, repaired to that assembly. The sittings were held in a plain near Placentia. Alexis Commenes had sent ambassadors to that council, to demand assistance of the Latin princes against the Mussulmen. They moved all hearts in speaking of the misfortunes of Jerusalem; they interested, at the same time, the policy of the princes, in laying before them the dangers that threatened the west.

They resolved at the same time to deliver Constantinople and Jerusalem. Urban, to take a last decision on this great enterprise, proposed to assemble a second synod in a city in France. This new council, summoned to meet at Clermont, in Auvergne, was no less numerous and no less respectable than that of Placentia: the saints and the most renowned doctors of the age came to honour it with their presence and enlighten it with their counsels; the lords and knights repaired there from all the neighbouring countries, and offered to fight for the cause of Jesus Christ. They forgot all causes of enmity; and suddenly they, who were at war with each other, had no longer any ground of hatred but against Mussulmen. The council gave sanction to these happy dispositions, in pronouncing a severe censure against the license of war among Princes, and confirming the truce of God, or the suspension of all hostilities during four days in the week; hence the priests, the women, the labourers, the trading people, were placed, for three years, under the special protection of the church. The council afterwards proceeded to provide for the Christians in Syria. Peter the Hermit, holding a crucifix, with a dejected and sorrowful air, spoke first of the insults offered to the faith of Christ; he recalled to mind the profanations he had witnessed, the tortures and executions he had seen the Christians undergo. The orator was frequently interrupted by sobs; the whole assembly melted into tears at his pictures. Urban, who spoke after Peter the Hermit, deplored in his turn the shame and the misfortunes of that city, which contained the tomb of Jesus Christ, and was disgraced by the worship of Mahomet; these sacred walls, that had sheltered the Apostles, were become the impure mansions of the Saracens; the blood of the martyrs, that had been spilt in Jerusalem and had inundated all Palestine, called aloud for vengeance against the oppressors of the Holy Land. At these words indignation took the place of grief; and, when the holy

Pontiff exhorted the faithful to take up arms, the whole assembly arose and answered with a unanimous voice—"It is the will of God! It is the will of God!" The Bishops of Puy and Orange were the first to ask to be decorated with the cross. Raymond Count of Toulouse, excused himself, by his ambassadors, for not having been present at this meeting: he had already fought the Mussulmen in Spain, he offered to go and fight them in Asia, followed by a great number of knights. As soon as the resolutions of the council were made known, and the bishops were come back in their dioceses, they were incessantly employed in blessing crosses for the crowd of persons who asked to march against the Holy Land, and all Europe resounded with these words of the Gospel: "He, who does not take up his cross and follow me, is not worthy of me." Not only bishops, princes, lords, but citizens and peasants, mechanics, women, children, and old men, looked upon Jerusalem as the road to heaven; they came in hosts to range under the banners of the cross. Political motives joined to pious sentiments: whilst a great number of Christians enrolled themselves with the crusaders, to deserve eternal felicity in another world, many others were going to seek a refuge against the evils that haunted them in this life; the people were unhappy, and the expedition to the Holy Land offered them the prospect of a happier condition. The serfs found in the camps of the crusaders a shelter against the rigours of servitude, the debtors against the prosecutions of their creditors, the guilty against the hand of justice. In these barbarous times, often no other authority was acknowledged than that of force, no other law than that of the sword; the profession of arms was the only one held honourable, and a multitude of knights travelled over Europe in quest of adventures. The preachers of the crusades availed themselves of that spirit of chivalry, and collected under their banners a vast number of those intrepid warriors, who, in swearing to defend innocence and

beauty, had also sworn to defend religion. It was known that two or three hundred Norman pilgrims, returning from the Holy Land, had conquered and founded the kingdom of Naples and Sicily: this example was likely to awaken ambition. All the travellers who came from the East spoke with admiration of the wonders they had seen, of the rich provinces they had crossed. If religion promised her favours to those who were to fight for her, fortune also promised gifts; and many a prince or lord, selling at a vile price his principality or his barony in Europe, smiled at the idea of exchanging it in Asia for a vast kingdom or an extensive empire.

The council of Clermont, which had taken place in the year 1095, had fixed the departure of the crusade for the day of the Assumption, the 15th of August, the following year; this term seemed too distant for the impatience of numbers of the crusaders. In the months of March and May, sixty thousand French of both sexes formed themselves into an army, and advanced from the borders of the Rhine towards those of the Danube, under the command of the hermit, Peter, who travelled on foot, in sandals, and girt with a cord. This new general had evinced more ability in raising soldiers than in conducting them; he had but too well succeeded in inflaming their zeal; he found himself unable to restrain or to direct the passions he had given birth to. The band of crusaders, which resembled rather a numerous caravan than an army, committing ravages every where on its passage, was attacked, beaten, and dispersed, by the Hungarians and Bulgarians; innumerable detachments that followed Peter's army committed the same excesses and met with the same fate. A small number of these lawless crusaders reached Constantinople; Alexis, who had called them to his assistance, endeavoured to get rid of these troublesome guests, and hastened to supply them with the means of continuing their march towards Syria. Transported into a country unknown to them, the crusaders experienced new disasters;

Peter was defeated by the Turks in the Plains of Nicea: he had the grief to see the remains of his army perish before they had reached the confines of Palestine.

Meanwhile the errors and the misfortunes of these first crusaders were not totally lost for those who were to follow them. A new army soon began its march, under the orders of the wise and pious Godfrey of Bouillon. This army, which counted among its soldiers the greater part of the gentlemen of Frise, Germany, and Lorraine, had for its leader one of the ablest captains of the age, and advanced across the countries Peter the Hermit had traversed, and arrived before Constantinople without having encountered other obstacles than the fatigues of a long journey.

Hugh the Great, brother of Philip, king of France, who had taken the cross, set out the same year, taking with him Robert, Duke of Normandy, Stephen, Count of Chartres, the young Count of Flanders, the young Eustatius of Boulogne, and the greater part of the other chief vassals of the crown. Many of the lords who accompanied Hugh the Great were obliged to sell their estates to supply the expenses of their journey to the Holy Land. The commons then were enabled to redeem their freedom, and the historians add, that the King of France saw with joy the departure of the most dangerous rivals of his power.

Bohemond, Prince of Tarentum, Tancred, the model of the knights of his time, and Raymond, Count of Toulouse, who had applied to the council of Clermont for the cross, soon began their march for Constantinople; Raymond led with him the ardent and courageous youth of the southern provinces. The valour of Bohemond was already feared in Asia: his soldiers had fought many times in Epirus and Thessaly. Four armies arrived successively at Constantinople; Alexis was astonished at their number, and he received, in trembling, the homage of these new auxiliaries: the crusaders entered Asia Minor; they took Nicea,

and beat the Turks twice, on the same plains where, the year before, the fragments of Peter's army had been destroyed.

Having conquered the Turks, they had to defend themselves against the burning heat of a new climate; considerable numbers of the crusaders perished by sickness: the countries they traversed, ravaged by their own arms, left them the prey of famine. To fill up the measure, discord crept in among the chiefs, and ambition made them forget the religious purpose of the war; masters of Edessa and Antioch, they quarrelled about their conquests, and did not think of relieving the distresses of the Christians.

Harassed by every scourge, discouraged by their very victories, the crusaders cast a look backwards, and sighed after the country they had quitted. Hugh the Great returned to Europe, the Count of Chartres and Blois deserted his colours like a coward; their example brought about a great number of desertions. In vain the bishops borrowed the voice of heaven to reanimate the courage of the soldiers; that eloquence, which at first had kindled their enthusiasm, could no longer soothe their despair.

Meanwhile the crusaders entered Syria; following their march between the sea-coast and Mount Lebanon, they crossed Tripoli, Tyre, Sidon, Ptolemais, and Cesarea; they knew Lydda, Ramla, Emmaus, and Bethlehem; at the sight of these revered places, they forgot all their hardships, and recovered all their hopes.

On the heights of Nicopolis, the Holy City suddenly struck their sight; at the view, the army broke out into the most lively joy; all the crusaders exclaimed at once, like as at the council of Clermont—"It is the will of God! It is the will of God!" Some fell on their knees at the sight of the Holy Place they were going to deliver; others kissed respectfully that soil honoured by the presence of their Saviour, and consecrated by his

blood. They who lately were but little disposed to follow the laws of Christ, now ready to die for him, swore all to revenge the Holy City for the outrages and the sacrilegious dominion of the infidels.

Since the crusaders had left Constantinople, Jerusalem had changed masters: the Turks had been driven away by the Saracens. These last had offered peace to the Christians, but they could not make up their minds to resign the holy city to them. The Latin princes began to make preparations for the siege: Godfrey of Bouillon, Eustatius his brother, and Tancred, took up their quarters on the western side, near to the tower they still called David's Fortress; the troops of Raymond spread towards the south, on the declivity of the mountain of Sion; Robert, Duke of Normandy, the Counts of Flanders and St. Pol, encamped their soldiers on the northern side, and occupied the whole plain that extends from the gates of Damascus to the Valley of Jehosaphat. The fifth day of the siege, on the wonderful promises of a hermit who inhabited the Mount of Olives, the besiegers gave a general assault; but, having neither ladders nor any other warlike machines, they were repulsed with loss into their camp. Some days after, they ventured on a new attack, that met with no better success than the first: the Christians, at the sight of Jerusalem, had recovered all their enthusiasm; but it soon grew weak on encountering the disasters that assailed them. The siege lasted but forty days, and these, says an historian, were days of misery and calamity. The incessant scourge of famine carried its ravages among the Latin army; an extraordinary drought came, and added its horrors to those of famine and war; all the fields in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem had been laid waste; the fountain of Siloë was dried up; the waters of the torrent of Cedron were corrupted by the summer's heat. The whole army was perishing with hunger, thirst, and penury; the chiefs

of the crusade saw no other remedy to these evils but the conquest of Jerusalem. As they could not take possession of that place without the help of warlike machines, they hastened to construct some. The enchanted forest of Tasso was cut down, and its trees were in a short time converted into rams and balistas, catapultas and huge towers, before which the ramparts of the besieged city were to fall. When these preparations were completed, they thought of re-establishing peace and harmony among the soldiers; the priests, who had taken the cross, strove to revive the broken courage of the Christians; they inveighed vehemently against those vices that enervated their hearts, and on account of which God seemed to have forbidden their entrance into Jerusalem. Raymond and Tancred were the first to set the example of reconciliation; they embraced each other in sight of the whole army. The chiefs and the soldiers imitated them; and, in order to add more solemnity to these affecting scenes, all the crusaders, preceded by the bishops, went out in arms from the camp, and repaired to the Mount of Olives. There, on the exhortation of Peter the Hermit, who pointed out to them the rocks of the Calvary, and the Church of the Sepulchre, ready to receive them, they renewed all their oaths. They returned into their quarters full of confidence; and, having passed the night in prayers, the whole army, at break of day, appeared under arms, and marched to the assault.

While the christian religion led the crusaders to attack Jerusalem, the faith of the prophet ordered the Mussulmen to defend it. A celebrated mosque, built in the place where stood formerly the temple of Solomon, obtained the veneration of the East. An ancient tradition, preserved among the Turks and Saracens, led them to believe that Mahomet had ascended to heaven from Jerusalem. The besieged, prompted by fanaticism, defended themselves obstinately; missile weapons of every de-

scription, burning arrows, huge masses of stones, torrents of boiling oil, and wild fire, rained on all sides on the besiegers. They fought on both sides till night with the same ardour: all the efforts of the crusaders proved fruitless; they returned to their quarters, full of sorrow and indignation. The principal chiefs could not console themselves at the idea that *God did not hold them worthy yet to enter the Holy City.*

The next day, namely, the 15th of July, 1099, at break of day, the Christians returned to the assault. The action was no less obstinate and no less bloody than that of the day before. Victory remained for a long time uncertain; at last, Godfrey of Bouillon, followed by many of his own people, succeeded in storming the ramparts, and Jerusalem was taken. History observes, that the crusaders entered the Holy City on a Friday, at three o'clock in the afternoon; it was the day and the hour when Jesus Christ had been put to death. This epoch ought to have brought back their hearts to sentiments of mercy; but, exasperated at the hardships they had undergone, aggravated by the long insults of the Saracens, intoxicated yet with the rage of combats, the crusaders put to the sword a great part of the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

The pious Godfrey turned aside from this scene of carnage; he deplored the errors of his companions, and proceeded to return thanks to God for his victory. Unarmed and barefooted, he repaired to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The news of this act of devotion soon spread throughout the army. Instantly all private resentments, all anger, are quelled; the crusaders strip off their bloody garments, make Jerusalem resound with the sobs of their contrition, and march all together, with bare feet and unarmed, towards the Church of Resurrection. This sudden transition, from the rage of battle to the soft emotions of piety, must undoubtedly astonish the observer. Contrasts of this kind are often met with in the history of the

crusades, but they only bear witness to the weaknesses of human nature.

When the crusaders had taken possession of Jerusalem, they proceeded to frame laws, and to raise up the throne of David and Solomon. The pious Godfrey of Bouillon was elected king by the unanimous voice of his companions in arms. The hero of this first crusade had a real piety; he would not consent to be crowned king in a city where the Saviour of the world had been crowned with thorns. He refused a title that his virtues had deserved, and that history has given him, for the more modest title of Defender and Baron of the Holy Sepulchre. Scarcely had he accepted the perilous honour of governing Jerusalem, when he found himself obliged to defend it against the troops of the Soldan of Egypt. A numberless army, consisting of Egyptians, Ethiops, and Arabs, assembled in the name of Mahomet, was advancing towards the capital of Judea, and had sworn to retake it from the Christians. Godfrey marched to meet the enemy, and found them in the neighbourhood of Ascalon: assisted by the brave Tancred, the Duke of Normandy, and the Count of Toulouse, he beat and dispersed the army of the Infidels. The battle of Ascalon was the last of this crusade; the christian princes, released from their engagements by the taking of Jerusalem, and the victory that secured its conquest, began their march to return to Europe, bearing palms in their hands, and singing triumphal hymns every where on their passage. They left Godfrey only two thousand foot and three hundred horse; but this little army was formidable yet, for it was commanded by the brave and faithful Tancred.

Such are the principal events of this first crusade, which has been celebrated by Tasso. Philosophy may oppose its arguments to the marvellous parts of this enterprise, but the Italian poet's lines have given it a character of heroism and

grandeur which will last as long as his poem. These heroic and marvellous times are to us now what the memorable epoch of the siege of Troy was to the Greeks, at the time of Alexander. One might add that Tasso's heroes are much more polished than those of Homer, and the motive that brought about the taking of Jerusalem is of much higher importance than that which armed the Greeks and prepared the fall of Troy.

The true political object of the crusades, that perhaps which had been least thought of, had just been fulfilled; the tottering empire of the Greeks had been raised again by the victories of the Christians. The crusaders had founded in the East the principality of Antioch, the county of Edessa, and the kingdom of Jerusalem. The Mussulmen might be reduced, for a long time, to a defensive war; but neither the degenerate Greeks, nor the Latins, who possessed valour only, were able to preserve the advantages that the war had given them.

The people of Syria submitted joyfully to Godfrey's power. The death of that prince, which happened too soon for the happiness of his subjects, was lamented at the same time both by the Turks and the Christians; he had extended his conquests as much by the wisdom of his policy as by the terror of his arms. He left Baldwin, his successor, a kingdom which was as extensive as that of Judah or Israel. It is true that the population of that new kingdom was not numerous, but the emigrations from Europe supplied it incessantly with defenders and inhabitants.

Fulk, Count of Anjou, ascended the throne of Jerusalem after Baldwin; his reign passed without either trouble or glory. The minority of his son, who succeeded him, gave rise to dissensions among the lords and gentlemen; the Saracens availed themselves of them; they retook Edessa from the Christians, and Jerusalem was threatened.

Cries of alarm resounded throughout the West ; the Christians of Syria called the princes of Europe to their assistance. Eight and forty years had elapsed since the deliverance of the Holy Sepulchre, but the spirit of the people was not altered, and they prepared for a second crusade on all sides.

At the voice of St. Bernard, the people and the princes of Christendom enrolled themselves again under the banners of the cross. Born of a noble family in Burgundy, eight years before the conquest of Jerusalem, St. Bernard, at the age of two-and-twenty, had buried himself in the monastery of Citeaux, and, from the bottom of his cloister, he was become the oracle of the christian world. The sanctity of his manners had procured him such ascendancy, that France, England, and Italy, consulted him on a schism, and obeyed his decision. He had Eugene and Suger for his disciples ; and the simple abbot of Clervaux was more powerful in Europe than his two disciples, one of whom had been raised to the tiara, and the other to the ministry of France. His eloquence, of which some monuments remain, places him high above his cotemporaries. " His compositions," says a Protestant writer, " are devoid of neither taste nor genius ; the stamp of reason and humanity is marked throughout."

St. Bernard was a different missionary from Peter the Hermit ; the one had principally addressed the people, the other drew in kings ; the two greatest monarchs in Europe, the King of France and the Emperor of Germany, placed themselves at the head of the new crusade.

Louis VII. called the Younger, who had made a vow to go and fight the Infidels in the East, summoned a meeting of the principal lords and bishops in the city of Bourges. Godfrey, Bishop of Langres, pronounced there a pathetic discourse on the calamities which threatened the christian colonies in Asia ; he exhorted his auditors to arm

themselves for the defence of Jerusalem; and, what is worthy of remark, St. Bernard then opposed vehemently the project of a new crusade; it was not until the following year that he yielded to the entreaties of the Sovereign Pontiff and to the spirit of the age.

In the spring of the year 1146, great numbers of ecclesiastics and seculars of all conditions were convoked at Vezelay. The meeting of the faithful took place in a plain near the city. St. Bernard appeared at that synod, whither his reputation had gone before him: the Pope had prevailed on him to preach the Crusade: he harangued his numerous auditors on the unfortunate state of their brethren in the East; he represented the Turks and Saracens as ready to invade Jerusalem again; he spoke of the glory the first crusaders had reaped, in conquering the Holy Land; he showed them Jesus Christ marching at the head of the christian armies, to defend the city where he had died for the salvation of mankind. Moved with this speech, the King of France arose from his throne, threw himself at the feet of St. Bernard, and received from him the revered sign of the cross. This example inflamed all minds still more than the discourse of the eloquent missionary. Queen Eleanor, daughter of the Duke of Guienne, appeared, to receive the cross, like the King, her husband: she was followed by all the great personages of the kingdom, who were present at the assembly. Fame published their holy resolution, and their enthusiasm soon communicated itself to all the nations of Christendom. St. Bernard, carried away by his zeal, went to preach the Crusade in the different provinces of Germany and France; his predications had such extraordinary success, and, I will almost say, so fatal, that they unpeopled the cities and the fields. He wrote to Pope Eugenius—"The villages and castles are deserted; none is seen but widows, whose husbands are living."

The reader will wonder, without doubt, that St. Bernard, who had at first shown so much moderation, should have displayed, afterwards, so much ardour and such unruly zeal in preaching the Crusades. It is not useless to observe here, that the opinions he preached were the prevailing ideas of his time, and that the influence the age exercised over him, was greater, perhaps, than that which he exercised over the age.

A new meeting was summoned at Chartres. The people were so much persuaded, then, that sanctity of manners and the fervour of religion were to hold the place of all political and military talents, that St. Bernard was elected unanimously general of the crusaders. He had the good sense to refuse this honour, and he wrote to the Pope, that it would be a monstrous prodigy and an ill-fated measure to see a monk take the command of an army. The departure of the crusaders having been fixed for the month of June, 1147, Louis the Younger repaired to Metz, accompanied by all the great lords of his kingdom; at the same time the Emperor Conrad was marching, with his troops, towards Constantinople, where the two princes were to unite their forces.

On the arrival of Conrad, Constantinople witnessed the singular meeting of two emperors, who had inherited the fragments of the empire of Augustus, and who both styled themselves the successors of Cæsar and Constantine. Their mutual pretensions gave rise, at first, to some divisions, but the Emperor of the West had a powerful army to maintain his claims, and the Greek Emperor did not insist much on his own.

Manuel Commenes, says a celebrated writer, shuddered at the danger of seeing passing through his states such fierce heroes and numerous armies. He dissembled his alarms; and, not daring to brave the princes of the West, he only thought how he could betray them. Some crusaders having found out his perfidy, proposed, in a meeting, to take

possession of Constantinople; but the leaders of the crusade generously rejected this advice, saying, like Aristides, that the enterprise might be profitable, but that it was unjust.

After a stay of some weeks in the neighbourhood of Constantinople, the Emperor of Germany entered into Asia Minor. He marched all the way beset with treasons. They supplied the Germans with poisoned provisions; ambushes awaited them every where on their passage; the enemy got information of their approach; and, to fill up the measure of perfidy, they had given them, at Constantinople, faithless guides, who misled the army in the straits of Mount Taurus, and gave them up, already broken by fatigue and despair, to the sword of the Turks and Saracens.

The French, whom the disasters of the Germans had not discouraged, pursued their march towards Syria; passed the Meander, notwithstanding the efforts of the Turks; experienced a check near Laodicea; and arrived at Antioch a year after their departure from Metz. Louis VII. experienced domestic sorrows at the court of Antioch, which obliged him to shorten his stay there. Prince Raymond declared himself publicly the lover of Eleanor of Guienne. A king of France was forced to steal away his own wife in the middle of the night: he brought her back into his camp, and set off, at the head of his troops, for Jerusalem, where the Emperor Conrad, who had left Germany with an army, had just arrived as a lone pilgrim.

The Christians in Syria were then in daily apprehension of an attack from the Saracens: the King of France was received at Jerusalem like a saviour. All the princes, all the prelates, and the clergy, followed by the people, went out to meet him, with loud acclamations, singing the same words as were sung to the Son of God, when he entered the Holy City in triumph. A few days after the arrival of Louis VII. the crusaders undertook the siege of Damascus, but they were soon forced to give it up,

by the treason of some Christians of the country : they afterwards proposed to besiege Ascalon, but the greater number of the German and French lords opposed it : they were discouraged, and the perfidy of some Christians of the East served as a pretence to close the campaign and terminate the war. The Emperor Conrad returned to Europe : they had rejoiced, in Constantinople, at his disasters ; when he went through, on his way back, he appeared less formidable, and was better received. The King of France had remained at Jerusalem, but, recalled by his faithful Suger, he embarked at Ptolemais, to return into his kingdom, whither he brought back only the regret of having made vain efforts for the cause of the faith, and lost the finest part of his army, without deriving any advantage.

This crusade turned out much more unfortunate than the first : the new crusaders did not avail themselves of the faults of those who had been in the Holy Land before them ; they did not sufficiently mistrust the Greeks, who betrayed them ; they despised the Turks too much, and often neglected the means of beating them : the christian armies had less able chiefs than in the first expedition. Raymond, Baldwin, Tancred, Godfrey of Bouillon, were better generals than the King of France and the Emperor of Germany. Conrad and Louis VII. were not wanting in courage, but were deficient in prudence ; their armies were like wandering tribes, composed, in a great part, of women, children, old men, who could do nothing towards ensuring victory, and who increased the confusion and despair after a defeat. This multitude could not be supplied with provisions ; discipline could not be established ; a single defeat destroyed the German army and the hope of the expedition. Alexander had conquered Asia with thirty thousand men, yet armies four times as numerous found their tomb there, because their leaders neglected to unite policy with valour.

On his return to France, Louis VII. caused his marriage with Eleanor of Guienne to be annulled: that princess was accused of having been seduced by Raymond, Prince of Antioch, and having shown herself too partial to the beauty of a young Turk, named Saladin. "But, with respect to those things," observes Mezeray, with simplicity, "more is often said than there really is, and sometimes more than is known." Eleanor soon after married Henry II. and the Duchy of Guienne became a province dependent on England. If Louis committed a fault in repudiating a wife, who took away with her one of his finest provinces, he made amends for it in preserving to France a minister who had added lustre to the state: the courtiers attacked Suger's fidelity, and the king answered them by giving his minister the title of *Father of the Country*. The Abbot Suger possessed then a great advantage; he was the only man in Europe who had opposed the crusade; on all sides they boasted of his wise foresight, and all the murmurs were directed against St. Bernard. The Abbot of Clervaux was forced to address to the Pope an apology for his conduct; he ascribed, with some reason, the misfortunes of the war he had preached to the inexperience and improper conduct of those who had the management of it. He, however, justified himself still better two years after, when he refused to preach a new crusade.

Whilst the Christians lamented in the West the disasters of the crusaders, new events were preparing in Asia: the Turkish apostles had given religious motives to their politics, and the war which they carried on against the Christians was also a sacred war. Ever since the first crusade they had not ceased to invite the people of the East to take up arms against the enemies of the Prophet. After the taking of Jerusalem, by Godfrey of Bouillon, the consternation had spread itself among the Musulmen: Bagdad was in tears, the Cadi of Damas-

cus had torn off his beard in the presence of the Caliph, and all the Divan had wept, on learning the first conquests of the Christians; but the Caliphs, divided among themselves and stripped of their authority, could only deplore the shame of the Mahomedan armies, when a revolution came which changed the face of the East, and opposed suddenly a formidable army to those of the crusaders.

When the Latins arrived in Syria for the first time, the Caliphs of Cairo and Bagdad had already no more than a phantom of power. Enervated by the pleasures of their harems, they no longer resembled that warrior, their predecessor, who, when asked about his origin, replied, putting his hand on his sword—“*This is my genealogy;*” and, pointing to his soldiers—“*These are my offspring.*” Invisible in their palaces, they had abandoned the government to their slaves, who worshipped them on their knees, and at the same time imposed laws on them. Their name was yet revered, but their authority unknown: they exercised their empire in mosques only; they had no other privilege left than the shameful one of confirming the usurped power of the Emirs, who disturbed the provinces to govern them, and disputed on the field of battle the right of ruling at once the people and the prince.

Noureddin had been brought up near the throne of Bagdad; he had both valour and ambition; he had become sultan of Mosul, Aleppo, and Damascus. In the hope of adding Egypt to his vast possessions, he formed the project of driving away the Fatimites, and sent Shirakouh, his general, against the Vizier and the Emirs of Cairo.

These were supported by powerful allies, and at first withstood the attacks of Noureddin. The two Caliphs, tranquil in their palaces, invoked Mahomet for the success of a war, the perils of which they might have shared, but could not hope to reap the advantages of: vicars of the Prophet, whose law they interpreted in differ-

ent ways, they cursed each other in public prayers, and declared each other reciprocally the enemy of God. The maledictions of the Caliph of Bagdad inflamed the minds; he promised all the favours of Mahomet to those who would go and fight his rival; and thus prevailed on many eastern princes to favour the enterprise of Nouredin and Shirakouh.

The second crusade might have profited by these divisions, but half the crusaders had perished before they could reach Palestine; the others were soon after discouraged, and set off for Europe, without having attempted any thing of importance. The King of Jerusalem supplied the Caliph and the Vizier of Cairo with succours, to prevent their being overcome; but, unfortunately, he thought more of ransoming than of defending them; besides, his forces were not considerable enough; and, after making some useless attempts, he abandoned them to all the odium that a temporary alliance with Christians had brought upon them.

Nouredin's general was received in Egypt like the protector of the Mahomedan faith; he caused the Vizier of Cairo to be assassinated, and, according to the custom of the East, he took his place. This conquest hurried on the fall of the Fatimite Caliphs; the Caliph of Bagdad was acknowledged in all the public prayers as the lawful head of all true believers, and the black colour of the Abassides, who descended from Omar and Abu-becker, took the place of the green livery of the children of Ali.

Amidst these revolutions, a young warrior of the Curdian tribe had arisen, who had seen on the field of battle how crowns are taken possession of, and who was soon to unite under his powerful sway the richest provinces of the East. Saladin, nephew of Shirakouh, had followed his uncle into Egypt; he had signalized himself at his defence of Alexandria; he had ingratiated himself with the army; and, having become master of Egypt, he

soon brought into his power, Damascus, Aleppo, and Diarbekir. Nicea and Medina acknowledged him protector. Assisted by his brother Melek Adhel, he conquered Yemen, Mesopotamia, obtained several advantages over the Christians, and threatened Jerusalem.

Such was the new and formidable power that had raised itself in the East. By degrees, as Saladin extended the limits of his empire, the kingdom of Jerusalem was verging to its fall. Amaury, who had carried on a successful war against the infidels, had just paid the debt of nature; a leprosy had deprived his son, Baldwin IV. of his mental and bodily faculties; Sybilla, his heiress, caused to be placed on the throne her husband, Guy of Lusignan, a prince of a noble countenance, but whose reputation was so indifferent in point of capacity, that his own brother, Godfrey, was heard to exclaim: "Since they have made a king of him, they would surely have made a God of me, had they known me." This choice, being generally blamed, impaired the new king's authority; his rivals excited the rage of parties. The aspect of the holy places in danger could not silence their ambitious pretensions; the government was spiritless, the people dissatisfied, the kingdom divided, and the throne of Jerusalem had no other support left than some succours lately arrived from Europe, and the bravery of the knights of St. John and of the Temple.

A truce had been concluded with Saladin; and, as a last blow, that truce was broken by the imprudence of Rinaldo of Chatillon, who had surprised a fortress in the neighbourhood of the desert, and there insulted the Saracens, plundered the caravans, and threatened the cities of Medina and Mecca. Saladin began by complaining; and, as he was not listened to, he entered the Holy Land, at the head of eighty thousand men. Guy of Lusignan left Jerusalem with an army hastily raised, advanced to meet the enemy as far as Ti-

beriad, was defeated, and fell himself, with the cross, into the power of the Infidels. Saladin showed himself generous towards the captive king, but he caused the head of Chatillon to be cut off, for having violated the treaties and refused to embrace the religion of the Prophet. A single day had deprived Jerusalem of her chief and most intrepid defenders; a queen in tears, the children of those who had perished at the battle of Tiberiad, and some fugitive soldiers, were the only guardians of the holy sepulchre. Preceded by the terror of his victims, Saladin appeared soon after under the walls of that place, the inhabitants of which hoped no more, except in the mercy of God and the conqueror. He sent for the principal persons in the town, and said to them, "I think, like you, that Jerusalem is the house of God: I will not profane its sanctity by the effusion of blood; abandon these walls, and I will give you part of my treasures." Despair gave them firmness: "We cannot," replied they, "yield you up a city where our God died; we can still less sell it you." The Sultan then swore on the Koran, that he would enter the city only by open force; the siege was begun and carried on with vigour; Jerusalem had yet a numerous population, but the inhabitants had only prayers and supplications to oppose to the fury of the besiegers. They, even, who had answered Saladin with that firmness, thought only now of imploring his indulgence. Saladin, mindful of his oath, showed himself inexorable. One day, that they were more earnest in their entreaties, turning towards the place, and showing them his colours flying on the walls, "How can you expect," said he, "that I should grant conditions to a city taken already?" But the Saracens were repulsed, and the Sultan, fearing the despair of the besieged, summoned the doctors of the law before him, and inquired whether he could be released from the oath he had taken to storm the city. The Imans and the Cadis decided in favour of humanity; and,

what is worthy of remark, they selected their opinions out of Aristotle's subtleties, translated into Arabic. Saladin granted the inhabitants their lives; and, after fourteen days' siege, he entered Jerusalem in triumph; he dragged in his train that Guy of Lusignan, who was returning a captive into that city where he had reigned: twenty thousand warriors, taken prisoners at Tiberiad and led in the conqueror's train, saw again with tears those walls that their courage had not been able to defend. Thus that Jerusalem, which had been conquered eighty-four years before, and cost Europe so much blood, fell again under the power of the infidels. Saladin availed himself of his victory with generosity.*

History has endeavoured to describe the despair of the Christians when they were obliged to abandon the Holy City. They bathed with their tears that Calvary where their God had died for them; they could not detach their eyes from a city that contained all they held dear. They were condemned to a hopeless exile; proscribed by the Mussulmen, scorned by the Christians of the East, who accused them of having given up the tomb of their God to the infidels, they wandered about in Syria, without resources or shelter. Many died with penury and despair; some returned into Europe, to announce, with tears and lamentations, that Jerusalem was no longer in the power of the Christians.

This intelligence threw all the West into the greatest consternation. Urban III. who was then at Ferrara, died of grief on hearing it. Gregory VIII. who succeeded him, addressed very pressing

* Some writers have attempted to draw a contrast between the clemency of Saladin and the massacre of the first crusade: but we must not forget that the Christians had offered to capitulate, that the Mahomedans had rejected the proffered conditions, and that the city was then taken by storm after several bloody actions.

and pathetic letters to all the faithful, exhorting them to take the cross for the deliverance of the Holy Land. These letters were read in all the churches. Every where the taking of Jerusalem was looked upon as a mark of the wrath of God; all the faithful sought to appease it by the fervour of their prayers and the austerity of their penitence. William, Archbishop of Tyre, celebrated for his eloquence and piety, arrived at the same time in Europe, commissioned to exhort the Christians of the West to arm themselves, to go and revenge their brethren of Syria. He went to the meeting of the faithful, convoked at Gisors; he drew before them a pathetic statement of the calamities the kingdom of Jerusalem had undergone; he represented to them the conquests of the crusaders in the East, reduced to the county of Antioch and the cities of Tyre and Tripoli; he spoke of the terror that Saladin inspired, and told them that there no longer remained any hopes to recover the holy kingdom, unless the most powerful kings of Christendom united their hearts and arms to deliver the land of the Christians. This speech fired the assembly with enthusiasm; the Kings of France and England, who were present, offered first to take the cross; they were followed by all the lords of their kingdoms. It was decreed that the French should adopt a red cross, as they had done in the first crusade, the English a white one, and the Flemish a green. It was resolved, at the same time, that, to supply the expenses of this new expedition, all those who did not take the cross, should pay the tenth of their income: the terror that Saladin's arms had inspired, caused the people to name this tax *the Saladin tythe*.

And now they only thought of preparing for the crusade; the King of France, Philip Augustus, and Richard Cœur de Lion, who had lately succeeded his father, Henry II. on the throne of England, had just gone to war again in Poitou; they had both taken the cross at Gisors; reminded of

their oath, they laid down their arms, and swore not to take them up again, except against the Infidels. They repaired to Vezelay, there to confer respecting the interests of religion, and swear to each other eternal reconciliation. Followed by the blessings of the people, they both sat off to embark, one at the port of Marseilles, the other at that of Genoa. An English writer observes, that Philip and Richard are the only two sovereigns of France and England who ever fought in the same cause; but politics soon began to spoil the work of religion; the union of the two kings was disturbed, and we shall see afterwards how hurtful their misunderstanding proved to the success of this crusade.

Meanwhile the Emperor of Germany, Frederic Barbarossa, who had taken the cross last of all the princes of the West, had been the first to signalize his courage. He had begun his march in the month of April, of the same year, at the head of a numerous army; he unfortunately adopted the same road as the first crusaders had taken, through the states of the Greek emperor, who more than ever feared the princes of the West, and who had just entered into an alliance with Saladin. He was obliged to march sword in hand, and to defend himself at times by open force against the crafty wiles of a weak and perfidious enemy. When the Emperor of Germany had got through the Grecian empire, he had still to fight the enemies that Manuel Lange had raised against him. His march was but a perpetual combat: he beat the Sultan of Icone, took several cities, gained many battles, but he lost the greater part of his army: he died, soon after, by having bathed, as Alexander did formerly, in the cold waters of the Cydnus. Those of the Germans, who managed to escape, arrived in Syria, under the orders of the Duke of Suabia, son of Frederic: their arrival inspired more terror than confidence to the Chris-

tians, who were then employed about the siege of Ptolemais.

While the German army was detained, and almost entirely destroyed, in Asia Minor, the Kings of France and England were on their way to Syria by sea. After having spent the winter at Messina, Philip Augustus arrived, in the spring, with his army, under the walls of Ptolemais. Richard, who followed him closely, stopped to punish the insolence of Isaac, King of Cyprus: this Isaac had refused the sister and the future bride of the English king a shelter in the island: Richard landed his army, attacked the tyrant of Cyprus, stripped him of his states, and loaded him with golden chains, in allusion to his avarice. The English monarch celebrated in that new kingdom his marriage with Bérengère, the daughter of the king of Navarre, and a few days after he arrived in the christian camp.

The affairs of the Christians in the East had already changed face. Their army had been strengthened by many troops of crusaders, who had got the start of Richard and Philip Augustus; they had received in their camp those of Pisa, Genoa, and Venice: on the arrival of the two monarchs, the Christians were redoubled in zeal, hope and courage. They were now strong enough to undertake the greatest projects.

Saladin had foreseen that he would have formidable armies to encounter. At the time the third crusade was yet preaching in Europe, he had despatched ambassadors to the Caliph of Bagdad: the Caliph had applied to all the servants of Mahomet, and exhorted them to defend their faith. At the first sound of the sacred trumpet, the warriors of Egypt, Arabia, and all the neighbouring provinces, had run and ranged themselves under Saladin's colours; thus Ptolemais beheld under its walls all that the West and the East had most conspicuous among their warriors for courage and intrepidity. In this memorable siege, prodigies of valour were

performed on both sides. The French and the English fought, at first, together, with as much ardour as success; but that good understanding did not prevail long; two competitors appeared for the kingdom of Jerusalem; one was that Guy of Lusignan, who had been taken prisoner at Tiberiad; the other was Conrad, Marquis of Montferrat, who had defended the city of Tyre against all Saladin's forces. Philip Augustus decided in favour of Conrad, and that was enough to make Richard, who was naturally of a jealous disposition, take part with Lusignan. The whole army then found itself divided; the besieged had never more than one of the kings to fight at once. Every time that the king of France, who was like the Agamemnon of this war, ordered an assault, Richard, retiring under his tent, remained, with his English, in the fatal inaction of Achilles. Meanwhile, the most prudent among the bishops and generals succeeded in silencing the claims of the different parties, and enforcing those of oppressed religion. Richard and Philip were reconciled; the chiefs and the soldiers followed the example of the two monarchs. They no longer disputed except for the honour of mounting first the enemy's ramparts. Ptolemais no longer resisted their efforts; the city surrendered to the crusaders, after a two-years siege.

The bravest nobility of Europe perished at the siege of Ptolemais. The French had to deplore the loss of the Counts Tybalt, of Chartres, and Blois, Stephen of Sancerre, Josselin of Montmorency, Alberic Clement, the first Marshal of France mentioned in history, &c. It was in that memorable siege that the Lord of Courcy was mortally wounded. He charged one of his squires to carry his heart to the Lady of Fayel: this trait has been brought forward on the stage in France. Such an affecting passion was likely to draw tears; but the jealous barbarity of the Lord of Fayel, the dreadful situation of a woman, who eats, unknow-

ingly, her lover's heart, and expires afterwards with despair and hunger, are pictures that interest less than they revolt sensible minds.

The crusaders lost too much time before Ptolemais, and the dissensions, that had taken place respecting the claims to the throne of Jerusalem, served only to secure the possession of that kingdom to the Saracens. Philip Augustus, who was still exposed to Richard's envy, and who, in the plains of Syria, never forgot that he was King of France, abandoned an enterprise commenced under unfortunate auspices : he returned to Europe after the taking of Ptolemais. Ten thousand French, the command of whom he entrusted to the Duke of Burgundy, remained in the army of the crusaders.

A few days after the King of France's departure, an important battle took place near, Antipatride, on the borders of the Jordan. The Christians and the Saracens attacked each other, and fought with equal valour. The historians relate, that Richard and Saladin, having met in the heat of the battle, rushed sword in hand against each other : at the sight of this singular combat the two armies suddenly remained still, and left to their chiefs the honour of deciding the action ; but Saladin having been thrown from his horse, the Saracens precipitated themselves to his assistance. Saladin preserved his life, but he lost the victory : the army of the Saracens was defeated ; and, if the Christians had known how to avail themselves of their advantage, if they had marched straight to Jerusalem, the Holy City would once more have escaped the dominion of the Infidels. Richard lost several months in recovering Jaffa Cesarea, and fortifying some maritime cities ; he thus gave discord and discouragement time to introduce themselves among the Christians. The rainy season came on, and interrupted the progress of his arms.

In the spring, the christian army marched against Jerusalem. Saladin, trembling, had shut himself up in that capital, incessantly improving its fortifi-

eations ; but the errors of Richard and the discord of the crusaders soon calmed his fears, and rendered his precautions useless. When the christian army was approaching Jerusalem, the Duke of Burgundy retired abruptly with the French he had under his command. Abandoned by his companions, the English monarch derived from this campaign no other than the painful advantage of seeing the Holy City from the heights of Nicopolis. At this view, he veiled his face, and exclaimed in his grief: " They, who refuse to deliver the Holy Sepulchre of Jesus Christ, are not worthy to contemplate it."

Discord broke out again among the crusaders ; they reproached each other openly with having sold Jerusalem to the Infidels ; treasons were incessantly spoken of in the christian army ; the same thing had already happened in the first crusades ; it is not unfrequent, in unsuccessful wars, to see the chiefs mutually accuse each other, and place on their rivals the shame of their own defeats. Richard answered his accusers by feats of bravery worthy of Amadis and Rolland. He was seen, alone challenging the Saracen army, and crossing the ranks of the enemy, without a single one of Saladin's soldiers daring to attack him. On another occasion, followed by a few of his companions, he saved the town of Jaffa, the enemy having already scaled the ramparts. Another time, at the head of a small detachment, he took possession of a convoy of seven thousand camels who were going to Jerusalem. But so many exploits were lost for the christian cause ; discord and discouragement did but increase in the army of the crusaders.

Despairing, then, of ever becoming master of Jerusalem, fearing besides the ambition of his brother John, who had remained in England, apprehensive of the designs of Philip Augustus against his states since his return to Europe, Richard thought only then of quitting Palestine. He

began some negotiations with the Saracens, and no longer carried on the war but to obtain an honourable peace. The Christians and Mussulmen then attacked each other with less fury; and several times the combats were interrupted by fêtes, where Richard's and Saladin's soldiers intermixed their good wishes for a peace. The crusaders asked the Sultan to give them up Jerusalem; but the Turks also looked upon Jerusalem as a holy city; Saladin refused this condition. In another negotiation, it was proposed to give a sister of Richard in marriage to Malek Adhel, the brother of Saladin. The married pair were to have ascended the throne of Jerusalem. Saladin, out of tenderness for his brother, assented to this project; but the difference of religion rendered it impracticable. Both parties were attached to their respective faith with great fervour; some required that Richard's sister should become a Mahomedan, others that Saladin's brother should become a Christian.

Meanwhile, the negotiations having been resumed, a truce was concluded for three years, three months, and three days: they agreed that Jerusalem should be open to the devotion of the Christians, and that these last should possess all the maritime coast from Jaffa to Tyre. The principal chiefs of the two armies swore, some on the Koran, others on the Gospel, to observe the conditions of the treaty. Royal majesty, in those remote times, seemed to have something more imposing and more august than the sanctity even of an oath. The Sultan and the King of England contented themselves to give their word and to touch each other's right hand.

Thus ended the third crusade, where all Europe in arms could not obtain any other advantage than the taking of Ptolemais. The Christians afforded perhaps greater proofs of valour than in the preceding expeditions; but they found the Saracens better disciplined: these had learnt from the Christians themselves the art of fighting and beating

them. They possessed besides several advantages over the crusaders; they fought on their own territory, in their own climate; they obeyed but one master, who gave them always the same spirit, and never held up to them but the same cause to defend.

Two men acquired immortal glory in this crusade; the one by splendid victories, the other by real qualities and an unprofitable bravery; the name of Richard was for a long time the terror of the East; the Turks and Saracens, whom he had conquered, celebrated him in all their sayings and proverbs long after the crusades. Saladin became famous in his turn in the West, and history has often held him up to christian princes as a model.

A long captivity awaited the hero of the crusade on his return to Europe; tears are yet shed at the account of his misfortunes. Saladin was not more fortunate; he enjoyed his glory but one year. The people of the East celebrate the edifying manner in which he died; he equally distributed his alms to the Christians and the Mussulmen; before he expired, he ordered one of his officers to carry his winding sheet about the streets of Damascus, and to cry aloud; "This is all that the great Saladin, conqueror of the East, carries with him from all his conquests."

When the death of Saladin was known in the West, Pope Celestine III. exhorted the faithful to take arms anew for the deliverance of Palestine. This crusade, at the head of which was Frederic, Duke of Austria, was less fruitful in exploits, and more disastrous than all the former.

Palestine had always proved the grave of the Christians; those who enrolled themselves in the fifth crusade, under Pope Innocent III. undertook a conquest that offered them fewer obstacles and a richer booty. The Latins, in crossing the empire of the Greeks, had admired the splendour of the city of Constantine, had seen the weakness of its

government; they found in the perfidy of the emperor's pretences enough to declare war against them, and they took possession of Constantinople. ~~Frederic, who had become Emperor of Germany,~~ returned some years after into the Holy Land with an army; he proved no more fortunate than his predecessors. Notwithstanding the experience of Frederic, and so many other powerful Princes, the wise Louis IX. thought yet of delivering the land that contained the Holy Sepulchre; he lost his liberty at Damietta and life at Tunis, without any advantage to the cause of the faith. After the death of St. Louis, vain efforts were made to revive the ardour of the crusades; Europe was too much engaged with intestine wars; schisms broke out in the West, and Jerusalem was forgotten.

The greater part of political enterprises are only justified by success. This reason cannot be alleged in favour of the crusades; they were ill directed; and the very frenzy, that gave birth to these distant wars, turned them from the end which a prudent policy might have given them. A blind confidence in success caused the means that could ensure it to be neglected; the multitude of the crusaders brought about confusion; and their numbers, which, on their departure, seemed a pledge of victory, were almost the constant cause of their ruin. If it be true, however, that the crusades have proved fatal to human kind, it must be confessed that they have not been totally unproductive of advantages to Europe: they suspended, for a long time, the religious quarrels that were always ready to break out in the West; they contributed to maintain peace among the princes, who kept their eyes towards the East, and who often sacrificed ambitious pretensions to fly to the assistance of the kingdom of Jerusalem. Under Louis the Younger, who took part in the second crusade, France was happy and tranquil; and the reign of Philip Augustus, who headed the third, was one of the most

brilliant of the monarchy. The crusades gave feudal laws the first blow ; in securing the prerogative of the kings, they prepared the independence of the commons.

Venice, Genoa, Amalfi, and several other maritime cities of Italy, Flanders and Germany, attained, during the crusades, the highest degree of prosperity and splendour ; they monopolized the rich Levant trade ; brought to perfection the art of navigation ; and it was in their schools that those intrepid mariners were brought up, who sailed on the discovery of America, and gave a new direction and spring to the human mind.

The crusades produced yet another advantage ; they stopped the emigrations of the people of Asia, always ready to overrun the West. The Saracens were masters of the finest provinces of Spain ; they had ravaged the coast of Italy : Charlemagne had defeated them at Poitiers ; Europe was threatened on all sides by warlike and victorious nations.

The crusades obliged them to defend themselves at home ; they deferred, for above a century, the fall of the empire of the Greeks : they were not able, it is true, to preserve to the Latins the possession of Constantinople, the only bulwark against the inroads of the Turks and Saracens ; but the statutes of the order of Malta, that work of the crusades, bear witness yet to the political spirit of these holy wars. The knights swore to fight the Turks, and more than once have stopped the armies of these barbarous and savage people, who were warlike and sanguinary by their religion and policy, and who often threatened to carry their faith and government into polished Europe.

At the time of the first crusades, the eastern nations were more advanced in civilization than those of the West. The Christians brought back from Palestine many useful institutions. The Arabs were skilled in agriculture and all those arts that contribute to the happiness of life and the advantage of society. The crusades rendered Europe more

industrious, and opened to her new sources of prosperity.

The Saracens, and particularly the Greeks, were lovers of the fine arts; the productions of the mind were sought after at the court of the Soldan and that of Constantinople; some of the Latins were then enabled to find therein that charm of urbanity that was then unknown in Europe. It is particularly since the crusades, that we find among the French that mixture of piety and gallantry that formed almost the national character, and that was so happily defined by this motto: *Faithful to God and to beauty*. It is since those holy wars that we find throughout our history that loyalty, the daughter of bravery, and that inflexible honour, which resembled justice, and for a long time stood in the stead of all the tribunals of the earth. The spirit of chivalry was formed or brought to perfection by the crusades, and soon the charms of the mind were blended with the brilliancy of valour. While the knights were devoting themselves to the defence of religion and beauty, the bards were celebrating in their poems the praises of valour and love. The noble sincerity of our ancestors lost some of its bluntness; then were seen displaying themselves that flower of politeness, that generous love of glory, that chivalric heroism, which reflected afterwards so much splendour on the nation, and contributed to the ornament and glory of the age of Louis XIV.

J. MICHAUD, EDITOR.

THE SARACEN.

CHAPTER I.

AFTER a long and bloody siege, Saladin had entered Jerusalem as a conqueror. At the report that the Holy City had fallen, all the christian powers were agitated. William, Archbishop of Tyre, embarked for Europe instantly: he went to impart his grief to the Sovereign Pontiff, and implore assistance in behalf of his brethren in the East. Urban III. deathstruck at this fatal news, expired in the arms of William. Gregory VIII. who succeeded him, preached a new crusade. At his voice, and that of the pious Archbishop, travelling over Europe on foot, holding a cross, using prayers, tears, and threats, all minds grew warm, the enthusiasm of glory and religion again took possession of men's souls; the kings themselves rose, united, and swore not to lay down their arms until they had recovered that Jerusalem which cost their ancestors so much blood, where stands the tomb of a God, and whose loss seemed to them a stain, which its conquest alone could wipe off.

At the head of so many sovereigns were Richard the First and Philip Augustus; rivals in power, by the situation and extent of their states, rivals also by their age and ardour for glory. Both equally proud, haughty and intrepid, they were incensed at the least appearance of insult, and could not be brought to yield: Philip Augustus, as great and magnanimous as he was provident and wise, aspired

to more solid and brilliant victories; Richard, full of candour and sincerity, but imprudent and wild, always led away by his passions, unable to dissemble or to delay his vengeance a single day, as constant in enmity as in friendship, and hurried on by the most impetuous courage, attached, perhaps, more splendour than his rival to his name and exploits, and owed to the very excess of his qualities the universal admiration that he became the object of, and the striking misfortunes into which the snares of perfidy precipitated him afterwards.

The emperor Frederic, at the head of fifty thousand men, had just set off for Palestine, while Richard and Philip Augustus, encamped yet in the plains of Gisors, saw their armies increasing every day by the pathetic and vehement pictures that William drew of the deplorable condition of the Christians in the East. All the youths who were animated with warlike ardour, in the two kingdoms, repaired in crowds to the standards of their respective sovereigns; and, in seeing them marching at the head of their soldiers, ready to fight with courage for the cause of heaven, no one would have suffered his name to be tarnished by the infamous reproach of having forsaken the cross.

Meanwhile the two monarchs parted, having agreed to meet again at Messina. Philip embarked at Genoa; Richard returned to London, entrusted the regency to his brother John; and, while the fleet on board of which he was to be conveyed was preparing at Marseilles, Bérengère, his destined bride, had already repaired to Sicily, in order to celebrate there the nuptial bond which was to unite them in the face of the two camps.

The affianced of Richard, the bashful and tender Bérengère, was daughter of Sanchez, King of Navarre; she possessed few charms and talents, but so many virtues adorned her disposition, and so much love attached her to Richard, that she had managed to fix the heart of this inconstant monarch; he had preferred her to all her rivals,

even to the sister of Philip Augustus. In vain the proud Alix had tried to chain his affections; Richard, seduced for a moment, had, soon after, rejected the hand of a woman whom he could not esteem, and once at least, modest virtue had an opportunity to triumph in the heart of a great king over the dazzling splendour of birth and beauty.

But, before entering on his long and perilous enterprise, Richard wished to assist at the sacrifice of his youngest sister, who was on the point of pronouncing her vows. He had not seen her since her infancy; perhaps he should never see her again, and, before she took leave of the world, or in case he might perish by the hands of the Infidels, he wished to know her, embrace her, and bid her a last farewell. While his captains prepared for their departure, attended only by a few gentlemen and the Archbishop of Tyre, who wished to be present at the ceremony, he repaired to the monastery where she had been shut up from a few months after her birth, and whence she was to swear never to depart.

Brought up, for sixteen years, in the solemn shade of that convent, having never lived but with vestals pure and chaste, like herself, the thoughts of the young princess never wandered beyond her retreat, nor did her heart sigh for other joys: her days passed uniformly and unheeded by, and, in her perfect innocence, she was equally ignorant of the existence of evil and the merit of virtue.

Little vain of her birth, still less of that beauty she knew not the value of; having but a confused idea of the world, the noise of which never reached her, and which the abbess had never described to her but as a frightful assemblage of dangers and torments; Matilda blessed the Lord every day for having called her to such a holy life; and, not supposing the existence of any other happiness than that which she enjoyed in her retirement, she

looked with joy on the approach of that august ceremony which was to entomb her for ever.

Meanwhile, Richard's arrival put the whole convent in motion; the doors flew open, and the very grates fell before him. It was now, for the first time, that the looks of a man were cast around the interior of this cloister, and that the noise of arms resounded in these peaceful vaults; but what is not permitted to supreme majesty! The Archbishop of Tyre alone dared to follow the king, and Matilda hastened to receive the embraces of a brother and the blessings of William.

The abbess and the other nuns, covered with their black veils, accompanied and surrounded the young novice; they were present at her interview with Richard, and wept at the soft effusions of fraternal love: the monarch recounted his projects, and spoke of his intended voyage; the Archbishop continued also after him, and, at the name alone of Jerusalem, they saw his eyes filled with tears, as he related the loss of the holy places, the hardships the faithful had to encounter in approaching them, and the delights they were to enjoy when they had attained them; these accounts awakened in Matilda's soul new, but no less pious, thoughts: her devotion, hitherto so mild, assumed a more ardent character; and, though surprised and confused to find a desire in her heart and to foresee a change in her life, she owned, with a blush, that she wished to take the cross with her brother, and visit the Holy Land, before she drew that veil that must for ever separate her from the world.

Matilda had no trouble to obtain her request; a voyage, like that, was looked upon, in those ancient times, as an action the most agreeable to God, and as the most salutary probation for the monastic state; all the companions of the princess hastened to applaud her projects with transports, and delighted with the honour a pilgrimage so holy would reflect on their convent, already they prepared the mystic roses with which they were to crown the

young virgin on her return; on her novicial habit, of a dazzling white, the abbess herself fastened the brilliant cross which gave the seal to her projects, and placed her under the immediate protection of God; then, committing her to the care of the king, she said, "Your majesty knows not yet all the value of the pledge I entrust you with, nor what treasures of innocence and piety are contained in this young virgin's heart: may your valour defend her life, Sire!—and you, my Father," added she, turning to the Archbishop, "may your zeal watch over her soul! It is not the princess of England that I recommend you, but the future bride of the Lord: it is, without a doubt, the noblest of all titles; meanwhile, O Matilda, let it not swell your heart with too much presumption, but may a humble diffidence attend you always. Think that there is no title so august, no disposition so holy, that can shelter us from temptations. Beware of listening to those seducing voices that flatter your senses to your ruin, and may the chaste husband, to whom you are destined, render your ears so attentive to the breathings of his divine spirit, that you may not hear the vain noise the world will make around you."

While Matilda listened with profound attention to the discourse of the pious abbess, Richard waited with marks of impatience for the end of it; and scarcely was he at liberty to speak, when he swore that his sister had nothing to fear near him. "With the help of God and my sword," exclaimed he, full of a chivalric enthusiasm, "rest assured, Madam, that Matilda will be no less safe in the middle of my camp than behind the walls of this cloister." The energetic tone with which he pronounced these words, tinged the faces of the young virgins with a blush; but, stricken with the martial air which breathed in the countenance of the hero, and the noble ardour which sparkled in his eyes, none cast theirs to the ground.

Meanwhile the time of departure approached:

Matilda advanced towards the outer door of the convent; and, on the point of passing the threshold for the first time in her life, she stopped, turned round, and her timid looks seemed to inquire if her courage was not rather temerity. The abbess, seeing her terror, and the dangers of the world open before her, conceived a new alarm at all the perils which were going to surround her favourite pupil; and, in the hope of preserving her life and her innocence, she made her last sacrifice; and, giving her a small relic that she always wore about her: "This, my child," said she, "will shelter you from all dangers; if the storm surprise you; if, more terrible than the storm, the passions threaten you, press on your breast this fragment of the true cross, and it will deliver you! O, Matilda, you fancy you prepare for a heavenly festival; but, believe me, that while on earth you must suffer.

Matilda, grateful for so precious a gift, fastened it on her bosom with an ardent faith, kissed the revered hand of her from whom she received it, and, pronouncing a last farewell to her timid sisters, she left the monastery, the gates of which she could not see closed on her without shuddering; then raising her eyes, suffused with tears, towards the holy asylum which she was leaving, she could not remove them until the thickness of the woods and the distance had entirely hidden it from her sight. She then felt her heart disturbed; which emotion increased still more on discovering the extensive horizon before her: frightened, the timid virgin drew nearer to her brother and the Archbishop, asking, with anxiety, whether they had to cross so many countries before they could reach Palestine. Richard smiled at the simplicity of her inquiry. "Many days and months will elapse, perhaps, before we can reach the land you are going to seek; but what do you fear, my sister?" added he, putting his hand on the sword that shone on his side, "have I not told you that this defender would never forsake you?"—"And, do you forget,"

continued the Archbishop, pointing to Heaven, "that more powerful Defender, whose mercy is without bounds and whose presence is every where?"

I shall not describe the various emotions of Matilda during so long a voyage: the effect may be imagined which the view of the sea, the warlike songs of the soldiers, and the tumultuous cries of the sailors, must produce on the soul of a timid maid, who, till then, had only seen the arches of a temple, the peaceful gardens of a cloister, and whose ears had never been struck but by the soft accents and holy hymns of the daughters of the Lord.

It was only at Messina that she met Bérengère: from the first moment a tender sympathy attached them to each other; Matilda admired in her those chaste and modest graces which reminded her of the companions she regretted, and could the daughter of Sanchez, whose heart was all love, not have cherished the amiable sister of the monarch with whom she was going to be united?

CHAPTER II.

THE differences, which soon arose between Richard and Philip Augustus, caused, in the first instance, by the perfidies of Tancred King of Sicily, brought obstacles to the design the English monarch had formed of celebrating, at Messina, his union with Bérengère; and it was only after he had conquered Cyprus, that, master of that important island, and crowned by victory, he was able to prepare for the august festival.

Never were nuptials formed under happier auspices, nor surrounded with more magnificence and more splendour. Conqueror of Isaac, King of Cyprus, Richard reigned over the kingdom which he had just deprived him of, and consoled himself, for having so long delayed sharing his throne with Bérengère, with the pleasure of placing on her head an additional crown.

On the report of his triumph, came Guy of Lusignan, King of Jerusalem. This young and proud sovereign, whose unconquerable valour had not proved a sufficient prop to his throne, and who, driven from his states, saw Conrad, Marquis of Montferrat, striving to rob him even of the hope to recover them some day, was coming to implore the protection of Richard against the unjust claims of his rival; which had become still more necessary, as Philip Augustus had already declared himself against him on his arrival in Syria, and maintained, with all his power, the rights of Conrad, who, master of Tyre, the only place the Christians possessed yet in Syria, had caused the gates to be closed against Lusignan, and raised against him the standard of rebellion. Since his stay in Sicily, Richard fancied grounds of complaint against Philip Augustus; stung with a secret envy to-

wards a glory that balanced his own, he joyfully caught the opportunity of placing himself at the head of a party inimical to the King of France; moved, besides, with Lusignan's confidence, flattered by his application, interested by his misfortunes, he solemnly engaged himself to protect him against all his rivals; and, from that moment, bound to each other, the one by gratitude, the other by the pleasure of protecting, they became friends, and swore faith and fraternity of arms to their latest breath.

Raymond, Prince of Antioch; Bohemond, Prince of Tripoli; Rinaldo of Sidon; Humphrey of Thoron; and Leon, Prince of Armenia; had followed Lusignan to the island of Cyprus. In coming to support their king's claims before Richard, they came also to request his protection for themselves. The English monarch promised to support them all in their various claims, and not to quit Syria till he had put them again in possession of their states. In return for so eminent a service, these princes, and Lusignan himself, consented to look upon him as their paramount lord, and to pay him the duties of vassalage; but the noble Richard refused an honour which would almost have equalled the good he meant to do them; and all that he required from their gratitude was, that they should prolong their stay with him, in order that they should assist at the ceremony of his marriage, to heighten its brilliancy and pomp by their presence.

That day, for ever memorable in the annals of Cyprus, was announced, from its dawn, by the harmony of a thousand musical instruments; the sumptuous church of St. James, situated between the ports of Limisso and the ancient Amathontus, was decorated with royal magnificence; the streets were strewed with flowers and carpeted with rich stuffs; Lusignan, at the head of his tributary princes, began the march; on the thick folds of their clokes, dyed in Tyrian purple, shone a sparkling

embroidery of oriental sapphires. A little farther on, gold and steel glittered, on all sides, on the coats of arms of the English nobility; Richard followed them, with the crown on his head and the sceptre in his hand; and the daughter of Sanchez, whose heart had so long palpitated at the expectation of this happy day; the daughter of Sanchez, who was going to vow with fervour never to love any other than Richard, and to receive with transports the oath of being always loved by him; the daughter of Sanchez, in fine, almost handsome this day with her modesty and happiness, walked by the side of her illustrious lord: but, that nothing should be wanting to her satisfaction, she had begged her dear Matilda to witness it, and Richard had also required it of his sister: hence the young novice appeared at the august ceremony. Covered with her long veil, she entered the church in the train of Bérengère, and, for the first time, saw a nuptial pomp, and the joys of the world under their most seducing aspect: this oath of an eternal love, addressed to another than God, astonished her innocence; and the passionate expressions of Richard, together with the voluptuous looks of his bride, disturbed the heart of the young virgin.

Guy of Lusignan, placed by the side of the king, was the only one, of all the princes, who could approach Matilda near enough to discover a part of those charms which were hidden beneath her chaste veil: they lighted up in his soul a flame as sudden as it was violent, but the remembrance of Sybilla, his wife, and the sacred habit of Matilda, were obstacles that precluded his expressing his wishes: thus, confining in his bosom his love and grief, he hid from all eyes that deep and sweet wound that was to prove incurable.

Richard, more of a warrior than a lover, had scarcely passed a few days with his young bride, when, tormented with the thirst of glory, he prepared to embark for Palestine: but, warned by Lusignan that the seas were covered with Saracen ships, all

fitted out against him ; that the coasts of Syria, and even those of Egypt, were infested with them ; that Malek Adhel, Saladin's brother, and the most formidable warrior of Asia, often commanded them, and had sworn endless war to all the kings of Europe ; Richard would not permit Bérengère and Matilda to share his dangers : all the efforts of the enemy were to unite and turn against him ; during the passage his great heart sprang to meet them, and he felt well, that, to be entirely devoted to glory, he ought not to suffer the objects of his affection to be near him : certain, besides, that as soon as he should arrive at Ptolemais, the Infidels, exasperated at having missed their prey, would bring all their forces against the camp, and, taken up with the land-attack, leave the seas clear, he thought that the passage would then be no longer perilous, and ordered that the vessel which was to bring his wife and sister should not set sail till his own had entered the port of Ptolemais.

Matilda, accustomed to obey, submitted without reluctance to her brother's will ; but the tender Bérengère, distracted at parting with the husband she cherished, threw herself at his feet, bathed in tears, asking, as the greatest proof of love she could receive from him, the favour of sharing with him the dangers he was going to encounter : moved with her sorrow, still Richard remained inexorable in his objections ; he represented to her that her presence, and that of Matilda, in softening his heart, would weaken his courage, and, perhaps, make him shun an action which it was his duty to seek ; besides, added he, these same enemies, who are going to pursue me inveterately, will let you pass quietly, and the voyage will be dangerous for me alone. The young queen still offered to remonstrate, but Richard, surprised at her resistance, having told her in a tone somewhat stern, that he would be obeyed, she remained silent, struck with the fear of having displeased her husband, and hiding her grief in her tears.

The King of Jerusalem and the other princes of his suite embarked with Richard; there only remained with the queen, Humphrey of Thoron, the Dukes of Northumberland and Gloucester, Simon of Mountfort, the Earl of Leicester, and some French lords, among whom were the brave Adam of Turenne, great chamberlain, Enguerrand of Fienne, and Josselin of Montmorency, handsome like Rinaldo, intrepid like him, lately entered into manhood, though long a hero; by his exploits he promised his country new glory and fresh lustre to his name, which, born with the monarchy, was already more ancient than that of its kings.

Richard wished also that the Archbishop of Tyre should not quit the princesses: "They will have need, my Father," said he, looking at the queen, "that you should teach them that women should serve God by their patience and submission as we by our valour in combat." Bérengère understood but too well the meaning of these words; she looked at her husband with so much love and resignation, that the proud monarch was moved, and would, perhaps, have yielded to the wishes of so affectionate a wife, if, in becoming dearer to him by her mildness, she had not given him another motive for not exposing her to the numerous perils he was seeking.

Content with having obtained the approbation of her husband, she kept to herself the wishes that assailed and the fears that tormented her; and, while pale, with downcast eyes, not daring to shed a tear, she accompanied him to the port, Matilda, shut up in the interior of the palace, stifled her murmurs, submitted to the will of her brother and king, and addressed her prayers to the divine Son of Mary for his safety.

Sailing with a favourable gale, the king's ship soon reached the shores of Asia; but, on approaching, she was surrounded by two galleys of the enemy, carrying eight hundred men each; far from fearing

and avoiding them, he provoked the boarding himself. Their swords glittered, the blood flowed, the carnage became general. Turks and Christians, all seemed to attack, and not to defend themselves. However, after a long and severe conflict, during which Richard was valiantly assisted by Lusignan, he succeeded in sinking one of the galleys and taking possession of the other. The next day, the 8th of June, he cast anchor at Ptolemais, preceded by victory and loaded with the enemy's spoils: all the crusaders received him with enthusiastic acclamations, and celebrated his arrival and triumph by lighting up fires throughout the camp.

Meanwhile, Lusignan heard, that, during his absence, death had snatched away Sybilla, his wife; this loss, which favoured the secret passion he had conceived at Cyprus, threatened to prove fatal to his power. Sybilla, daughter of Baldwin, heiress of the kingdom of Jerusalem, had given him that crown with her hand; but, on her death, her rights devolved to Isabella, her youngest sister, wife of the Marquis of Montferrat, and thus gave an additional weight to the claims of this last. Lusignan, supported by Richard, maintained that the title and character of a king were indelible, and that no one had a right to deprive him of them: he saw the Pisans, the Flemish, and the Knights of St. John, come over to his side; but the Templars, the Genoese, and the Germans, at whose head Philip Augustus placed himself, supported the Marquis of Montferrat's rights; the marquis, shut up in Tyre, proud yet to command a city where Lusignan no longer possessed any thing, insulted from the height of his proud ramparts his distressed rival; and, while they both fomented in the camps of the crusaders discord and hatred, in disputing the possession of a crown which they had suffered the Infidels to rob them of, Saladin was fixing it on his head in strengthening daily the fortifica-

tions of Jerusalem against the future attacks of the Christians.

Richard had established his quarters near the sea-shore, in order to watch the least movements of the besieged, and to create obstacles to their receiving any assistance either by sea or land. To the east of the city, opposite the strongest of the towers, called the Accursed Tower, the banners of Philip Augustus were waving; and, in the middle of the camp, the proud eagles of the German empire were displayed. The three nations were distinguished by the colour of the cross that shone on their standards: red in the empire of the Lilies, white among the Germans, and green in the camp of the English. Amidst these different courts, that of England strove to eclipse all the others by its splendour and magnificence; and, whilst Richard was surrounding himself with pomp and sumptuousness, Philip Augustus, more plain and more modest, wished to derive his splendour only from the high and valiant noblemen who attended him: they were the Counts of Dreux and of Chartres, Everard and Andrew of Brienne, the Joinvilles, the Chatillon, the Coucy; names for ever dear in France, and of which no circumstances can ever obliterate the remembrance or glory.

Meanwhile, Richard loudly demanded that they should press the siege of Ptolemais, the surrender of which was to open the road to the Holy City; but the proud Conrad would not stir out of his walls, nor lend his assistance to the crusaders, unless he was acknowledged King of Jerusalem; and Philip Augustus, true to the alliance he had contracted with him, displeased besides with the influence Richard wished to obtain in the camp, and envious perhaps of the laurels he had gathered in the Isle of Cyprus, remained inactive, or sought only partial actions with the Infidels, carefully avoiding a general assault. Richard, too faithful and too honourable to abandon his brother in arms, and at the same time too imperious and haughty

to enter into an arrangement with his rival, far from seeking to bring back Philip Augustus by arguments, aggravated him by invectives, and thus increased more and more the division that reigned in the camp. Twenty times the opposite parties were on the point of coming to blows, and twenty times they shuddered at lifting up against Christians the sword that they had just girt on for their defence. While confusion was creeping among the councils, and the chiefs were giving way to intemperance of language, and loading each other with insults, the soldiers, who had come into Palestine only to deliver the Holy Land, and not to set up a king of Jerusalem, broke out into loud murmurs at these intestine dissensions, which chained the ardour of their courage; and more than once they were seen uniting to ravage the lands of the Mussulmen, and to carry the sword and the flame to the very tents of Saladin.

But these fatal disturbances, so hurtful to the success of the christian arms, were not the only sorrows which Richard had to encounter. His first care, on his arrival in Palestine, had been to send the queen an order to come and join him with his sister: he was well convinced of the eagerness with which she would obey him, but still she did not arrive; every day he went to the shore to try if he could not perceive the vessel he was expecting, but still he went in vain. Lusignan never quitted him; Lusignan heard from his friend his fears and anxieties, and partook of them the more sensibly, as, since the death of Sybilla, his passion had assumed a new empire by the hopes he had ventured to encourage: he had just recovered his liberty. Matilda had not yet lost her own, and already he depended enough on Richard's friendship to flatter himself he should obtain his interest with his sister. It was, therefore, from that friendship alone he could expect to recover his kingdom and indulge his love, and of course neglected no means to improve it. Richard was not insensible to the pleasure of being loved, and Lusignan show-

ed him an attachment without bounds; but the proud Richard wanted to be loved for himself alone, and Lusignan, on discovering to him the wishes of his heart, had had the artifice of persuading him that, in this alliance, he courted less the charms of his sister than the means of drawing closer the friendship that united him to the brother. Richard, open-hearted, sincere, easy to deceive because he was incapable himself of deceiving others, Richard believed him, and felt his regard increase, from that which Lusignan showed him, so much, that he now could no longer act without him. They slept under the same tent, had but one table; together they went to fight the Infidels, and the booty they brought back was always faithfully divided between them. In the tournaments they wore the same colours, on their shields the same device; and, when they had exerted themselves in the day, either in handling the lance in the lists, or in drawing the sword against the Infidels, they returned in the evening, by common accord, to walk on the sea side: there they contemplated the immense extent of the water and of the horizon with bitter sighs; they hung their heads; and, filled with their sorrowful thoughts, they preserved a deep silence. If a storm raised foaming billows, they fancied they saw them open their abysses to swallow up for ever that vessel which carried all they held dear in the world. But, if the sea were calm, and the wind favourable, then the nature of their fears changed, though their anxiety was not allayed; and, if it were no longer from the vast ocean, it was from the Infidels, that the king demanded his wife and his sister.

CHAPTER III.

EVER since the king's departure, the sorrowful Bérengère had never ceased praying and shedding tears. She incessantly pictured to herself this husband, so dear, a prey to the fury of the Mussulmen: in her dreams she saw him at times loaded with chains, at times covered with wounds; and during the day her alarmed fancy confirmed to her all those doleful presages; for, when the heart is filled with love, it is also filled with apprehension. In vain did the Archbishop of Tyre strive to calm this lively sorrow, in representing it as offensive to the Divinity: the young queen wept then her fault, without being able to withhold her tears for a husband's absence. But, what neither the Archbishop's exhortations nor the example of Matilda had been able to accomplish, was in an instant produced by the arrival of a vessel that Richard had sent to her. She scarcely heard the account of his victory, she only rejoiced that he was in safety, and that she should see him again ere long; and, her tears drying up suddenly, she passed from an excess of sorrow to the height of joy.

Matilda, on hearing she was at last on the point of attaining the purpose of her voyage, returned thanks to God, with a heart as submissive as when she had resigned herself to the delay prescribed by her brother: too pious to give up her soul to any extremes of joy or sorrow, she looked on the violent despair Bérengère had indulged in, on parting with the king, as a sin; and, when this disconsolate bride gave vent, in her presence, to the lamentations of her tenderness and her regrets, the chaste virgin, who, till then was ignorant there were passions, astonished at a language so

new, grew alarmed on hearing it, and thought herself guilty in lending an ear to the accents of a pure and legitimate love: with a blush she entrusted her scruples to the Archbishop of Tyre; and the venerable William, who, in the secrets of confession, had never yet received so modest an avowal, thought he saw, in the beauty who thus humbled herself before him, celestial Eve at the first dawning of the world, and he resolved never to abandon the guidance of a conscience, the extreme delicacy of which announced to the world one saint more.

Though gallantry was looked upon then as a duty and as a kind of glory, though Bérengère had in her suite many of the most distinguished and most noble knights of the courts of France and England, none, however, were bold enough to offer their homage to young Matilda: notwithstanding the brightness of her charms, her seducing graces, and the languor of her large blue eyes, there was throughout the whole of her person a sort of purity which awed desire and checked it in its birth; and the religious habit, that hid a frame formed by love, sheltered her from tender attempts still less than the respect her modesty inspired. She showed herself seldom to the eyes of men, but, at the sight of the virgin, with downcast eyes, her hands crossed on her bosom, half concealed by a long linen veil, and all beauteous in her primitive innocence, every one, struck with a religious admiration, retired a few paces, as unworthy to approach her. The queen loved Matilda too dearly not to grieve at the vows she was going to pronounce: it was neither the solitude, nor the obscurity of the retreat in which she was to be buried, that seemed a misfortune to her, but it was to live there without love: if she could easily understand how any one could disdain a crown, she could not comprehend how it was possible to renounce a husband, and, more than once, she could not forbear telling her young sister her thoughts;

but, when she was endeavouring to tempt her ambition, and dazzle her with the splendour of a throne, recounting to her the number of sceptres that so many kings would esteem themselves happy to surrender to her beauty; when she, yet oftener, tried to move her heart by describing the sweets of a conjugal union; Matilda turned aside blushing at the view of such pictures, not from a fear that they would tempt her, but from the shame of beholding them: then Bérengère, careful not to alarm such exquisite delicacy, spoke only of those pure and chaste sentiments which alone have a right to move a virgin's heart—the regrets of the best of brothers—the grief of a mother disconsolate at living separate from her dearest child—the friendship that united them both, the privation of which would leave a void in her heart, which even the love of Richard could not entirely fill up. To these pathetic pictures the queen added the description of fêtes, where magnificence and gallantry were combined together, and at which it was difficult that the Princess Matilda should not sometimes assist; but in vain did the age display its splendid allurements, in vain did nature urge her sentiments: modest and courageous, the young virgin disdained all earthly joys, and traversed the world, thinking on heaven alone.

After some days, of a fortunate, though slow, navigation, the ship came in sight of the Asiatic coasts; and already they perceived the port of Ptolemais as a point in the horizon, when the wind, rising suddenly with violence, rendered all the mariners' efforts useless; the pilot himself abandoned his rudder to the fury of the waves; and, in less than six-and-thirty hours, the violence of the storm had driven the vessel on the sand-banks that extend near Damietta; there she was perceived by an enemy's ship, which, seeing the distress of the Christians, fancied she would prove an easy conquest; but subjects who had their queen to defend, and knights who fought for religion and

beauty, were not to surrender without the loss of their lives. At the head of the warriors, the youngest and most valiant of all, Josselin of Montmorency, sword in hand, resisted with such intrepidity, that already the Infidels were giving way, when a vessel, coming out of the port of Damietta, made the fortune of the fight change. At the sight of the yellow and black flag she carried, the Saracens exclaimed with one common voice, Malek Adhel! Malek Adhel! and, this name restoring their almost broken courage, they renewed the fight with fresh ardour. While Josselin, fired with heroic valour, sprang among the enemy, pressed, drove, threatened, and hurled them into the sea; struck down others, heaped up the victims, made rivers of blood flow, and formed around himself a rampart of the broken arms and dead bodies of the Infidels, the Archbishop of Tyre, who was near the princesses, having caught the dreadful sound of Malek Adhel's name, fell on his knees, exclaiming, "Humble yourselves with me, for our hour is come! nothing can resist Malek Adhel!" The princess obeyed, and prostrated herself; but the queen, with a rending voice, and melting into tears, cried out: "O, my Father! who is then this formidable and horrible Saracen, whose valour is to snatch me from my husband?"—"Malek Adhel is the brother of Saladin: of all the enemies of the Christians he is the most terrible: I have seen him, fire and sword in his hand, reducing our villages and our fields to ashes; but for him, Jerusalem had never fallen, Saladin had never displayed his colours on the Temple of Christ." Scarcely had the Archbishop pronounced these words, when a confused noise of arms and clinking of chains told them their unhappy fate was accomplished; he then instantly hurried to join his brethren in misfortune, hoping to allay their griefs by his prayers. For a long time he had known Malek Adhel, and was not ignorant of the ascendancy his high wisdom gave him over the soul of this warrior. While

he implored him, the two unhappy princesses retired into the darkest place in the ship, tremblingly waiting for the chains they were to be loaded with. The queen, in despair at an event that was to part her from her husband, exhaled her sorrow in tears and sobs, calling on the brave Richard to fly to her assistance. Matilda, more resigned, though shuddering on seeing herself in the power of the enemies of her faith, pressed to her bosom the relic the abbess gave her, and kneeling before God, implored that deliverance she expected from him alone. Suddenly now the door of the place where they were enclosed burst with a crash; several men rushed in. At the sight of the Turkish habit, Matilda turned aside with horror, again invoking her holy relic. The chief of the victors approached the queen, with a proud but respectful air, and said to her, "calm your terror, Madam, you are no slave; you will be treated, in my palace, with all the regard and honours due to your high birth; I pledge myself, in the name of the holy Prophet, that none of your people shall wear chains: I only demand their word that they will not quit Damietta, nor try to join the christian camp, before Saladin, my brother, acquainted with your arrival in his states, shall have treated with the King of England for the price he sets on your ransom."

Bérenghère joyfully accepted such generous conditions, which afforded her the hope of being soon restored to her husband; moved, besides, with the noble and polite manners of the Arabian Prince, she answered with gratitude, promised what he had required, and prepared to quit the vessel, to repair to the palace of her new master; but first she said, pointing to Matilda—"My Lord, this young virgin is Richard's sister: do not part us; the comfort of weeping together is the only one we have left, and so generous a victor will not deprive us of it." Malek Adhel then perceived the princess, and approached to offer her his hand;

but Matilda, whose terror the abhorred name of Saladin had just doubly augmented, shrank back with fear, to avoid the brother of the great enemy of the Lord; and, wrapping herself up in her veil that she might not see him, she answered, tremulously and without raising her eyes from the ground, that she would follow the queen.

On coming on the deck, Malek Adhel cast an inquisitive glance at his two illustrious prisoners, whose features had, till then, been concealed by the obscurity; an idolizing admirer of beauty, the Queen of England's person did not long fix his looks; he turned them aside on the princess, who had just raised her veil to step down into the boat. The mixture of softness and majesty scattered all over her person, the whiteness of her fine ingenuous forehead, the modest blush of her cheeks, her timid looks cast towards the ground, her habit, the emblem of chastity; in fine, this kind of beauty, unknown in the climate which Malek Adhel inhabited, astonished and struck him; he remained confounded, unable to define his feelings: hitherto the despotic lover of the most celebrated beauties of Asia, who had all equally subdued his senses, his heart had never been moved; this was the first time the proud Arab trembled before a woman; and, without raising her eyes, a christian virgin had just laid in chains the brother of the sovereign of Syria, Egypt, and the three Arabias!

It was much for a Turkish conqueror to be polite towards a sex that Mahomet had destined for slavery. Malek Adhel, a stranger to the faith of Europe, could not partake of the religious veneration that Matilda's habit inspired Christians with; and, since he had dared to love her, he dared to tell her so; therefore, entrusting one of his officers with the care of conducting the queen, he ran to the princess, took her up in his arms, carried her into the boat, sat down by her, and offered to press one of her hands; but the young virgin, frightened at the Mussulman's boldness, threw herself back

with as much terror as if an abyss had gaped before her; at this moment her eyes perceived those of Malek Adhel, and surprise fixed her motionless.

Until this day she had figured to herself a Saracen as the most hideous of all creatures, and similar in every respect to the terrific picture drawn of Satan in the Scriptures: instead of a demon, she beheld the most majestic countenance, a proud and martial look, an eye where magnanimity of soul shone conspicuous. Astonished, confounded, ignorant if some infernal delusion had not taken possession of her senses, she ran and threw herself at the feet of the Archbishop of Tyre, who just approached, and hiding her head in his robes, she exclaimed—"O my Father, my Father!"..... The Archbishop knew the extreme devotion of Matilda, and attributed what she experienced to the humiliation of having been made the prize of an Infidel, and the grief of finding herself his dependent; he raised and encouraged her, and, while with one hand he supported her, he raised the other to his forehead, which he bent before Malek Adhel, saying to him—"My Lord, this young person, whom you see before you, pale and trembling, belongs no longer to the world: placed from her birth at the side of Richard's throne, she has descended from it, to consecrate herself to God by a vow of eternal chastity: the approach of a man she holds a stain to her, and, till this day, no christian knight has ever ventured to behold the virgin of the Lord with the eye of profaneness; permit, then, O noble Malek Adhel, that, confined in the interior of your palace, out of the reach of all eyes, faithful to *her* law, she may remain alone and concealed till the instant marked out for her deliverance by Heaven, the great Richard and the illustrious Saladin." In finishing these words, he bowed with increased respect, and waited for Malek Adhel's answer. The Turk gazed a long time on the Princess, whose confusion but heightened her beauty: such

were his glances, that she was forced to hide her embarrassment and shame in the queen's bosom: still he remained in silence, hesitated, nor knew on what to resolve; at last, turning towards the Archbishop, he said: "Pontiff of Christ, your words seem to me so strange, that to believe them, I must needs have them confirmed by the Princess herself." Then, advancing some paces towards her, he added: "Can it be true, madam, that your engagements be such as they have just been described, and that you have doomed yourself voluntarily to bury in eternal obscurity, those charms that astonish and intoxicate the soul?" She interrupted the Prince, and, without looking at him, raising her eyes to heaven, she said: "O that I were yet in my cloister, and had never seen the features, nor heard the voice of a Saracen! Almighty God, you best know if all the wishes of my heart are not for ever to live far from the enemies of your name!"—"You see, illustrious Malek Adhel, that I do not impose on you," said the Archbishop. "Yes, my Father," replied the Prince, proudly, "I perceive the effects of that fanatic religion which you name the *most holy*, while you accuse our own of being 'impious and cruel; yet, cruel as it is, it never commanded our warriors to go and ravage your country, nor young and heavenly beauties to quit the world and its joys, to go and bury themselves alive in a tomb: meanwhile, the Princess is free; she shall live in my palace conformably to her will, and I will learn to respect even her absurd engagements."

In saying these words, Malek Adhel left them, and, having divided the crew of the christian vessel on board several sloops, he returned into the ship which had brought him, and preceded his prisoners to Damietta.

The princesses, on landing at the port, found two palanquins waiting for them; a horse was offered to the Archbishop, the rest of the prisoners followed on foot, except the brave Montmorency,

who, having yielded to numbers only during the action, was covered with glorious wounds, and, pale and inanimate, was put on a litter, and carried almost lifeless to the palace.

During the way, Matilda, left to herself, was reviewing in her mind all the fatal events that day had produced; she shuddered at the recollection of the Infidel's temerity; but, at the same time, she wondered at not feeling a more invincible horror against him. "How is it," said she to herself, "that I did not perceive in him any signs of the evil spirit to whom he is abandoned? Without doubt the disturbance, into which his impious discourse has thrown my mind, must have been the cause." In musing thus, the beautiful Princess experienced a kind of secret curiosity to see the young Arab again, in order to discover that distinguishing sign which the Lord must have stamped on the reprobate.

Malek Adhel inhabited at Damietta the ancient palace of the Fatimite Caliphs; there every thing breathed the splendour and magnificence of its former possessors, there the foot stepped on marble, there the eye saw nothing but columns of granite and jasper; and still the elegance of the outside was short of that of the interior. Apartments without number, and immense gardens, were occupied by the seraglio; eunuchs watched at the secret doors, and guards, in costly dresses, at the outer gates; but the Prince had destined another palace for the residence of the Queen and the Christians: though a stranger to the manners of Europe, he still knew enough of their delicacy, to judge that a queen would blush to live with slaves, and that the abode of voluptuousness must prove detestable to the Archbishop; it was therefore to a separate palace that he caused the Queen and her attendants to be conducted. He ordered that none but Christians should wait on her; he allowed the prelate to celebrate the mysteries of

his worship, and even consented that the lords and knights, who formed Bérengère's court, should be introduced into her apartments at certain hours of the day. Solitary and extensive gardens surrounded this palace: though contiguous to those of the seraglio, they were separated from them by high walls, and had no sort of communication with them.

The eastern luxury that pervaded this abode astonished the Queen, and offended the humble novice: rich Persia carpets were spread under their feet, odoriferous incense and myrrh burnt on all sides, and, in a large jasper hall, piles of cushions, richly embroidered, surrounded a basin, wherein four Cupids of porphyry poured out of rich vases streams of clear and lucid water. Gauze curtains and blinds, admitting but a faint light, permitted the eye to distinguish through them, in the gardens, orange and rose trees twining their flexible branches with the jasmin and the vine before the windows.

The richest of these apartments was intended for the Queen; Matilda selected the plainest, and, within these walls, covered with marble and gilding, she regretted her obscure and narrow cell. The Archbishop, deeply grieved at the detention of the Queen and the Christians, detested the more the luxury that surrounded him, in proportion as his heart was filled with bitterness; he shut himself up in the most retired chamber of the palace, a coarse bed was the only piece of furniture, a cross the only ornament he condescended to accept; there he prayed night and day for the deliverance of his brethren, and quitted his retirement only to go and impart to them assistance and consolation.

As soon as the Princesses had arrived in their apartments, Malek Adhel sent them baskets filled with the most exquisite kinds of fruit, and sherbets of every sort: but, joining respect with generosity, he did not appear before them. He even

sent to acquaint them, that no Mussulman should enter their palace without their consent, and that himself would not venture to appear before them until he had some satisfactory news to impart to them.

During the sad night that followed this mournful day, the Princesses sought in vain that sleep, which the remembrance of their misfortunes interrupted incessantly. Bérengère, thinking only of her husband, bathed with tears her lonesome couch, and could address God only in the passionate accents of her distracted love: Matilda, kneeling before the Sovereign Judge, offered up to him her tears and prayers; and, endeavouring to resign her soul to the severe affliction he had sent her, she said: "O, infinite Greatness, I will break my heart rather than murmur against thy decrees; nor shall the cup of clay rise against the hand that formed it. Happy yet that thou hast given me thy law for my support, in order that it may soften the bitterness of evil days, and prevent my being overcome with anguish in my trials."

The next day the princesses met in a solitary closet, of which they resolved to make their oratory; the pale visage of Matilda exhibited the signs of a calm and resigned grief, such as piety approves of and allows; while the Queen carried in her distracted countenance the image of the profound desolation that reigned in her soul.— At that moment the Archbishop entered; he had interrupted his prayers for the sake of performing a more important duty still, that of consoling the afflicted—a worthy and noble prerogative of his office that his charity never suffered him to neglect; but the Queen, overcome by her sorrow, was unable yet to hear him; and, though she durst not own it, she felt in her heart that her wound would not stop bleeding until the day when she should be restored to her lord: meanwhile, in order to be able to see a term to her troubles, she interrogated the prelate, and requested he would make

her acquainted with the disposition of Saladin, and the hopes she might build on Malek Adhel's protection. "My Father," said she, "you, born in Asia, Patriarch of Tyre for these last thirty years, the counsellor, the friend, of the kings of Jerusalem, who have many times been entrusted by them with embassies to the Soldan, you must know, better than any person, the court, the customs, the characters, of our enemies, and be better able to point out by what means the favour, on which my life depends, may be obtained."

"Alas!" replied the Archbishop, "it is but too true that I have seen the birth and the progress of this power of Saladin, which has overturned the throne of Jerusalem, and threatens now all Asia; I may, without a doubt, be able to inform you by what road he has attained this height of glory where he now sits. I know his court, his power, and his intrigues; I know what virtues distinguish him and what vices he is charged with; I know well too the great ascendancy of Malek Adhel over his mind, and all the advantages I might have derived therefrom, in behalf of the Christians, if they had suffered me alone to treat with this Prince, the most noble and generous of all princes. Alas! instead of destroying one another by intestine wars, if our chiefs, our Christians of the East, would have listened to my counsels, and Amaury and Lusignan had entrusted themselves to my experience, believe me, the Holy Land would not now be reduced to the deplorable condition we are doomed to witness.

Having said these words, the Archbishop sighed bitterly and remained silent. After a long pause, he resumed, and began his recital, while the Queen and Matilda, their eyes fixed on him, were listening with the most profound attention.

CHAPTER IV.

“IT was at Damascus, in the court of the Atabek Nouredin, that Saladin and Malek Adhel were brought up, under the eyes of their father Ayoub. Ayoub was far from foreseeing or wishing the future greatness of his house: faithful to his sovereign, who loved and honoured him, at times his sword was employed in gaining him new states, or, retired in his government of Damascus, he was bringing up for him, in the person of his two sons, two servants as faithful, as devoted to his interests, as he had always been himself.

“Saladin did not announce in his infancy what he was one day to be: an indolent temper and peaceable virtues were the only marks observed in his character, while Malek Adhel, full of warlike ardour, seemed as he grew up to thirst after combats. Saladin, grave, cold, austere, reflected much, spoke little, shunned all pleasures, disdained love, and saw with pain the moment arrive when his age must oblige him to take arms. Malek Adhel, impetuous, intrepid, open-hearted, even to indiscretion, giving himself up immoderately to all the voluptuous pleasures of youth, obtained by his entreaties leave to shed his blood for his country, before the age when the law of Mussulmen allows it.

“It was thus that the genius of Saladin, which was formed only to command, remained inactive as long as he was obliged to obey, while Malek Adhel evinced early proofs of what he was to be all his life—an intrepid warrior, sincere friend, and devoted servant. But, much as the dispositions of these two brothers were opposite, as much also were their hearts united: they never parted without regret, nor met again without joy. This friend-

ship, cemented by the same respect for the laws of Mahomet, by an irreconcilable hatred of the Christians, by mutual services, and above all, by time; this deep and lively friendship, which would be the object of our admiration, had it not been so fatal to us in its effects, has never belied itself to this day, and even seems with time to acquire new strength.

“In Egypt they made their first campaigns, under the command of their uncle Shirkouh, who had been sent, by the Atabek Nouredin, to drive away the Fatimite Caliph, who reigned at Cairo, and substitute in his authority that of the Caliph of Bagdad. Shirkouh penetrated with ease into an ill-protected and ill-defended country, the indolent sovereign of which had abandoned the government to subordinate tyrants. Meanwhile, at the approach of the general of Nouredin, Ledin Allah awoke from his lethargy; but, having no means to repel so formidable an enemy, he lavished his treasures to bribe him, and offered him, together with half of his riches, the place of Grand Vizier, which, by the extent of its authority, was above that of the Caliph himself.

“Shirkouh was dazzled by the magnificence of these promises, and, his ambition prevailing over his fidelity, he engaged to maintain the rights of Ledin Allah, and to abandon his former masters. At this intelligence, the soul of Malek Adhel grew indignant; he ventured to reproach his uncle with the treacherous action he was going to commit: offended at such audacity, Shirkouh would have punished him, without doubt, had not Saladin interceded in behalf of his brother, and prevailed on him to accompany their uncle the next day to the audience of the Caliph.

“The brilliant pomp of that court astonished the sons of Ayoub, accustomed to the simplicity of that of Nouredin; but they saw it with very different eyes; while Shirkouh's perfidy fired the proud and generous heart of Malek Adhel

with indignation, Saladin felt rising in his own certain movements of ambition until then unknown to him; not that he envied Shirkouh his greatness; the second place of an empire was not enough to draw him from his indifference; but he felt, at the same time, that the hope of seeing none above him in power might make of him another man.*

"These sentiments soon began to display themselves; it only required opportunity to determine Saladin; it offered itself: Shirkouh died, and Ledin Allah, finding himself without any defender, and hoping to acquire one in the eldest of Ayoub's sons, lost no time in offering him the place of his uncle. The ambitious Saladin, who was aspiring at another, feigned however to content himself with that, and excused himself with Malek Adhel for having accepted it, in assuring him, that his intention was to make use of it only to farther the views and conform himself to the orders of the Atabek, their master. Malek Adhel believed him; but, on his leaving Cairo, to fight the Christians, he heard that Ledin Allah was no more, that Saladin had ascended his throne, and ruled with power supreme: he could not think that his brother would thus have betrayed the allegiance he owed to Nouredin; and particularly that he would have deceived him thus. He quitted the army amidst his victories, ran to Cairo, and appeared before Saladin: with tears in his eyes, he painted to him, in strong colours, the shame such a usurpation would cast on their family, the despair of their old father, Ayoub; he reminded him, that it was to the master he was betraying that he owed the very greatness he had attained.—Saladin had not forgotten the Atabek's favours; he revered his father's gray hairs, and loved Malek Adhel more than brother ever loved brother; yet, im-

* All these particulars respecting the character of Saladin are true, and faithfully transcribed from the history of his life.

moveable on his throne, conscious that was the place fate had assigned to him, his brother's entreaties could not make him give it up, and Malek Adhel, unwilling either to fight against him, to defend him against Nouredin, or remain an idle spectator of the war, turned his arms against the Christians, and made them tremble in the very walls of Jerusalem.

"Thus," continued the Archbishop, "Malek Adhel, by refusing to take part in the great quarrel between Saladin and the Atabek, made us the victims of his friendship for his brother, and his fidelity to his sovereign. I shall not describe to you the horrid ravages his arms have committed in the Holy Land. None of our cities, none of our armies, have been able to withstand this warrior, too aptly surnamed the *Lion of Combats* and the *Thunder of War*. But, Ramah and Tiberiad levelled with the ground, Tripoli and Bethlehem changed into a heap of stones, Ptolemais conquered, and Jerusalem at last lost to Christendom, speak louder than my words, and more forcibly than the tears I cannot help shedding at the recollection of such misfortunes."

The Archbishop interrupted, stopped himself for the second time, at this period, to give free course to his tears. Matilda mixed her own with them, and would undoubtedly have hated the dire author of so many calamities, if Heaven had given her a heart capable to feel such a sentiment. "My Father," said she, with a timid voice, "there are, in this account, things that confound my understanding: how do you allow noble and generous sentiments to that prince who has overturned the Holy City? Can it be, that the Infidels possess any virtues?" "For the misfortune of the world, and the faith, they do, my daughter," replied the prelate; "you will meet, in many Saracens, and particularly in Malek Adhel, sincerity, disinterestedness, and nobleness of soul; but all these virtues are like a smooth bark, hiding within a source of corruption, similar

to those fruits we read of in the Scriptures, that charm the eye by their beauty, and leave in the mouth a bitter and poisonous substance." Matilda, at these words, raised her eyes to Heaven, as if to recommend these wretched Mussulmen to divine mercy: and the Queen exclaimed—"But, my Father, tell us how Malek Adhel, who left Egypt, not to favour the usurpation of his brother, happens to be now governor of Damietta?" "This is what remains for me to tell you," replied the Archbishop; "but your majesty will allow me to delay this information until another day: for at this moment the recollection of my brethren's sufferings has made my wounds bleed afresh. Alas! who will heal them? The crown is fallen from our head; our days are accomplished; our end is come; and all the splendour of the daughter of Sion is tarnished. O almighty Judge! cast a look on our affliction, see if ever grief equalled our grief, and do not close thine ear to our cries, that we may not expire in distress."

During the following days, the Archbishop could only meet the Princesses at the hour of prayers; much of his time was taken up by Malek Adhel, who inquired about the state of Europe, and the respective characters of its kings: he consecrated the remainder of his day to visit the wounded, and console the dying; he stopped most by Montmorency's bedside; but it was less to strengthen than to admire his courage; for this hero was resigned to his God with such fervour, that he would have beheld the approach of death without even regretting glory; meanwhile he was restored to that glory for which he was born. His wounds closed, and Malek Adhel, hearing he was out of danger, in consequence of the care he had caused to be bestowed upon him, Malek Adhel, noble and generous, did not think he had preserved the life of an enemy, but that he had saved a hero.

When at last the Archbishop was free to return

to the Queen, she entreated him to resume the history of Saladin's conquests. They met with Matilda in the oratory, and the Prelate continued thus:

“ While Malek Adhel was destroying our cities and our fields, Nouredin was preparing to chastise his faithless Emir; he had just collected a numerous army, and was advancing by forced marches towards Egypt, when death struck him, and thus destroyed the only power that could set bounds to Saladin's ambition: the last, as a wise politician, hastened to marry the widow of the Atabek, and, this marriage making his usurpation partly legitimate, Malek Adhel hesitated no longer to range himself on his brother's side, and thenceforth, supported by that invincible arm, the new Sultan's throne, bade defiance to all the united powers of the East.

“ The two brothers celebrated their reconciliation by new conquests. Mouhoul, Damascus, Aleppo, fell under their blows: Jerusalem alone resisted still; but the intestine wars, that raged there, made the Christians tremble for the fate that awaited her.

“ Amaury was no more; the unfortunate Baldwin V. had not survived him long, and Sybilla, his eldest sister, heiress of the kingdom of Jerusalem, had caused Lusignan, her husband, to be crowned king; but the rights of this last were not universally acknowledged. Several princes, his tributaries, refused to swear allegiance to him, and Conrad, Marquis of Montferrat, disputed his claims to the throne; this rival, supported by Raymond, Count of Tripoli, was a formidable enemy, and perhaps he would have prevailed, had he not indisposed all men's minds by his harsh, haughty, and inflexible disposition; while that of Lusignan, hiding as boundless an ambition under a popular and affable carriage, acquired many more partisans: besides, deep in his projects and constant in his undertakings, impetuous in his wishes, but still master

of his sentiments ; artful, perfidious perhaps, never stopping to consider if a determination was unjust, but only if it was practicable ; and, withal, having had the artifice to persuade that his own interests were held of no importance by him, compared with those of the state ; he had obtained great advantages over a rival, who had dared to threaten the Christians he would abandon their cause to join that of Saladin, if they did not oblige Lusignan to resign him the crown.

“ It was in these circumstances that the King of Jerusalem summoned me one day to his council, and said to me : ‘ My Father, if we were still in the times of the first crusade, in those happy times when the Christians, obeying only one chief, sacrificing with joy their private advantage to the public good, were worthy of the heavenly cause they were called upon to defend, notwithstanding the valour and the numbers of our enemies, I should not fear them, nor should I see myself reduced to the humiliating necessity of suing for peace ; but, my Father, since the wealth of the East has corrupted the Christians, since they have preferred gold, perfumes, and the pleasures of this climate, to that poverty, that austerity of manners, which formerly distinguished the avengers of the Son of Mary ; since, in short, Palestine has successively given birth to princes of Sidon, Marquises of Tyre, Counts of Joppa, Barons of Ramla, and so many other lords, who have endeavoured to become independent of the King of Jerusalem, the empire, in dividing thus its forces, has lost them irrecoverably ; and, unless we obtain from Saladin a truce, which will afford us time to send for and receive assistance from Europe, I see, with terror, the throne of Godfrey of Bouillon ready to crumble into dust, and the tomb of Christ, purchased with so much blood and so many toils, falling for ever under the power of our impious oppressors : in this distressing situation, it is to your experience, knowledge, and wisdom, O my Father, that I have

recourse. Revered by the Christians, esteemed even by our enemies, you are the only man who can support our cause with success: go, then, my Father, repair to the court of Saladin, speak to him; speak also to Malek Adhel, he possesses great ascendancy over the mind of his brother; and, though he has done us more harm than any body, if I am to believe what fame publishes to his praise, he will sympathize with our misfortunes better than others: with respect to the conditions of the truce, my Father, I rest upon you entirely; for I know too well how dear the glory of the Christians is to you to fear seeing it tarnished in your hands.'

" In consenting to take upon myself the care of this honourable and difficult mission, I adopted the cause of Lusignan in the eyes of Christendom; but, though I did not esteem his character, it appeared to me more likely than that of Conrad to bring back peace and harmony into the empire; besides, his claims were very fair; they were sacred, since he had received the oath of all his subjects; honour, religion, made it a duty for me to acknowledge him as my sovereign; consequently, I did not hesitate to repair, according to his orders, to the court of Damascus, where Saladin then resided.

" I may venture to say, that no ambassador ever experienced a more distinguished reception than I did at the court of Damascus: the very day of my arrival, I was admitted to an audience by the Sultan; he received me in his tent whence pomp and luxury were severely banished, and where he was distinguished from his subjects only by a greater simplicity of dress. When he perceived me, he honoured me with a gracious smile; and the prince his brother, advancing to meet me, with that air of dignity and open-heartedness that wins all hearts to him, took hold of my hand, and said—
' Venerable Pontiff, in sending you to us, the Christians announce, at last, that they are willing

to deal with us honestly, and that we may confide in their promises: my brother is ready to listen to your proposals, and I to support them before him. Although we know well, that by your example and your eloquence, you draw to your faith almost all the Saracen prisoners, yet, we know also, that those who remain faithful to Mahomet are no less protected by you, and that your charity extends to all the unfortunate; therefore you will receive in this court the same attentions, the same homages, as are paid to you, without doubt, at Jerusalem: whoever scatters benefits all around, ought also to reap gratitude; such a man as you only can have friends, and I swear, in spite of the faith that divides us, that you will find none more sincere and more ardent than Malek Adhel."

"The warmth with which this prince pronounced these words moved all present, and affected me to tears.—Perhaps," continued the Archbishop, addressing the Queen, "your majesty will think that modesty ought to have closed my lips on such praises, but it is less from vanity than from a desire to make you know Malek Adhel that I am induced to repeat them."—"But, my Father," interrupted Matilda eagerly, "why did you not avail yourself of your residence near that prince to open his eyes to the light?"—"I have attempted it more than once, my daughter," replied the Prelate, "but, without doubt, the instant marked by the Lord has not arrived yet: I am willing to believe that it will come, and that so magnanimous a soul is not destined to remain in eternal darkness." "My Father," continued the Princess, "do not you pray sometimes for his conversion?"—"Every day, my daughter; for such a conversion would do more good to Christianity than the gain of many battles; and, if the Queen permit, we will every morning and evening implore the God of mercy for the Prince in our joint prayers." Bérengère assured him that she consented to it very willingly, and the Princess added, rather eagerly—"My

Father, you will resume to-morrow your interesting account; but now I think the hour of prayers has struck." The Archbishop arose at these words to begin the holy ceremonies; all the captive Christians, who, by their rank, were entitled to be admitted before the Queen, were assembled. Near the altar stood the old Duke of Norfolk: bent with the weight of years, he only asked of God life enough to go and die in the camp of the Christians: farther on, some women, in tears, raised up their hands and hearts towards him who alone could bring their captivity to a period: at some little distance the young Josselin of Montmorency, pale and weak, was casting timid glances on the daughter of kings, and wondering that Heaven, who had reserved her to his service, had permitted that she should fall under the yoke of the Infidels. The Queen, prostrate before her crucifix, on velvet cushions, taken up with one thought alone, could speak and pray for one object only; while, kneeling down on the marble, Matilda, with a tranquil conscience, sent up to Heaven, for the Prince's conversion, innocent and pure prayers, that might have intermixed themselves with those of angels.

CHAPTER V.

A FEW days after, the Archbishop was proceeding to give the Princesses the continuation of Saladin's victories, when a black eunuch, charged with a message from Malek Adhel, was introduced to the Queen, and told her, that the Prince, having news of importance to communicate, was coming shortly to see her majesty.

At this intelligence the young virgin blushed and arose, looking at the Archbishop, as if to read in his eyes whether she was to retire or wait for the Prince. The Prelate reflected for some minutes, then, taking Matilda by the hand, he made her sit down between the Queen and himself. "You must remain, my daughter," said he; "the least sign of mistrust might offend the Prince, and the safest way to deal with great and generous souls is to seem to trust to them; besides, Malek Adhel has, by his moderation, deserved our confidence, since this is the first time he ventures to appear before you after your arrival at Damietta." At these words, the obedient Matilda sat down, dropping her veil over her virginal brow. Béren-gère, always thinking of her husband, did not imagine, from the moment news of importance had been announced, that it could relate to any other than him: she was going to interrogate the Archbishop, when she was interrupted by Malek Adhel, who, following his message closely, appeared suddenly before them.

After he had advanced towards the Queen, and bowed with an air both mild and respectful, he turned to the Princess, looked at her a long time, and not without emotion. At last, addressing the Archbishop, he said: "Venerable Father of the Christians, our acquaintance does not date from

this day : if our faith is different, our souls, I venture to think, are not ; and in speaking of me to my illustrious captives, I may hope you have not represented me as an implacable master and a merciless enemy."—"The Princesses can tell you," replied the Prelate, "in what terms I have expressed myself on your account." "My Lord," interrupted Bérengère eagerly, "the Archbishop has confirmed only what fame had already told us ; we know that Malek Adhel is a hero as brave as he is magnanimous, always a victor in the field of battle, always clement after his victory ; if, sword in hand, he subdues the fiercest foes, when he lays by the sword, he does not scorn the tears of misfortune. My Lord, you see before you a Queen in despair ; it is not the loss of her throne that she weeps and bewails, it is her husband that she begs of you to restore—her husband, whom you alone can give her back, since you are the master of her fate." "No, madam, I am not," replied Malek Adhel, with emotion ; "if I were, rest assured your chains would be broken already ; but I was desirous of telling you myself, that to-morrow I send to demand your liberty from my brother, the great Saladin, the first of mankind after Mahomet ; he will not prolong your pains ; confide in his goodness, madam, in my intercessions, and in his friendship for me. But could I not learn," continued he, addressing the Princess with a sort of fear and embarrassment which he could not account for himself, "could I not learn if Richard's sister participates in the flattering opinion the Queen is pleased to entertain of me, and if she deigns to look upon me as favourably ?" The virgin, who had kept her eyes stedfastly fixed on the ground since the Prince's entrance, raised them on him with timidity at this question, and replied : "How could I hold an opinion in that respect, when my thought cannot comprehend that there should be any virtue among the Infidels ? But, if it be true that they have any, what monsters

of ingratitude are they, since they refuse to know the God from whom they received them !”

The Prince shuddered at these words; the boldness of the expression, and the timidity of the Princess's manner, afforded such a strange contrast, that he looked at her in silence unable either to answer or understand her. Bérengère, fearful lest he should be offended, hastened to excuse her sister: “Forgive, my Lord, the rashness of a young person, who, brought up away from the world, knows only the law of God, and is ignorant of the respect that is due to the great ones of the earth; but her intention is so laudable, that the manner in which she has expressed herself ought not to give you offence.”—“To give me offence !” interrupted the Prince eagerly; “ah! madam, rest assured, that it is not in the power of the Princess of England to give me offence.” “In speaking her mind openly, the Princess Matilda has only followed her duty,” replied the pious Prelate; “for, the God who inspires her, that God, to whose service she is consecrated, does not permit that her zeal should be stopped by frivolous considerations. What is birth? What are rank and worldly honours to her who has sacrificed them to her salvation? Prince,” added he, turning to Malek Adhel, “this language ought not to surprise you, for, if you remember the frequent endeavours that I have made to draw you over to the true God during my residence at Damascus, the wishes of my heart are well known to you, and you may imagine with what ardour I join my prayers to those that the Queen and the Princess daily address to Heaven for your conversion.”—“Can it be true?” exclaimed Malek Adhel, in casting looks of ardour on Matilda, “can it be true, that so divine a mouth should pronounce my name without anger? Can it be true, madam, that, notwithstanding my faith, you should take some interest in my welfare?” The Princess, with eyes cast down, and a blush on her cheeks, replied in a

calm voice : " Your faith inspires me with horror, your blindness with pity. The empire of the demon, that extends itself with the help of your arm, would make room for that of Christ, if your eyes could be opened to the proper light : can I too much ask this grace of God ?"—" Ah ! madam," answered the Prince, in laying hold of her hand, " that God cannot be the true God ; for, if he heard you, and was all powerful, would he resist your voice, would he not lend a favourable ear to your prayers ?" The young Arab's vivacity disturbed the virgin ; she withdrew her hand, stepped back a few paces, and raising on the Archbishop eyes filled with confusion and innocence, she said to him, " May I not be allowed to retire now, my Father ?" The Prelate nodded assent ; Malek Adhel durst not detain her, but scarcely was she gone out, when he exclaimed : " From what Heaven is this maid descended ? She most assuredly is no human creature, and the *houris* that the Prophet promises us cannot boast her intoxicating beauty."—" The beauty of the daughter of kings is no profane beauty," replied gravely the Archbishop ; " it proceeds from within, and her features shine with the purity of her soul : if she had lost her innocence she would be no more than a common beauty."—" No, no," interrupted the Prince, " love would lend her new charms, if possible. Happy, a thousand times happy, he who shall see her embellished by love !" At this exclamation, the heart of the Archbishop was seized with terror ; for, from that moment he foresaw both the passion of the Prince and the dangers of Matilda ; but his long experience made him perceive the necessity of opposing cunning to force ; he feigned then not to have understood the meaning of these words, and the Queen, who had scarcely heard them, broke the silence, and still following the only thought that employed her, she said, " My Lord, you are not ignorant, without doubt, of what passes in the christian camp : has any battle taken

place? has my husband been engaged? is not the valiant, the noble, Richard, wounded?"—"If I am to believe the news which I receive from the army," replied Malek Adhel, "the discord that reigns among the Christians will soon have put an end to this fatal war, without our having scarcely occasion to fight them. Since the King of England's arrival in Syria, there has not been any general action, but only some partial skirmishes, where your Lord has displayed his valour, and acquired new glory, without its being purchased at the expense of your rest: perhaps, madam, I shall be able to tell you more at my return."—"What, then, my Lord," interrupted Bérengère, alarmed, "are you going to Ptolemais, and is your invincible sword to be pointed against the heart of my husband?"—"No, madam," answered the Prince; "my brother's commands detain me yet in Egypt; his orders are that I should go to Cairo to collect new troops, and I shall return hither to wait the moment when he will desire me to bring them to him. During my absence, you alone will command in this palace; your least wishes will be respected: I only beg, that out of regard for our customs, which prescribe to women a strict retirement, the gentlemen of your court may appear but seldom in your apartments, and that you allow none the permission to enter your gardens.—This injunction does not concern you, my Father," continued he, addressing the Archbishop; "the respect due to your sacred character, the profound veneration with which your virtues have inspired me, would incline me rather to obey all your orders than to venture to give you any. I feel that you are here the only consolation and support of the Princesses; do not quit them, and let the liberty which I give you, never to lose sight of them, be at least a pledge of the purity of my intentions." He then renewed to Bérengère the promise of speaking to Saladin in her favour, and left the apartment.

They were scarcely alone, when the Prelate said to the Queen, "Does not your majesty shudder at the dangers to which the Princess is going to be exposed? Her beauty has inflamed the Infidel, and I know Malek Adhel but too well; his soul is noble, but his passions are violent, and, accustomed as he is to give way to them, unless the Almighty come to the assistance of the virgin, her virtue will not save her."—"My Father," replied the Queen, "are not your fears exaggerated? is a day, an instant, sufficient to kindle a passion? The Prince does not know my sister, he has seen her beauty only; and, although beauty is much, still it is not enough to inspire a durable attachment." "Madam," answered the Archbishop, "we are not here as in Europe, where women, free in their choice, require time to love and to be loved; there they can only form indissoluble bonds, because the happiness of these bonds has virtue for its basis, and virtue is discovered only by the help of time; but, in the East, where women are subjected to a master who disposes of them according to his will, the qualities of the mind are thought nothing of; external charms are every thing, and, to behold them and be inflamed, it requires but a moment."—"Thus, my Father, you imagine that the Prince has conceived love for Matilda?"—"I am surprised that such a misfortune should have escaped the penetration of your majesty."—"But, my Father, why call this love a misfortune?—Don't you know that it is impossible to resist the object we love, and, if it be true, that Matilda is dear to the Prince, she need only say one word to break our chains, and obtain from him a conveyance back to the christian camp." "My character," replied the Archbishop, gravely, "has always preserved me from that frenzy that you name Love; but, as much as I have been able to observe it in others, it has appeared to me, that, to the man affected by it, there is no duty, oaths, nor any thing sacred on the earth, which he will

not consent to brave ; and that, in short, he is capable of doing any thing for the object of his love, except sacrificing to it that love and those desires ; thus, I can well believe, that Malek Adhel would grant all to the prayers of the Princess, but what would affect the interest of his passion. Provided she remain with him, perhaps he would break our chains ; but, madam, would that be enough ? and, if your sister did not follow you, would you have the courage to depart ?” “ My Father,” resumed the Queen, with hesitation, “ of what service could my presence be to Matilda ?—What do I say, should I not even be more useful to her, by going to ask Richard to come sword in hand to her deliverance, than by remaining here to bewail with her ? Without doubt, my Father, you have no apprehensions for her virtue, and you cannot believe that a Prince, such as you have described Malek Adhel to us, would be capable of a criminal violence ?” “ I see,” replied the Archbishop, with surprise, “ that it is not possible to carry conjugal tenderness farther than your majesty does, since it can give you the resolution of abandoning the Princess. No, madam, I do not mistrust the virtue of that modest child ; but, near Malek Adhel, the temptation will be dangerous indeed, and innocence will never have had a harder struggle to maintain. Your majesty knows too well the ardent love that attaches me to the faith of Christ to suppose that a Mahomedan Prince could inspire me with an ill-grounded enthusiasm ; but I dare affirm, madam, that neither Philip Augustus, nor the illustrious Richard, the two greatest monarchs in Christendom, possesses that union of striking virtues, that elegance of mind, that seductive charm, that may be remarked in Malek Adhel ; but, in the error to which he is abandoned, so many brilliant advantages are only sources of corruption, and serve only to the misfortune of the world. Shall I tell you, madam, they have seduced a christian maid, one who was by birth nearly allied to the throne, in

that Jerusalem where her father had reigned, where her God had died, the daughter of Amaury and Mary, the niece of the Emperor of Constantinople, that Agnes so celebrated throughout the East for her beauty and valour, who, sword in hand, braved death a thousand times, and, soaring thus above her sex, whose glory she wished to be, soon became the disgrace of it, by neglecting its duties, as she had forgotten its modesty. Proud heroine, thou who didst despise the gentle virtues of thy companions, and their peaceful pleasures in retirement and obscurity, who didst pride thyself on thy superiority, because thou couldst shed blood, though thou hadst a merciless heart, it was not free from weakness; and hadst thou not, amidst the din of arms and the sports of warriors, learned to blush at nothing, thou wouldst, without doubt, have been ashamed of thy love for a Saracen!" "What do you say! O heavens!" exclaimed the Queen, with terror.—"A cruel and dreadful truth, at the remembrance of which my heart bleeds every day! but I will enter into the particulars of that deplorable adventure when I resume the history of Saladin, and perhaps you will then be better able to judge of what we may have room to apprehend and to hope from the disposition of Malek Adhel.

A few days after this conversation, the Queen sent word to the Archbishop that she was going with Matilda to the orange arbour nearest to the palace, and begged him to come and meet them, in order to finish the narration that she was so impatient to hear.

Bérenghère and her sister, arm in arm, covered with their veils, descended into the gardens: in waiting for the Archbishop, they were walking quietly around the orange grove, when suddenly, from the middle of a thick clump, the branches of which extended along the wall that closed the garden, an unexpected noise made them shudder. Bérenghère advanced towards the spot: she saw

with surprise a little secret door, made in the wall, and hidden from the eye by the foliage which covered it, fly open, and a female slave, trembling and dismayed, come running towards her, and throw herself at her feet; at the sight of a suppliant, Matilda, whose terror had kept her back, came to raise her up; but the slave, pressing to her lips the Princess's robe, exclaimed—"O dear and sacred habit! O bright and revered cross! O virgin, worthy to carry it, be thou blessed a thousand times! Ah! madam," added she, in struggling against Matilda, who was still endeavouring to raise her from the ground—"Let not your chaste hands touch me: I am a wretch stained with the blackest of crimes; I have forsworn my God and my country, to follow my royal and guilty mistress into this impious abode. Seduced by the greatest of all heroes, she sacrificed all her duties to her mad passion, not doubting to reign always in the heart of Malek Adhel, and to share with him Saladin's power; but, instead of that glory and happiness she expected, Malek Adhel loads her with mortifications; he treats the daughter of Amaury, who has given herself to him, like the slaves which he purchases; she is dying with grief and shame. More than once has she tried to take up her arms again, and quit this abominable residence, but love detains her, and still more the fear of appearing again in her indignant country: sometimes, snatching up her formidable lance, she would challenge her ungrateful lover; but he answered that he would not fight against a woman, nor love a woman who could fight; in fine, madam, when we heard that you were a prisoner in Damietta, but treated like a Queen by Malek Adhel, I entreated my mistress to permit me to seek the means of gaining admittance to you, in order to implore your assistance: her pride could not brook the idea of it; but this morning a fresh insult has determined her to break, if possible, the chains that hold her, and place her destiny in your hands. Would you

believe it, madam? it was not enough for the Prince to confound the daughter of Amaury with the crowd of women that fill his seraglio; it was not enough to treat her with an insulting coldness; it was not enough, in short, to leave her; but he wishes to resign her to another husband before he departs for Cairo. In leaving your palace, madam, the Prince has declared to all his women, that he was going to choose husbands for them amongst the emirs of his court, and this humiliating order, which slaves might obey, would you believe, he has also dared to give to the Princess of Jerusalem? She, justly indignant, has answered him, that she would leave instantly the palace of the tyrant who threatened her with such a disgrace: Malek Adhel has opposed this;—‘In giving yourself to me,’ said he, ‘in adopting the faith of Mahomet, you are become a slave, and the laws of the seraglio forbid my restoring you to liberty; choose, then, either the husband that I propose for you, or eternal captivity; and let me, on my return from Cairo, find you resolved!’—With these words he went away, and the Princess, in despair, was snatching up her poniard to put an end to her deplorable existence, when I arrested her hand: then, by dint of tears and prayers, I prevailed on her to let me come in her name to implore your protection. ‘Go, then,’ said she to me, ‘go and entreat that Queen of Europe to cast a look of pity on my misfortunes: tell her with what affront the Princess of Jerusalem is threatened; that will be enough without doubt to engage her to save me.’ I should then, madam, have flown instantly to your palace, if I had had the liberty of leaving that of the Prince; but, not being able, I sought by what means I could reach you. In walking along the walls of the seraglio, I have discovered a secret passage, concealed on this side by thick foliage, and unknown to Malek Adhel himself; it is through this door, and under a dress like mine, that my mistress will come and embrace your sacred knees;

and I conjure you, in the name of the divine Saviour of the world, who never slighted the prayers of a broken heart, I conjure you to snatch away this wretched victim from the hands of the cruel Saracen who insults her, and benevolently to protect her escape and mine."

In speaking thus, the prostrate slave bent her face down to the ground, and waited for the Queen's answer. Bérengère did not keep her in suspense; her tender and compassionate heart was always ready to alleviate the sorrows of misfortune and repentance; she answered, then, with a dignity blended with indulgence, that, though a slave herself, she would promise the daughter of Amaury to employ her best cares in assisting her escape, in case she should not be able to prevail on Malek Adhel to let her depart freely; "But," added she, "I require a promise from the Princess of Jerusalem: after a fault like her's, she must feel that the world is for ever shut against her, and that there can be no other retreat for her among the Christians than the asylum of penitence."—"Yes, madam," exclaimed the slave, "it is there we both wish to retire for ever, and it is there that eternal tears will never wipe off sufficiently our irreparable fault."—"If such be your intention," replied the Queen, "accept my royal word never to abandon you: but, tell me, is the motive of the Prince's strange conduct known, and is it discovered why his women are suddenly become so odious to him?" "It is reported, madam," replied the slave, "that a new passion, sprung from a look, and raised in an instant, is the cause of it; that this love, pure, chaste, generous, similar to that our christian knights experience, and worthy, in a word, of the object that inspires it, has closed the heart of Malek Adhel to any other desires."—"And do they name," demanded the Queen, "her who has produced such a marvellous effect!"—"Yes, without a doubt, madam, she is named; but your majesty will pardon me, if the respect that such a noble and revered

name inspires forbids my pronouncing it before you."

Bérenghère easily guessed at what the slave wanted to conceal, but Matilda guessed nothing: she had listened to the story of Amaury's daughter with a sort of fear; her innocent thoughts did but reluctantly comprehend such new crimes; and, meanwhile, she could not help being disturbed with the images offered to her. Had she not just heard that a christian daughter had denied her country and her God; that she had chosen a Mussulman for her master; that she worshipped the altars of Satan; and could one wonder at the secret horror that pervaded her soul, and the universal tremor that forced her to lean against a tree to support herself?—"Heavens, madam!" exclaimed the slave, rising suddenly, "is not this the Archbishop of Tyre advancing towards you? Ah! I fly; I cannot bear his presence; alas! the idea of appearing before him is the worst of all the fears that torment my mistress.—"The words of the good Prelate are meanwhile so sweet and consolatory," answered the Princess.—"They are so for you, madam, who are pure and irreproachable," replied the slave; "but, O! how terrible are the looks of the virtuous man to a criminal conscience!"

In speaking thus, she again closed abruptly the little door, and the Queen, advancing towards the Archbishop, told him what she had just heard. The Bishop was surprised, but returned thanks to heaven that the heart of the faithless Princess of Jerusalem was moved at last.—"She is wrong to fear me," said he: "if her repentance be profound and sincere, I will support her against the terrors that the enormity of her crime must have inflicted on her: and you, my daughter," added he, drawing near Matilda; "you, who appear frightened yet at the dreadful story that has just wounded your ears, believe that Providence had not permitted that you should hear such things, were not the knowledge of them to be of use to you some day: you are, without

doubt, destined to undergo trials, through which your innocence alone would not carry you; and it is because the divine wisdom has foreseen that you would stand in need of the light of virtue, that it has just opened your eyes to the image of evil deeds, that you might measure the abyss into which the passions hurry us headlong. But, come, my child, follow the Queen with me; we are going to resume and finish the history of Saladin; you will hear the calamities of your brethren; you will weep at their chastisements, and particularly at their errors, and you will learn, by their example, that we must not expect to repose softly on this earth, but to suffer many hardships."

At the view of that futurity, thus laid before her, Matilda sighed deeply, and, agitated by a thousand confused fears, that she could neither comprehend nor define, she went in silence to the orange-grove, where the Archbishop resumed in these terms the sad account of the Mussulman's victories.

CHAPTER VI.

“ I HAD not yet passed a month at the court of Damascus, before, thanks to Malek Adhel’s protection, I had already obtained a truce for three years; but on such advantageous conditions, that Lusignan himself would not have dared to ask. Malek Adhel, full of generous confidence, had engaged his brother to rely on my word alone, and not to exact from me either hostages, towns, citadels or fortresses; and friendship obtained it from Saladin, in spite of the remonstrances of prudence: already the treaty had just been signed, already the Sultan had given orders to stop until the expiration of the truce, the raising of the fortifications which he was building at Ramah, when the Marquis of Tyre, learning news so favourable to his rival, forgot, without doubt, that they were still more so for the Christians, and resolved to destroy, by a perfidy, all the advantages I had obtained, and all the good I had just done: it was the moment when hostilities were suspended, when the truce was on the point of being sworn, and the peace firmly established, that he chose to arm his soldiers to attack, pillage, ravage, and plunder, a caravan, loaded with treasures, that Saladin was sending to Mecca and Caabah (which is the temple of Mecca.)

“ At the news of this breach of faith, the court of Damascus, where I yet was, resounded with cries of rage; the Sultan would not understand that, the interests of Lusignan being opposite to those of Conrad, the crime of the latter ought not to be imputed to the former; he only saw the insult he had received; he thought that all the Christians were accomplices in it, and equally deserved his vengeance; therefore, in the first move-

ment of his indignation, he ordered me to be loaded with chains, and plunged into a dungeon. Malek Adhel opposed it, although he partook of all his brother's resentment against the Christians, although he must have been the more exasperated against them as he had answered on his head for their good faith: he ventured to represent to his brother, that the perfidy of their enemies did not authorize their own, that the person of an ambassador ought to be held sacred, and that, while he hated those whose interests I was maintaining, he would defend my liberty and my life to the last drop of his blood. Saladin answered, "I set much less value on the empire I possess than on the friend who has just hindered my committing a great fault! Do what thou wilt; I place the Archbishop's person under thy keeping." "Your subjects," replied Malek Adhel, "are so justly indignant against the rash people who have laid their sacrilegious hands on the treasure you were sending to the tomb of the Prophet, that I do not think the Archbishop of Tyre could traverse your states with safety; permit, therefore, that I attend him as far as the gates of Jerusalem; and, that duty fulfilled, permit me to acquit myself of another no less sacred; namely, to revenge my brother, our Prophet, and the faith of treaties shamefully violated." "Let it be so!" exclaimed Saladin; "let us also, before many days are departed, lay siege to Jerusalem, and let this sabre, that I now give thee, be the first to shine on its ramparts." "You will see it there," replied Malek Adhel, pressing the Soldan against his breast; "you know that your brother has never promised any thing in vain." "I know it," replied the Sultan, "and I read the ruin of the Christians in thine eye."—"Their ruin is come!" exclaimed the Prince vehemently, and they parted.

"Malek Adhel performed but too well the promise which he had just made to his brother. After having escorted me as far as the limits of

the Christians, with such generous care, that gratitude makes it my duty never to forget it, he sat off in pursuit of Conrad's army, who was returning to Tyre, loaded with the spoils of the caravan; he attacked and beat the plunderers, and made a considerable number of prisoners, among whom were Raymond of Tripoli and Rinaldo of Chatillon; but he had scarcely gained this victory, when he heard of the battle on the point of being fought at Tiberiad. For our misfortune, he ran there, and, for our greater misfortune yet, Lusignan refused to listen to my advice, and, far from shutting himself up in the walls of Jerusalem, as prudence required, he caused the gates of the city to be opened, went out at the head of his army, and accepted the proffered battle. You have heard, but too well, the account of that famous and ever-deplorable day, which almost entirely crushed the Christian power in Asia. The body of the Templars destroyed, the most illustrious captains slain, the king himself taken prisoner—these were but the forerunners of a far more terrible disaster. Jerusalem still held out; but what could women, old men, children who wept their chiefs and their supports, do against a triumphant and numerous army? In vain did Sybilla strive to encourage the soldiers who yet remained; in vain did I repeat, to these dismayed people, that it were better to die on the sepulchre of our God than thus abandon it to the hands of the Infidels: they answered me with a mournful silence only. Hunger broke down their courage, the holy Temple was deserted; none were seen in the streets but pale and livid figures, moving like ghosts, and disputing for their food with the vilest animals; nothing was heard but the hollow groans of hunger and the last sighs of life. Thus were the sad predictions of the Prophet verified under our eyes:

“The ancients of the city of Sion sit in the dust in silence. They have put ashes on their heads, and

clad themselves in sackcloth; the virgins of Jerusalem cast their eyes on the ground, and weep."

"Alas! madam, how shall I describe to you that day of desolation when they were forced to capitulate—that day when the sad Jerusalem opened her gates to a proud conqueror, and saw, with horror, the hand of Malek Adhel plant on her walls the hateful colours of the crescent! Meanwhile, I must own, that it is to the protection of that prince that we are indebted for a more honourable capitulation, and the permission of retiring to Antioch with our families and our treasures; he set free all the prisoners he had taken at Tiberiad, and paid out of his own purse the ransom of the captives he did not dispose of; he made rich presents to those women whose husbands had perished in the fight; he caused the wounded to be taken care of at his own expense, and obtained from Saladin that the brethren of the various monastic orders should attend them till their complete recovery: in short, madam, I own that, in this circumstance, the Prince displayed virtues unknown to this age. The East, astonished, admired them; the Mussulmen were proud of them; the Christians deeply affected: but all praised and blessed his name; and it was at that focus of universal admiration that the first sparks of the fatal passion that ruined the daughter of Amaury were kindled. That Princess was with Lusignan at the head of the army which was defeated at Tiberiad, carrying her valour wherever the carnage was most dreadful; she was always found near Malek Adhel; many times they fought together; she resisted long; at last, forced to yield she acquainted her astonished victor, that the enemy, whom he had overcome with so much difficulty, was a woman, and she followed him into his tent. Ever since that day she abandoned the cause of the Christians, renounced her religion, and became the first slave of that Prince whose enemy her birth had made her. It was

thus that Agnes, in scorning the prejudices of her sex, had departed from its virtues, and it proved more difficult to triumph over her valour than over her modesty.

“Therefore the sentiment that Malek Adhel inspired her with was not that tenderness virtue allows women to feel; it was one of those unruly passions, such as arise in the breast of warriors, and that, similar to a burning torrent, scatter their flaming waves, fearless of noise and destruction. Ah! what are we not to expect from a maid who has once broken asunder the chains of austere virtue! she falls with the more weight as her chains are drawn closer; thus Agnes, accustomed to obey but the impetuous dictates of her soul, loved the Prince with the same ardour as she had loved combats; she wished to become his wife, and Malek Adhel, who could not entertain any real esteem for her, still consented to give her that title.—“My Father,” interrupted Béren-gère, “to a woman he could not esteem?”—“That name of wife,” replied the Archbishop, “is very far from being as holy among the Turks as it is among the Christians; many women share it, and their maser’s fancy is the only law necessary to repudiate them.”—“Can it be,” interrupted the Queen a second time, joining her hands, “that a christian woman could have submitted to such a humiliation!”—“Ah! madam, that shameful folly, named love,” resumed the Archbishop, “had persuaded Agnes that there was glory in that humiliation, that there was glory in loving to such excess as to reckon for nothing the esteem of men and the judgment of God. Thus, deceiving herself still, and fancying she saw glory in celebrity, she has left the distaff for the sword, and the shade of retreat for the bustle of arms; and thus will those wander, who, scorning the place God has marked for them, and the qualities that are their appendage, substitute for their humble virtues the bold ones of men, and, confounding

what heaven has divided, belong to the sex they have forsaken and the one they adopt, only to unite and combine the vices of both."—"But what became of Agnes, my Father?" exclaimed the Queen; "she has not known any happy days, most probably."—"No, madam," replied the Pre-late, "that passion, acting as a force to part us with violence from our line of duty, being the road of vice, it is always that of misfortune too. Agnes has suffered all the pains she merited, although a Mussulman knows little of that delicacy that counts external charms for nothing, when the qualities of the soul do not accompany them; meanwhile, she has experienced the shame of being despised by her ravisher: a Christian, without doubt, in Malek Adhel's place would have done more; he would have shunned with indignation a young person who gave herself up to him without shame. Malek Adhel balanced one moment; to hesitate was much for him; for, such is the superiority of our holy religion over all others, that the same action, which among the Infidels is a rare virtue, is with us but a simple duty; so that in this circumstance, when the allurements of pleasure and the voice of honour were in opposition, by resisting the first but for a short time even, Malek Adhel was generous, while, by resisting the call of the other for one moment, a Christian had been guilty. I will not describe to you Agnes leaving her country and her God to follow an Infidel, quitting the steps of the throne where she sat, to be confined in a seraglio, and her superb armour for the habit of a slave. Let us cast a veil on the errors of that unfortunate Princess; let us not retrace her fault to ourselves. Since she begins to repent, let us begin to compassionate her, and not show ourselves less merciful than the Almighty, who never shuts the treasures of his grace to the repentant sinner.

"At last arose that fatal day when we were to abandon Jerusalem: the very inhabitants, who had

begged to surrender, and to have the liberty of quitting the city, then wept that they had obtained it: they could not console themselves for leaving the holy ground, and it was a very moving spectacle to see them embracing each other, begging pardon mutually for their past animosities and divisions, raising their hands to heaven, kissing respectfully the walls of the churches they were no more to behold, bending prostrate in the Holy Sepulchre their faces to the earth, and bathing with tears of blood the place where their Saviour died. Queen Sybilla, her head shaved, and clad in a mourning habit, opened the march, and led her weeping subjects. Saladin, on seeing her, appeared moved with her profound sorrow: he approached her respectfully, and said to her, that, having just been dubbed a knight by Hugh of Tiberia, he wished that very day to begin following the laws of chivalry, in granting her a gift according to the custom of our ancient knights-errant. The Queen did not hesitate to ask her husband's freedom, and the artful Sultan, who well expected that request, feigned meanwhile some surprise, and seemed to assent merely from a holy respect for his promise; but, in the bottom of his heart, he was very happy to have so noble a pretence to restore Lusignan his liberty, for he was not ignorant that his release would soon prove a source of new divisions among the Christians: in fact, had that Prince remained in the chains of the Saracens, all the parties would have united round Conrad, powerful then with harmony and good intentions: guided by one leader, they might have withstood Saladin's army; whereas Lusignan, on his being set at liberty, revived anew his claims to the kingdom which he had lost. Conrad, indignant at his obstinacy, caused the gates of Tyre to be cruelly closed against him, the only city that remained in the power of the Christians. The parties then grew more and more inveterate, and their animosities increased to such a degree, that Lusignan

and Conrad were greater enemies against each other than they were against Saladin himself; and, while scorning my remonstrances, forgetting the interests of their brethren, they were shamefully quarrelling about the possession of a throne which they had not known how to defend, all the East, dazzled with the pretended generosity of the Sultan, applauded his conduct in raising up to the clouds the greatness of an action, which, in truth, was but the fruit of the deepest policy.

“ It was about that time that I embarked for Europe: you know, madam, what powerful succours I obtained from all the christian Princes: not satisfied with opening the field of honour to bravery, glory and piety, they have wished to march there themselves, and set the example to their subjects; and now they are arriving in crowds on our desolate shores: no, a greater ardour did not animate their ancestors at the first crusade; none were then fired with a more noble and holy zeal, and better disposed to shed their blood for the recovery of the sepulchre of their God. Ah! without doubt, we shall see the dissensions of Conrad and Lusignan expire before the magnanimous example they behold in Richard and Philip Augustus, and so many other European Princes, who, for the interest of religion, abandon their vast and flourishing states, and, through the perils of a stormy sea, come to meet their death in a foreign clime. O my God!” continued the Archbishop, raising his venerable hands to heaven, “ thou wilt not surely permit that such fair hopes be destroyed, and that such noble resolutions be without effect; thou wilt make shine that glorious day, when the Christians, after having earned repose by their toils, and victory by their combats, shall again enter Jerusalem consoled, and there celebrate the effusions of their gratitude and love; and, purified by their misfortunes, adopt new manners, new sentiments, and set such an example of wisdom and virtue to the neighbouring nations, that these last, moved, edi-

fied, converted by the change, will run into thy temple, and form with thy old servants but one people, one faith, and one heart." In speaking thus, the good Archbishop was so thoroughly touched with what he said, he fancied he could read so well in futurity the confirmation of his hopes, that the image of such happiness filled his breast with too much emotion to permit him to go on: he stopped, but his lively looks, his head raised towards heaven, and his silence, big with impressive fervour, told enough that his heart was yet in prayer, although his lips articulated no longer.

Already did the first shades of night begin to throw their veil on the orange-grove, and gave to nature that tint of melancholy which seems so favourable to religious meditations and tender reveries, when the light rustling of a dress creeping through the leaves, struck upon the ears of the Archbishop and the two Princesses, and disturbed their reflections. Soon they saw appear, at the entrance of the grove, a female slave, who seemed to wish, and yet to dread, to approach.—“Who are you?” demanded the Prelate, advancing some paces towards her. At this question, the unknown threw herself on the ground, with such sobs and cries, that it would have been thought her heart was ready to break.—“Wretched Agnes! is it you?” exclaimed the Archbishop, retiring a few paces involuntarily. “My Father,” replied the Princess, “do not retire; do not make me desperate, for death is in my heart, and my last moment approaches.”—“O my Father,” interrupted Matilda eagerly, and drawing near Amaury’s daughter, “hasten to give her your spiritual assistance, for she says she is at the point of death, and her soul may yet be saved!”—“Is it the Princess of England that I see?” exclaimed Agnes; “is it she who speaks in my favour? Yes, I know her by her habit, and more so by her marvellous and fatal beauty. Heavens! must I be doomed to this excess of

humiliation, to owe something to the prayers of her who has injured me so deeply?"—"What do I hear!" replied Matilda, astonished; "a stranger in this place, a captive in this palace, ignorant of your name and existence till within these few hours, what am I charged with, and what harm have I done you?"—"She asks what harm," exclaimed Agnes, distracted with grief; "she who has banished me from the heart where I reigned; who has robbed me of a love to which I had sacrificed every thing; she, in fine, the only cause of my shame and despair!"—"Hold, hold, Agnes!" interrupted the Archbishop, sternly; "your shame is in your regrets. Ah! unfortunate woman, if you were moved with a true repentance, would you hold such language? would you not rather bless the instant, that, in banishing from you the object of your criminal ardour, has likewise forced you to have recourse to heaven's mercy."—"Why do you talk of heaven!" exclaimed Agnes, raving; "what is heaven without Malek Adhel, and what God can I implore, when he whom I had chosen scorns and leaves me?"—"If such are your sentiments," replied the Archbishop, in a severe tone; "if your soul still lies under the weight of reprobation, why do you come hither? why bring your licentious cries to the ears of this noble Queen and this chaste virgin; and what are you seeking with me?"—At these words the daughter of Amaury, recovering all her pride, answered, in a proud and firm voice:—"I am come to seek a shelter against the ungrateful man who repudiates me; I come to ask for arms to defend and revenge myself. Give me back my lance and sword, and my arm shall know how to secure the daughter of Jerusalem from the shame of being treated like the last of slaves!"—"And by what right should the daughter of Jerusalem expect to be treated otherwise," replied the Archbishop, with indignation, "when, by her conduct, she has placed herself below the most despicable creatures of her sex? Go,

go, wretched Agnes! return into that palace—bow down under the feet of your proud Arab—implore deaf Mahomet. The day of condemnation is not far; it approaches fast, it will soon swallow you up; already heaven warns you by me of your eternal doom.” “O my Father! do not pronounce it!” interrupted Matilda, melting into tears: “could your lips open to utter such terrible words; take pity on the unfortunate, who is going to die without succour, and has no longer the strength to apply to you for relief.” The Queen also drew near the Archbishop, and said to him, in a low voice:—“My Father, will you not speak to her more kindly, and try to bring her back to God?”—“Will I not!” replied the Prelate, wiping the tears that fell on his venerable cheeks; “madam, can you believe it? O! you know not the injury her obstinacy does me, nor with what joy I would give my own blood to redeem her sin; but what can I do if she do not repent? what can I do but implore for her the grace of the Almighty?”—Scarcely had he uttered these words, when the slave, who had addressed the Queen some hours before, appeared; and, speaking to the Princess of Jerusalem, exclaimed: “They have just discovered your absence, madam, and are seeking for you every where in the seraglio: I have taken advantage of the confusion that prevails there to escape and follow you: and now we are both safe; for, the way that has conducted us hither is known to nobody, and the Queen of England’s palace is an inviolable asylum, where no Mussulman’s eye can penetrate.” “Madam,” then said Agnes, “you see my fate is in your hands; will you not grant me a shelter in your palace? will you not restore me my liberty, my arms, my vengeance?”

The tone in which she pronounced these words made Matilda shudder: it was not that which was likely to persuade the Queen. Agnes, seeing that she was hesitating, hastened to add:—“I but ill understand suing, madam; but remember, that,

accustomed to command since my infancy, prayer is for me a strange language, to which I have had recourse only to avoid slavery, and which I should not have employed to save my life.”—“ I shall not resist your wishes,” replied the Queen; “ I shall not deny myself the hope of contributing to your salvation, in breaking the chain that detains you here. Come, madam, come among Christians again! Come, and weep with them the fatal day, when you ceased to name them your brethren, and, by long and frequent acts of repentance, obtain, from God’s infinite mercy, a pardon that the clemency of men would not, perhaps, grant you. I shall see Prince Malek Adhel at his return from Cairo, and will apply to him for permission for you to leave this place.”—“ No, madam, no,” interrupted Agnes, impetuously, “ do not ask him for any thing, I entreat you: I wish to fly from him without his knowledge, without his consent: leave me the care of my own destiny; it is through deserts that, alone, on foot, under the armour of a warrior, I will go and seek for a retreat, which I shall owe to your goodness and my courage only.”—The Archbishop said then, that this was not the moment to ascertain whether such a request could be granted to her, and that she ought to rest herself contented with waiting in silence for her fate near the generous benefactress who consented to afford her a shelter.—Agnes durst not reply any thing to the Prelate’s commands: she put down her veil over her face, leaned on her slave, and followed the Queen into her palace. As none entered the Princesses’ apartments but persons of their own choice, they easily secured their silence on the temporary concealment they offered the daughter of Amaury. Matilda gave up with pleasure the room she occupied to that Princess. Agnes took up her residence there the same evening; and Matilda, pleased to see her there at her ease, removed into a little closet contiguous to that room, where she found no other furniture but two stools.

and a small couch. Scarcely was she left alone in that plain habitation, when the remembrance of what she had just heard, of what she had understood, and still more of what she had not been able to comprehend, recurred to give birth to new thoughts, and to reveal to her, that the world and the heart of man were full of mysteries entirely unknown to her. She blamed herself for thus giving admittance to ideas, which she was not allowed to fathom; but the very efforts she made to drive them away, brought them back incessantly; and the curiosity of a young girl, who seeks into what is concealed from her, could scarcely yield to the modesty of a virgin, who grows alarmed at what she perceives. Meanwhile, sixteen years' innocence soon prevailed over a few hours' disturbance. As she offered up her accustomed prayers to God, she insensibly forgot the discourses, the wrongs, and the accusations, of Amaury's daughter; and, of all the sentiments that had disturbed her, there only remained a profound compassion for sorrows, the more dangerous in her eyes, as she less understood the cause; but compassion, which, for tender souls, is rather a pleasure than a pain, did not hinder her from finding, on her narrow couch, that sweet and peaceful sleep which a pure conscience can always procure.

CHAPTER VII.

THE Princess of Jerusalem was too much a stranger to that peace which reigned in the soul of Matilda to be able to enjoy the same rest. The tortures of pride and of a frightened conscience closed her heart against those sentiments of contrition which alone ease and strengthen the broken sinner: more vexed at the humiliations which her fault had brought upon her, than repentant for having committed it, she only felt a kind of dry and tearless remorse, and of universal aversion, that extended equally over the lover who scorned her, and the benefactress who consented to save her, over the God to whom she had given herself up, and that whom she had abjured, as well as over the innocence of that virgin who was preferred to her; but still more (and that was the worst of her torments) over herself, whom she could not but accuse alone as the cause of the vile condition to which she was reduced. In vain she sought to fly from herself; she could not escape: the poignancy of her shame, increased by the recollection of its celebrity, and that irrevocable necessity which bound her with her own thoughts, and forced her, as it were, to live with herself, threw her into fits of despair, compared to which insanity or death would have seemed comforts. If, sometimes, the image of Malek Adhel came to turn her aside from her own contemplation, it was only to present her with fresh cause of sorrow; for, she not only saw herself slighted by the man to whom she had sacrificed the world and her eternal salvation, but she was on the point of being parted from him, and with his own consent too!—At this thought, the most bitter of all thoughts for a soul fired yet with

all her passion, the unfortunate Agnes, who, during the whole night, had not been able to taste a moment's rest, suffered so piercing and so doleful a cry to escape her, that it resounded in the ears of Matilda, and awoke her in a fright. She arose, looked around; the day was just beginning to enlighten the east with its first fires; she could perceive nothing, but she listened, in order to discover whence the noise that broke upon her could come, and she heard deep groans proceeding from Agnes's room: she ran there, and found her up, pacing the room, pale, dismayed, crying out with grief, but not weeping.—“What wouldst thou with me?” exclaimed she, on her perceiving the virgin; “why does thy angelic form come to offer before me the view of all that is sinful in me, and to increase the transport that tortures my soul?”—“Your groans have reached my ears,” answered Matilda; “I thought you were ill, and came to offer you my cares.”—“Ill!” replied Agnes, looking at her earnestly; “indeed I am ill, very ill too; but what avail thy cares? thinkest thou they will cure me? Ah, if thou wouldst ease the dreadful torments thou causest me to suffer, restore me the heart thou hast taken from me, restore me the love of Malek Adhel, restore me my lover!”—“Heaven be praised,” replied the Princess, blushing, “the heart of the Infidel is not mine, and I do not dispose of it.”—“Would thou hadst spoken true!” interrupted Agnes, laying hold of her hand with eager vivacity: “I would give my life to be able to believe it for one instant:—but hear me! if ever he offered to thee that heart, the possession of which is the first blessing on earth or in heaven, accept it not, or thou wilt soon fall into the condition in which thou seest me plunged.”—“But can you not extricate yourself from that dreadful state, at which my soul is frightened?” replied Matilda softly; “can you not avoid the Prince by flight?” “Avoid him! sayest thou? avoid Malek Adhel! no, I cannot; no, I cannot tear myself

away from the intoxicating charm of his love. If thou couldst know what felicity I tasted in forgetting, near him, my country, my family, my crime, nay, my God himself! . . . thou shudderest, Matilda! thy ear is a stranger to such crimes: well, thou knowest not all yet; no, thou knowest not what excess of impiety love has drawn me into. I have wished for the destruction of the empire of Christ, because it may rise against that of my lover; I have wished to see that lover reigning alone over kings and worlds in chains: I wished to follow him to the army, to fight against the cause which I supported formerly, and, to defend a head adored, I wished to raise the sword against my own blood and the God of my fathers! . . . In short, this very moment, when William opens before me the road of repentance, when my ungrateful husband abandons and hates me, the idea of avoiding him, of being parted from him for ever, is more terrible, in my eyes, than that of my eternal perdition! —And thou, cruel maid, thou, the author of all my woes, leave me, and go, tell thy Archbishop that I will not hear of a heaven that has not Malek Adhel's love to offer me!"

During all this speech, Matilda had remained trembling and motionless; the vehemence of such an unruly passion inspired her with horror: incapable of returning a single word in answer to speeches so new to her, impatient to steal away from the shame of listening to them, she still could not make up her mind to leave Agnes alone, a prey to her dreadful transports; meanwhile, she went out to call her women, and sent them to Agnes, until she could acquaint the pious Archbishop with the state of Amaury's daughter. As soon as he was informed of it, he came; Matilda, when she heard he was in the palace, went to meet him, and said—"My Father, the Princess of Jerusalem is very ill. I know not what fever works in her brain, but her head is totally deranged; for, she talks of nothing but the charms of crime,

the delights of impiety; and Malek Adhel seems in her eyes preferable to God himself—"Hold, my daughter!" replied the Prelate; "let not a mouth so pure open to utter such expressions: strive even to obliterate them from your mind, and beware ever to attempt to understand them: and now, go to the Queen, begin your holy lectures with her, and do not return into your apartment until you have seen me."—At these words, Matilda quitted him, walked away slowly, musing, and still endeavoured to obey the Prelate's injunction, by not seeking to comprehend what strange happiness Agnes could taste of in the road of crime: on arriving at the oratory she found the Queen was not there: she went into her chamber, but without success; at last she entered the great jasper-hall, where Bérengère sat on a pile of cushions, before a table elegantly set out, and surrounded by a crowd of young slaves, loaded with baskets of flowers. "Sister," exclaimed the Queen, on seeing her, "the Prince is just arrived at Damietta; he is coming hither presently to bring us news of the army; and, until then, he has sent us his women to amuse us with their games; come, and sit by me to partake of this recreation."—At these words the Princess blushed; she felt her heart palpitate, sat down, and remained silent. The young slaves began to dance at the sound of the castanets, the cithern and the tabor; but there was in their dances a sort of luxuriant voluptuousness that disturbed the Queen and alarmed the virgin: she turned her looks aside from a sight that hurt her delicacy; and, to see it no longer, she arose, went to a window, threw up the blind; and there, delighted with the serenity of the sky, the beauty of the verdure, and the charm that the freshness of the morning spread in the air, she yielded to a strong desire of taking a solitary walk, and descended into the gardens of the palace.

She followed the course of a rivulet that meandered in a fine sand, edged on both sides with rose and citron trees: insensibly, the trees grew larger and closer together, and she found herself in the middle of a wood, where a thousand paths that crossed each other made her lose the first she had taken: following at hazard that which offered itself, she lost her way still more and more; and meanwhile the place was so beautiful, so many birds were singing, so many flowers exhaling their perfume, such clear waters flowing around, that the virgin was moved, but not alarmed. Soon, fatigued with her long walk, she sat down under an arbour of jessamin and plantain trees; soon the profound silence of this solitude brought back calm into her heart: the remembrance of Agnes grew weaker, as well as the terror of her impious speeches; sweet and tranquil thoughts, such as the place she was in, succeeded her agitation; and, overcome insensibly by the charms of that nature, which it would seem—that no one could approach without becoming better, Matilda abandoned herself to that sort of vague reverie, during which the imagination, wandering on many objects, quits and returns to them again, without being ever fixed, because each attracts it in turn, and it pleases itself with all without having to blush at any.

In that beautiful bower, in that state of forgetfulness so new and sweet for the youthful mind of a maid, who, for the first time in her life, finds herself alone in flowery and blooming retreats, the hours passed rapidly away. The morning was almost entirely gone, and the Prince had been with the Queen. Surprised and grieved at not finding Matilda with her, he wished to know where she was, and whether he might be allowed to see her. Bérengère sent after her; she was not in her apartment. The Prelate, who had all the time remained there with Agnes, left his

penitent, and came to tell the Queen that Matilda had not appeared in the room; hence he too wondered what had become of her. Bérengère could not satisfy him; for, she had not observed her sister descend into the garden. Her absence alarmed the Archbishop; he looked at the Prince with an eye of suspicion; but Malek Adhel was too anxious about the Princess to observe his mistrust; he kept inquiring incessantly from all around him, with an eagerness that betrayed enough how deeply his heart felt interested in that object. Bérengère remembered well that her sister had seated herself by her, but only for some moments; where she had gone since she knew not. Meanwhile, after many fruitless efforts, she thought she recollected having seen her open one of the doors into the garden, and immediately went herself in quest of her. But soon she was left behind by the Prince; happy with the hope of finding the Princess alone, he sprang forward with rapidity; desire, emotion, lent him wings. He knew all the turns of that intricate labyrinth, and traversed it in a moment; at last he flew towards the jessamin-bower, caught a glimpse of the vestal's garment, and the sight alone of that dress caused him a greater pleasure than any he had ever experienced. Matilda heard the noise of the leaves he was treading upon, arose, knew him again; at once the Archbishop's narrative and the condition of Amaury's daughter came back into her mind. With a heart full of terror and trouble, she flew hastily away, exclaiming—"O my God! preserve me from that son of the Demon, that formidable Infidel, whose arm crushes the Christians, and whose tongue has perverted the wretched Agnes!"—And at that thought she flew still faster; but what availed to fly with such rapidity, except to show her terror and her zeal; for, the swiftness of a timid virgin, who has passed all her life in the confinement of a cloister, would

not save her long from the pursuit of a warrior like Malek Adhel. Sure to overtake her when he chose, he stopped to see her run; it was truly to avoid him that she hurried: thus he saw it, and such a resistance, which he had never yet met with, inflamed him still more; and now he sat off in his turn; the arrow flying through the air could scarcely follow him; he came near the Princess—touched her—took hold of her garment; he would fain have pressed her in his arms, and yet he dared not. If the divine beauty of the Princess attracted him, the dignity of her countenance kept him in awe. Led away by imperious desires which he had never attempted to oppose, sovereign of his palace, of courage to dare any thing, having only to overcome the weakness of a young girl to attain the height of his wishes—yet, an indescribable sentiment, a sort of respect, which, until this day he had never experienced, but at the sight of his father, or in the temple of Mahomet, made him fall at the knees of Matilda. For the first time the proud Arab prostrated himself at the feet of a woman, and was not ashamed of it, for he fancied he was in the presence of a divinity.—“O you,” said he to her, “who have given me a new being, daughter of heaven, angelic beauty!—you who surpass all that I have seen most beautiful in my life, who consume me with an ardent fire which I dare not indulge, and which I almost dread to mention—you who already dispose of my will and my life, whence have you taken your power?” At these passionate words, Matilda pressed on her bosom the relic of the Abbess, raised her eyes to heaven, and made new efforts to escape; but the Prince would not suffer her.—“Whither would you go?” exclaimed he, pressing eagerly the delicate hand of the Princess;—“why do you shun me with so much obstinacy, what are you afraid of, do you behold me with horror?”—In speaking

thus, he looked at her so tenderly, love gave his handsome features so much expression, that the ingenuous Matilda, who, since her birth, had never once disguised her thoughts, could not answer that she saw him with horror; she only replied, turning her eyes aside—"God commands me to shun his enemies."—"And does that cruel God also command you to hate those who adore you?"—"I ought to hate those who know him not."—"O! no, no, no, a thousand times!" interrupted he, pressing the hand of Matilda to his lips: "you will not follow a law both unjust and cruel; you will compassionate the torture you cause me; you will yield to the lover who to you abandons his fate and his life! I swear it, England shall never behold you again!—better to die than to part from you!" At this terrible vow, Matilda fancied at once she was torn away from her country, her family, her convent, and that eternal salvation her engagements secured to her. Frightened at the Saracen's projects, she snatched her hand away, wrapped it up in the long sleeves of her dress, pulled down her veil over her face, and, both confused and terrified at the Prince's speeches, she replied in the sternest tone: "I am destined to the honour of being one of the brides of Jesus Christ: it is in order better to deserve so glorious a title, that I came to Palestine to pay my adorations at his tomb; but it is in England that my cloister expects me, and that my vows call me; retract, therefore, an impious and sacrilegious oath; restore me the liberty which you have deprived me of, and, for your reward, God will perhaps consent to open your eyes to his eternal light." On hearing this language, Malek Adhel knew that strong faith, that ardent piety which distinguished the children of Christ: he felt well that time and his cares alone could work a change in the heart of the Princess; and, as already he had resolved to abide by her will, and detest a

happiness that she could not share, far from insisting, he submitted, and said—" Daughter of innocence, what do you command and require of me ? the slave of your will, there is nothing that I would not suffer to please and obey you." Matilda was too pure to understand the extent and value of such a sacrifice ; but the air, the expression, of Malek Adhel, made her suspect it must have cost him dear ; her heart was moved, her looks grew kinder, her voice was softened, and she answered, with embarrassment : " I pray you, conduct me to the Queen." Matilda's change had not escaped the Prince's penetration : he saw that there were means left to move the fair Christian, but only with the help of much reserve and perfect submission ; he therefore did not hesitate one moment to obey.—" Come this way," said he, showing her another path ; " this will take us sooner to the palace." She adopted it immediately, and followed the Prince in silence. Sometimes he turned round to look at her—he stopped—he sighed : the fearful Matilda then kept back, cast her eyes to the ground, raised her hand to hide her face from the Prince ; but could not conceal from him that modesty spread all over her person and countenance ; that modesty the most captivating of all the graces, the most powerful of the weapons that heaven has endowed the sex with, and which inspires respect at the same time that it increases love. In seeing her so beautiful, Malek Adhel could scarcely contain the flame burning in his breast : meanwhile he prevailed ; for, at that moment, the beauty of Matilda was almost like that of an angel : he hurried on to escape sooner the danger of giving a loose to transports that might alienate the heart he was resolved to obtain ; the struggle of his present desires with his future projects agitated him violently ; he walked with emotion, but he knew well the cause of it ; he knew what he wished, what he expected, what

he had to hope, while Matilda was destitute, without knowing the reason of it, or even what she really experienced; and, if any thing was passing in her heart, she only saw it through that thick veil that innocence draws always before the thoughts of a virgin, to prevent her distinguishing what modesty does not allow her to know.

CHAPTER VIII.

MATILDA and the Prince had soon reached the edge of the wood; they then perceived the Queen coming that way, and, near the door of the palace, the Archbishop waiting for them. His look was grave and stern, and, as she embraced the Queen, Matilda could not help blushing. As she could not, without much confusion, own all that had passed between her and the Prince, she grew uneasy, inwardly, at having any thing to conceal; it seemed to her, that any thought we dare not own, must be a reprehensible one; and, taking the bashfulness of modesty for the remorse of a fault, she fancied she had already found her punishment in the unusual embarrassment that the presence of the Archbishop caused her. Bérengère asked her sister some questions; but the interest she displayed soon gave way to a more powerful one. She had not had time in the morning to speak of her husband to the Prince; all taken up with Matilda, he would not then have listened to her, but now she was in hopes to obtain more attention, and, drawing near him, with eyes full of tears, she said, "can you not give me some news from the army at Ptolemais? O noble Malek Adhel! have you nothing to tell me about Richard? alas! my life is in your answer." The Prince was going to satisfy her anxiety, but he was prevented by the appearance of a knight, who seemed running precipitately towards them. Malek Adhel wondered, and said to the Queen, "who is the rash man who presumes to enter your gardens at this hour without your orders?" The Archbishop had recognised Josselin of Montmorency, and mentioned his name to the Prince. Malek Adhel then replied: "That illustrious name has often reached

my ear, coupled together with that of all the kings of Europe, and surrounded with a reputation of valour and glory which but few sovereigns can pretend to; but that name, great as it may be, and the valour of him who bears it, do not excuse his intrusion." He then advanced towards Josselin, who was only at a few paces distance, and said to him, proudly, "Presumptuous knight, art not thou forbidden to enter these gardens without the Queen of England's permission? Has she given it thee, and, if she has not, what comest thou here for? Knowest thou not that such rashness deserves a high punishment?"—"Prince," replied Josselin, with a cold dignity, "when King Richard entrusted his wife and his sister to the care of all the knights who are now at Damietta, we swore to him to defend them to the last drop of our blood. Just now, on coming to the Queen's, I found all the Christians in confusion; I learned that the Princess Matilda was lost in these extensive gardens, and exposed to dangers."—"And what dangers could she fear in this place?" interrupted the Prince, with impatience. "That I cared but little to know," replied Josselin; "it was enough there were dangers threatening the Princess to make me fly to her assistance, in spite of all obstacles, and without calculating what perils I might expose myself to." At these words Malek Adhel's great soul was moved: squeezing the knight's hand affectionately, he said to him, "Fear nothing, brave Montmorency: the Queen, without doubt, will not punish the action she admires; but, learn, that I too am a knight as well as thou. Hugh of Tiberiad has fastened the spurs on me, and I have sworn, in his hands, to protect beauty, innocence and misfortune, at the peril of my life; be not, therefore, any longer uneasy for the fate of the Princess of England, I too will now watch over her, I, alone, hearest thou! and, while I do justice to thy valour, I think that mine will be as useful to her; and it is at the feet of this divine maid, in

the presence of her sister, of this holy Prelate, and thyself, that I beg her henceforth to look upon me as her most devoted knight and only defender."—" I doubt," replied Montmorency, sharply, " that, a captive, as the daughter of kings is in this palace, she would accept the master of it for her servant."—" She cannot do it as a Christian," added the Archbishop.—" And still less as a sister," replied the Queen. " O magnanimous Prince! consider yourself, whether Matilda can accept the protection of him who may, some day, shed the blood of her brother and my husband!"—" And if I swore to you, madam," replied Malek Adhel, " never to turn my arms against that beloved husband, myself to watch over his life, and, in short, to respect the brother of Matilda, even as I do my own brother, would you not at that price consent to see the Princess Matilda assent to my request?" Bérengère could not believe what she heard; she could not believe that that formidable arm, not satisfied with sparing her husband, was going to be raised in his defence. Malek Adhel renewed his promise, and then, in the effusion of her gratitude, she blessed her chains, and loved that captivity which had supplied her with the means of interesting Malek Adhel in favour of Richard. " I know not," interrupted Montmorency, bitterly, " whether our great king might not be offended if he saw your majesty imploring in his behalf, Malek Adhel's generosity. Whatever be the valour of this warrior, I am much deceived, or the illustrious Richard would fear his arms much less than his compassion; and all our knights would wonder much, madam, to see a christian queen placing less confidence in their zeal than in the protection of their greatest enemy."

Matilda inclined her head softly on the Queen's shoulder, and told her that Montmorency's answer seemed to her just, noble, and such as must affect her. Malek Adhel heard her, and grew uneasy;

as he looked at her, she seemed moved. Meanwhile, Montmorency, on his knees before the Princess, gazed on her enthusiastically, and thanked her, with transport, for the approbation she had just given him. On seeing this, Malek Adhel could hardly contain the terrible suspicions that began to work upon him; every thing seemed to tell him that Montmorency was dear to Matilda: a thousand violent projects crowded at once into his mind, all advising him to get rid of his rival. He must punish him assuredly, but only in such a way as his great soul could punish. "Montmorency," said he to him, "a soul like yours, wherein honour reigns, must grow indignant at being away from the field of war. Return! I break your chains! Go, and tell your masters that I am not much afraid of them, since I venture to restore them such a man as you." At this speech Josselin remained confounded: unable to accept a favour from an Infidel, or to leave Matilda, he refused the proffered gift of freedom: he had sworn to his King not to quit the Princesses, and, unless they should think proper to release him from his oath, he vowed to keep it at the price of his blood. Malek Adhel, with great vivacity, asked the Queen whether she had any objections to Montmorency's going to speak of her to Richard. Bérengère assured him, that she would consider herself blameable if she deprived Richard and the Christians of such a valiant knight. Josselin had then but one hope left; he addressed Matilda, entreating her not to dismiss him too. "Was that to be the price with which she would reward the pure zeal that animated him—a zeal which would make him sacrifice his life, without even asking for a look as a recompense?" The impetuous Arab would not let him go on; he threw himself at the knees of the Princess, exclaiming, "Matilda! I vow to you a zeal as pure and a boundless gratitude. Think what extensive claims the title of *your Knight* will give you over me; think of all the good my obedience will enable you to do your subjects, your

friends, your brethren." He ceased then, and waited in silence for the Princess's answer. Montmorency was waiting also, and both were fixing on her their supplicating looks, that seemed to implore some favourable words. Matilda cast her eyes to the ground; embarrassment, emotion, uncertainty, were seen on her ingenuous countenance: she knew not what to decide; and, full of diffidence of herself, she applied to the Archbishop for advice from his wisdom. "O my Father!" said she, "tell me what I am to do!"—"My daughter," replied the Archbishop, "the arm of Montmorency is of too much service in the army for you to allow yourself to detain him here; but, if a sense of duty prescribe you to release him from his engagement, that same sense of duty commands you still more to refuse the services of a Prince, who, great and magnanimous as he is, still is no less the most formidable enemy of your brother and your God. My child," continued he, with a holy enthusiasm, "what need you the assistance of men? Ah! preserve only that piety that reigns in your soul; and, in spite of the weakness of your age and sex, you will be armed with a force that will place you above all perils, and prove of more service to you than all human assistance."—"My Father," replied Matilda, "your words come from heaven: I believe them, I adore them! they shall be my law." Then, turning round to Josselin, with an interesting look of dignity, she said, "Baron of Montmorency, the road of glory lies open before you, I will detain you no longer; go to the army, go, and shed your blood in that holy and sacred cause, the cause of God himself, which he invites you to support. You will relate to my brother our misfortunes; you will ask of the Christians prayers for our deliverance: but," added she, with a blush, "you must, to allay their fears, tell them of all the virtues of our present master;—it will be easy to describe them: to speak of honour and loyalty will only be a Montmorency's native tongue." On hearing this kind

language, the proud Josselin was affected; to hide his emotion, he bowed low to the Princess, and took the train of her robe, which he kissed respectfully; but, feeling his disturbance increasing, he pulled down the visor of his helmet, and, inclining himself very low before the Queen, the Prince, and the Archbishop, he hastened to withdraw. After his departure, Malek Adhel remained thoughtful and absent; still in his place, he seemed to see nothing of what surrounded him. The Queen, fatigued with his silence, sat down upon a turfy seat, and Matilda placed herself by her. Meanwhile, the Prelate meditated within himself the means of obtaining, also, from the Prince, the liberty of Amaury's daughter; without doubt, he was fearful of breaking upon Malek Adhel's reflections, but he was still more afraid of putting off to the next day a good action which might then be performed: led away by his benevolence, he determined to speak to the Prince.

He described to him the remorse of Agnes, the wish she felt of going to expiate her crime in one of those profound retreats where austere penitence weeps till death; he hoped the noble Malek Adhel would not oppose the only means of salvation remaining for a sinner, who had been guilty for his sake only. The Prince, astonished, inquired if he knew what had become of Agnes? Bérengère then spoke; she related the means by which Amaury's daughter had left the seraglio, and concluded by asking for her liberty. Malek Adhel answered: "Since that Princess has selected so respectable a protectress, madam, I confide her freedom into your hands, and leave you the arbitress of her fate. Father of the Christians," added he, turning to the Archbishop, "you know I did not seduce Agnes. Without doubt, she was too fair for me to refuse her proffered love, but to give her mine I esteemed her character too little, and the sort of glory she had acquired rendered her still less amiable in my eyes. No, a woman I had seen covered all over

with blood in battle, and unmoved, could not engage my heart : this heart, that had never loved yet, wanted a timid and modest beauty—an object both pure and virtuous, who could command its respect : in short, my love wanted an object that stands alone in the world, that has appeared but once to the eyes of men—an object that a single word conveys and expresses—I wanted”——The Archbishop hastened to interrupt him : “ My Lord,” said he, “ what do you decide about the daughter of Amaury ? ” “ Madam,” replied the Prince, addressing himself to Bérengère, “ I surrender into your hands all my rights over her ; watch her conduct ; you will henceforward be her support and her only relation, for she has just lost her remaining sister : Sybilla is no more ! ”——“ What do I hear ! ” exclaimed the Archbishop ; “ Sybilla is no more ! what will become of Lusignan ? what determination will he adopt on losing a wife who strips him of all his claims to the crown of Jerusalem ? ” “ I think,” replied Malek Adhel, with a smile, “ that my brother has already stripped him still more.” He then farther entered into some particulars of the situation of the Christians ; he said, that the loss of Sybilla had not made Lusignan any wiser, that he still persisted in looking on himself as King of Jerusalem ; but that his claims, although supported by Richard, would not meet with more success. He spoke, likewise, of the division which had taken place between the King of England and Philip Augustus, and of the various factions that prevailed in the camp of the crusaders.

At this account, the Archbishop sighed bitterly over the misfortunes, and still more over the faults, of his brethren ; and ventured to ask the Prince to permit him to charge Montmorency with some counsels in writing, proper to bring peace back among the Christians. The Prince had not a heart to deny a man for whom he entertained such a profound veneration, and even excused himself for not doing more. “ I might,” said he, “ let you de-

part with Montmorency, but I know so well the superiority of your talents, and the ascendancy of your prudence, that I can entertain no doubt of their efficacy over the minds of the Christians. To supply you with the means of allaying their dissensions, which are so advantageous to our empire, would it not be a perfidy against my brother?" The Prelate felt too well the justice of this objection to try to do it away; besides, Matilda appeared to him surrounded with such dangers, that, had he been at liberty to leave her that very day, he would have hesitated to do it: since the instant when she had returned with Malek Adhel, he had looked at her several times with attention, and had not found on her countenance that peaceable calm and sweet serenity which were habitual to her. He was impatient to speak with her, and inquire from her what the Prince might have been saying. Having made a sign, she arose that instant, and the Queen, who was desirous of unburdening her heart in sending her husband long particulars about her love and sufferings, begged likewise of the Prince leave to retire. He bowed to her, attended her to the door of her palace, still looking at Matilda, and retired into his own.

Bérenghère hastened to shut herself up in her closet, and the Princess went to the oratory, not unmoved on seeing the Archbishop was following her. She wished, she intended, but she feared, to own to him the faults she was reproaching herself with. Meanwhile, they were scarcely left alone, when, her soul pregnant with profound humility, she fell at the feet of the Archbishop, and said to him, "My Father, what blind ardour has led me out of my cloister to make me acquainted with what it was so hurtful to know! why came I to learn, in this ill-fated country, that there are crimes among the Christians, and virtues among the Infidels!"—"Daughter," replied the Prelate, "Providence takes pleasure sometimes in adorning a Pagan with the most brilliant qualities, in order to show, that,

having all in the eyes of the world, he has nothing in the eyes of God, being bereft of the true faith: and if, at other times this same providence allows the Christians to fall into great errors, it is in order to manifest the power of that religion, full of mercy, which has the blood of Christ ready to redeem the sins of her children.—But why all these inquiries, my daughter? what is it that passes in your soul? you seem to labour under a painful agitation—the blush of shame tinges your cheek: what thought can make Matilda colour thus?” At these words, the Princess hid her face in the Archbishop’s robe: she shed some tears, and replied, in a faltering voice: “My Father, the Saracén has surprised me in his gardens, he has told me that he loved, he has imprinted his impure lips on my hand. In the first disturbances of my spirits, I did not think of withdrawing it, and, when I did so afterwards, I did it without horror.” In hearing this confession, the Archbishop took care not to show any severity; but he artfully questioned his young penitent, sounded the bottom of her heart, penetrated into every recess, pursued and caught there the fugitive trace of a recent emotion, and could not help seeing that Malek Adhel was the only cause of it. Yet if it were true that this sentiment existed, it was so feeble then, that the Prelate was but little alarmed; and, as he saw means of stopping its progress with ease, far from thinking it necessary to acquaint Matilda with his suspicions, he wished to conceal from her the nature of what she felt, and that the idea she could love an Infidel should for ever remain unknown to her, because he thought there were sentiments which ought always to be looked upon as impossible for innocence to harbour. Therefore, without speaking to the Princess of the dangers to which the weakness of her heart might expose her, he only described those that surround a young girl who does not live in absolute retirement. “When we are only accountable to ourselves for our actions,” said he to her,

“and do not live under the strict discipline of the cloister, we grow remiss in the practice of our duties ; we allow ourselves certain satisfactions which we deem innocent, and which, by the consequences they lead us into, prove that they are not so. Instead of going with the Queen yesterday,” said he, “to visit the orange-grove, if you had not left the oratory, the slave of Agnes could not have met you, and you would still have been ignorant of a shameful story which I never would have wished to mention ; and this morning, when you were tempted to go and walk alone in the vast gardens of the palace, had you possessed the courage to resist that desire, and to come and shut yourself up here, the Prince would not have found you. Matilda, you are young, you are handsome ; deplore these advantages, which a vain world praises and admires, and which the faithful fear and despise ; for, they expose us to such dangers, and surround us with so many opportunities of failing, that human frailty cannot save herself, except in the secrecy of a profound retreat.” The Princess, at these words, prostrated herself, and promised entire obedience. After a moment’s rest, the Archbishop went on thus : “And, above all, daughter, never regret a world whose joys are but illusions, grandeur but a dream, and pleasures impostures only ; a world, where the liveliest happiness changes on a sudden to bitter sorrow, and where the pleasure of the evening brings us affliction in the morning : regret still less those passionate sentiments, the delights of which you often hear boasted of, and that plunge almost invariably into irretrievable ruin those who experience them : such is the effect of all earthly love, my daughter ; it enters the soul softly, but, once admitted, it wounds and gives death.”

Exalted by all that the Prelate had just said to her, Matilda might, after that conversation, have been exposed to the most dangerous temptations, and even have met the Prince without running any risk of being moved ; she returned into her cham-

ber in a much more peaceable situation of mind than when she had left it in the morning. Agnes was not there; Malek Adhel had caused a private apartment to be prepared for her near that of Bérengère, under an express condition not to leave it but with the Queen. Matilda was happy not to find her there, for she was in want of solitude, in order to review in thought the various events of that day; she paced her room in silence, musing on all she had heard; she stopped near the seat where Agnes had given loose to so many lamentations some hours before; she shuddered at the recollection of the wanderings of that unhappy soul, and, applying to that sad story part of the Archbishop's words, she raised to heaven her beautiful eyes, and finished her day with repeating many times, in a tender and doleful accent, "Such is the effect of all earthly love! it enters the soul softly, but once admitted, it wounds and gives death."

CHAPTER IX.

THE tyranny which the image of Matilda exercised over the soul of Malek Adhel became daily more imperious; incessantly occupied with that thought alone, it disgusted him with all other pleasures, followed him in all his pursuits, made him absent in all his affairs, and, during the night, deprived him of rest; for, such love never sleeps; it is ever on the watch. The Prince often, either in conversing with his friends or reviewing his troops, stopped on a sudden, remained plunged in profound reverie, heaving deep sighs, and seeing or hearing nothing more of what was passing around him. Often he went and sat in the grove where he had surprised the Princess: there, retracing to himself the beauty, the expressions, the looks, of that young maiden, his imagination grew warm at the remembrance, his heart palpitated violently, impetuous desires inflamed his blood, and he then formed the resolution to go and surprise Matilda, and force her to become his. But, suddenly, he fancied he saw her tears, he heard her cries, he pictured her to himself calling down heaven's vengeance on him, and loading him with her indignation and hatred; then his resolution changed, he could not persist in wishing to afflict Matilda; to die had seemed to him more easy. But the less he dared, the more he loved, and he could not help owning to himself that this severity of the Princess, which set obstacles to his desires and deprived him of all hope, was precisely that which made her appear so beautiful in his eyes and endeared her so much to his heart. In fact, how could he have harboured such an extraordinary sentiment, if she had been like the woman he had

known? Deep rooted and terrible as that sentiment was, however, he cherished it, and would not have exchanged it for any of the enjoyments of his past life; his smarting wound yielded him fancied pleasure, and he hugged his grief with transport. Meanwhile, days elapsed without bringing him any consolation; he no more perceived Matilda. In vain he went daily to see the Queen of England, the Princess never appeared; he many times asked the cause, and received for answer only, that being engaged by her religious vows to live in deep retirement, she was not allowed to appear before the eye of man. Such answers did but irritate his passion; and, one day, when he happened to be alone with the Queen, he suffered all his grief to burst forth; he declared to her that he could not exist any longer without seeing Matilda; that, if he were denied that satisfaction, he could no longer answer for himself; and that, from being a kind and indulgent master, he might perhaps become a furious and lawless tyrant. "That divine girl," exclaimed he, in his extreme agitation, "overturns all the powers of my soul; there is no dominion so absolute as that which she holds over me; there are none of her wishes, but what are commands in my eyes. What, then, is that European pride that disdains to ask any thing from a master who longs to grant her all? Are you ignorant, madam," continued he, carried away by that instinct that makes it easy to guess the very words that must succeed, "are you ignorant of all that you can obtain by the intercession of the Princess? In breaking your chains, without having received Saladin's commands, I venture my life without a doubt, but how happy should I think myself, did Matilda ask of me the sacrifice!"

On hearing these words, Bérengère started; she had just perceived that she might be restored to her husband, and that idea gave her indescribable emotion: too pious, however, to give the Prince any hopes, she only allowed herself to

commiserate him, and deplore a difference of religion, which placed an insurmountable barrier between Matilda and him. The Queen of England's heart was more likely than any other to pity the sufferings of unfortunate love: while she commiserated those of the Prince, she thought of her own, described them, expressed them with energy, spoke of Richard like an impassioned wife, and did not attempt to deny, that if her return to her beloved lord depended on the prayers of Matilda, it would not rest with her, but with Matilda, to address the Prince on the occasion. Malek Adhel asked for no more, and withdrew. The Queen went immediately into the apartment of the Princess; she found the Archbishop there, and told them all she had just heard, that they might be free, that the generous Malek Adhel consented to break their chains, to restore them to Richard, and that, in return for such a favour, he only implored a word from Matilda; "for he loves Matilda," added she; "he loves her with an ardour, a respect, of which I have seen but few examples among the noblest knights." These words disturbed the virgin; a crimson flush tinged the lilies of her face; she cast her humble looks to the ground, and accused herself for having inspired with love one of Mahomet's children. Bérengère blamed that excess of severity; she spoke in justification of the Prince, and maintained, that far from making him any reproaches, she could not enough admire his conduct, since, possessing the power to take every advantage, he denied himself what he might have a right to attempt, and that there was no Mahomedan Prince nor Christian King who, being the absolute master over his beloved object, would have used the same moderation. At these words, the Prelate interrupted her, and asked, in a tone rather stern, what happy hopes she could build on such a guilty love?—"My Father," replied she, "if my sister could overcome the reluctance the

Prince inspires her with, and resolve to see him again, to ask him to break our chains—once only, to obtain our liberty, Malek Adhel has sworn to deny Matilda nothing!”—The Archbishop made a short pause, and then he answered rather more gravely:—“I declare to your majesty, that, the Princess having accepted of my cares, as long as she condescends to grant me the same confidence, and remains free in her actions, I will not allow her to be one moment with the impious man who has dared to throw a profane glance upon her; and I would tell you more, madam, if I did not respect the pure and holy ignorance of the maid whose days are devoted to the Lord.”—The Queen, accustomed blindly to adopt all the Archbishop’s decisions, took good care not to contradict him, nor to press Matilda any longer to appear before the Prince; but in her inmost soul she could not approve the Prelate’s conduct, and ventured to find therein more obstinacy than reason and true piety.

The next day Malek Adhel failed not to come early to her apartments, for he flattered himself, after the obliging manner in which she had received his complaints the day before, that she would have prevailed on Matilda to leave her place of retirement; but, on seeing his hopes deceived, he inveighed in bitter and almost threatening reproaches; he declared that henceforth he would use towards his captives the same rigour as they used towards him:—“And, since they refuse not only to see me,” exclaimed he in his grief, “but even to listen to the news I may have to communicate, and the propositions I may offer, I will preserve a profound silence, and others than I will also suffer the torture of being denied the sight of the object they love.”—“Alas!” replied Bérengère, in tears, “where is your goodness? where is your justice? will you punish me for the fault of another? and is my fate to lie at the mercy of my sis-

ter's decisions?"—"I have already told you, madam," replied the Prince, "your fate depends entirely on Matilda; I may do much for you, but she must deign both to hear and speak to me." "Ah!" replied the Queen, eagerly, "as long as the Archbishop of Tyre remains with her, we shall not gain any influence over her mind."—"Is it then that Priest who sets her against me?" inquired Malek Adhel, struck with the sudden intelligence.—"Prince," answered the Queen, "the Prelate has wisdom, experience, and much piety; he knows that my sister has forsaken the world; and that, in order that such a sacrifice may please the Lord, it requires that she who performs it should do it without regret: perhaps he fears lest, in exposing herself often to the danger of hearing you, the innocent Matilda should carry back into her cloister too lively a remembrance of one of the enemies of her God."

That was enough for Malek Adhel; he went out precipitately, with a determination of removing the Archbishop away from Damietta; but where was he to send him? a slave into some other city? he could not consent to that. Love, while it made him violent, had not the power to make him unjust. Was he then to despatch him to the christian camp? Prudence would oppose it, but generosity approved this resolution; and, in Malek Adhel's soul, generosity always prevailed over prudence; besides, if he should hurt the interests of his brother, by sending back to the Christians that zealous apostle, would it not be a reason to defend him with fresh ardour? and was he not certain to do him more good than all the Archbishop's speeches could do him harm?—It was thus he justified to himself a resolution which appeared to him so guilty some days before, that he had declared to the Prelate, that the interest of his country would never allow him to adopt it; but the interest of his love

spoke now, and that alone was listened to. Malek Adhel did not allow himself to reflect much longer; he seemed fearful lest a long meditation should show him all the imprudence of the determination he had taken, and he gave orders instantly that the Archbishop should be introduced before him.—“Pontiff of Christ,” said he, “in consequence of the news received from Saladin, I have reason to believe that he will not restore the Queen of England to her husband unless the Christians consent to raise the siege of Ptolemais. I know not whether Richard’s love will induce him to make such a sacrifice; your wisdom ought, perhaps, to bring him to it, and, in order to furnish you with all the means of success, I break your chains, and send you back to the camp of the Crusaders with Montmorency. Acquaint Richard with Saladin’s dispositions: if he approve of them, I do not doubt but his example will be a sufficient authority for all the other sovereigns, and consequently it will rest with him alone to terminate this cruel war; but, if he should persist in his designs, and prefer Ptolemais to his wife, let him know that I am ready to fight him, and that the same sword which crushed your armies at Tiberiad will know how to drive them away from Ptolemais.”

The pious Archbishop was surprised at this discourse; the Prince’s resolution appeared to him so sudden, so singular, that he conceived suspicions from it; he crossed his hands on his breast, inclined his head in the attitude of reflection, and meditated in silence what could be the Prince’s real motives in sending him to the christian camp.—It cannot be, as he says, to induce Richard to retire from before Ptolemais; it would be such a cowardly action, that to propose it is almost an affront, and Malek Adhel cannot doubt, that, rather than consent, Richard would suffer death a thousand times. The Archbishop saw well that it was but a pretence to banish him from Damietta,

and guessed but too well the Prince's motives; but why should he give him the liberty to join the Christians? could he not have sent him a prisoner elsewhere? must there, even in Malek Adhel's faults, enter a share of magnanimity! Ah! that passion, which might induce him to commit an imprudence and not a cruelty, frightened the Archbishop much less by its violence than by that sort of greatness of soul that seemed combined with it; and which was, in his eyes, the blackest artifice of the demon of darkness, because it was the most dangerous of seductions. . . . No, he will not abandon his timid child in such imminent peril, he will sustain the feeble reed, and show her the road of perdition laid open before her.

While he reflected thus, Malek Adhel waited impatiently for his answer, and, seeing that he remained still silent, he pressed him to explain himself: the Archbishop then said—"You were in the wrong to believe that Richard's tenderness for his wife could ever engage him to do the cowardly and shameful action which you propose: to deliver her, he would shed all his blood; but, for the good of his country and his religion, he would give the life of this very wife so dear: such is Richard, such are all the Christian Princes; and I declare to you, that, if it were possible that they could accept the proposals which you have just given me to understand, I should employ all my ascendancy over them to make them blush. No, Prince, no; such a mission is not fit for a minister of peace, since it can only serve to rekindle a more cruel war. Montmorency is the man whom it becomes to deliver your proposals; he alone can take upon him the office!"—"It is you alone, however, that I entrust them to," interrupted the Prince, imperiously, "and this very evening you shall depart with the little caravan which is to accompany Montmorency to the camp of the Crusaders. I will give my orders that the same regard as I have ever shown you be paid

to your age and character ; but I will not allow that you pass another day at Damietta, and I expect to be obeyed."—The Prince's absolute tone leaving the Prelate no hope, he insisted no longer ; he heaved a deep sigh, and, having bowed slowly, he withdrew, and passed immediately into the Princess of England's apartment.—“ O my daughter !” said he to her, as he entered, “ I have but an instant longer to see you ! Let God watch over you ; place in him all your confidence, for you are lost if he abandons you : the Prince dreads my vigilance, and removes me hence.”—“ What, my Father, are you going to quit me ?” exclaimed Matilda, with terror. —“ The time of trials is come, my daughter,” replied the Prelate, in a tone full of vehemence : “ we must support them in a becoming way : the trials which God is preparing for you are a sign of his love ; he sends them to the elect only. O you, future bride of Christ ! never forget that here he died for you, that the ground you now tread upon is impregnated with the blood of martyrs, that all these deserts are inhabited by the children of faith, and that so many illustrious examples ought never to let you hesitate to make, if requisite, the sacrifice of your life to save your honour.”—“ Alas ! my Father,” replied Matilda, all in tears, “ I do not understand you ; explain yourself. What have I to fear, what am I to do, and what do you command ?”—“ My child,” answered the Prelate, “ it is no longer time to conceal things from you ; hitherto you were going to our God by the easy road of innocence ; now he calls you to him by the harder, but more glorious, road of virtue, and he commands me to enlighten the darkness of your ignorance ;—the Saracen, my daughter, has conceived a criminal affection for you. The impious man, harbouring an adulterous flame, wants to count you among his wives ; you, a christian virgin, the daughter of kings, the bride of the Lord ! . . . You shudder, my daughter, and fancy yourself already degraded by the bare

idea of such an abominable design No, thou noble maid, take courage, for thy courage can save thee ; raise thy soul up to the height of thy destiny, shun with horror the Saracen who dares love thee ; and, I repeat it, learn to die, if requisite ; for, the Almighty sees thee, the heavens open, and the palm of martyrdom awaits thee."—The words of the Pontiff scattered terror into the soul of Matilda ; she fancied herself surrounded with abysses and devouring fires : fright took possession of her ; distracted, beside herself, kneeling on the floor, she hid her face, drowned in tears, in the Archbishop's robe, and could only repeat, with a voice broken with sobs—" My Father, O my Father ! do not abandon me."—" My child," replied the Prelate, in a tone of softness and compassion, " I already have said that the impious Mahomedan dreads my vigilance ; but, in struggling alone against the demon's snares, your glory will be greater Meanwhile, if you feel your strength failing and your virtue dismayed, demand, obtain from the Prince, the permission of making a pilgrimage towards the Great Desert : there, amidst the broken fragments of a ruined monastery, which was raised by St. John Climaque, resides a son of Basil, a pious anchoret. The world saw him formerly adorned with the highest dignities, renowned for his vast knowledge, diving into the mysteries of the heaven and the earth ; but, the more he fed on human glory, the more he felt the emptiness of it. He saw that man, gifted with the most rare understanding, unless he be supported by the divine power, raises himself above other men only to fall from a greater height ; he saw that all which God does not fill is but a bottomless abyss : then he rejected all the vain knowledge that only served to show him man's miserable condition, and attached himself only to that light which helped to show him his glory. He therefore retired into the desert, and for these thirty years has lived there alone, spending his time in fasting, praying,

and practising deeds of hospitality. Apply to him to support your weakness; he knows the way to resist: ask for his prayers—his prayers have found their way to heaven.”

The Prelate had not time to say more; Béren-gère interrupted him: she had just heard of his journey, and wanted to know the cause of it. The Archbishop told her what pretence the Prince had employed to remove him from Damietta. — “Almighty God!” exclaimed the Queen, “can it be possible, that Saladin should ask the disgrace of Richard for the price of my ransom? he dares to propose raising the siege of Ptolemais; on such a condition only am I to be set at liberty! Well, if such be his pleasure, I can die, for I shall never behold my loved lord again.”—She said, and fell on a seat a prey to the most dreadful despair. The Archbishop, moved with compassion, drew near, and endeavoured to comfort her, in saying, that Malek Adhel had not absolutely entrusted him with that proposal as coming directly from Saladin.—But the Queen hardly listened to him; in her despair she exclaimed, that she consented freely to give her life for her husband, and die far away from him, rather than obtain her deliverance at the expense of his fame; “but let him know, at least,” added she, with heart-rending screams, “let him know that I shall not die alone! I bear in my womb a pledge of his love, a successor to his name;—must then that dear child perish with his mother too? will they feel no compassion for that tender victim?”—At this confession of the Queen, the Archbishop bowed respectfully to her. “Illustrious and unfortunate Queen,” said he, “do not despair; Providence watches over you; Providence puts you to trial, but never will abandon you. Trust me you will one day return to the coast of England, and offer to her enraptured looks the august scion of the great Henry II. Until the time be accomplished raise your broken spirits; remember that you are no longer allowed

to give yourself up to despair without offending both your God and your husband.—And you, Matilda, I recommend the Queen to your cares; let her meet with all due regard and obliging attentions; deny her nothing but what might commit your salvation; sacrifice all earthly good to her: that forgetfulness of yourself, which religion prescribes, will be repaid to you some day with usury. . . . but I cannot say more at present; time flies, the moment of my departure is approaching, and I wish to prevail on Agnes to set off with me; for, I shall not think her saved until she be far away from this place. Farewell, unfortunate Princesses. Let all heaven's blessings be showered down among you, and never forget, in your trials, that what is transient is short and of little avail; that resignation in earthly troubles ought to be easy to those who know that they do not hope in vain; and, in fine, that, in whatever situation we may be placed, though all human assistance should seem to have forsaken us, still we ought not to lose courage; for God can do more than man can comprehend."

As he finished these words, the Archbishop raised his hands on the two Princesses, blessed them, and left them, his heart filled with compassion and sorrow.

CHAPTER X.

THE Prelate entered into the daughter of Am-aury's chamber, to propose her departue that very day, in order to hasten the time of her penitence. —“ If you are fearful,” said he, “ of appearing again in the christian camp, we will stop at the monastery founded by St. Helena on the summit of Carmel ; there you will be received by holy maidens, who, submitting to the severest discipline, and free from all mental or bodily stains, live, nevertheless, in such profound humility, that they will never think they can raise themselves above you, nor remember your errors, except to ask forgiveness of them from the throne of heavenly mercy ; it is in that retreat, Agnes, that, laid in sackcloth and ashes, you will perform penance for your past life, and be able to say, with the prophet : “ O Lord ! feed me with the bread of my contrition, and let me drink plentifully the water of my tears.”

At the Prelate's first words, the Princess of Jerusalem had started, and her face had covered itself with a crimson blush ; when he had done, she turned her eyes aside with disdainful pride, and made no answer ; he then added, “ Take care, Agnes, do not harden your heart ; for, besides the misfortune of being guilty, there is likewise the misfortune of tardy repentance.” —“ My Father,” replied she, with an agitation which she was unable to contain, “ I pray you, leave me, for I declare to you, that I cannot, no, cannot, yet repent ; there is no room in my heart but for one sentiment alone —vengeance !” —“ Well, Agnes,” answered the Prelate, “ if you must have blood, if your violent and desperate soul thirsts after vengeance, I do not oppose it. Come, follow me to the christian camp, come, and place your courage at the head of your

armies; take up again the lance and the sword, and cover yourself with the blood of the Infidels."——"Yes! I will," interrupted she, in a terrible voice; then, stopping suddenly, she resumed, with more moderation, "but the moment is not come yet; I must wait for it, my Father; I cannot depart with you."——"Hear me, you unhappy woman," replied the Archbishop, in a compassionate tone, "your crimes have been so great, that, if there were bounds to divine clemency, I could not undertake to promise your pardon; but, from an infinite mercy, we can expect and hope every thing: deep as the abyss, wherein we are plunged, may be, that mercy, which is every where, is there too: it is near you, Agnes; it waits only for a single word of sincere repentance to take you again among its children. O Agnes! is not your heart moved with so much goodness?——Agnes, do not distract mine by your silence." The daughter of Amaury remained silent still. The Archbishop fell on his knees. "O my God!" exclaimed he, "deign to inspire her with pity for herself; your forgiveness is ready, but it is not enough yet; force her heart to implore it of you." Agnes persisted in her silence. The Prelate arose, his face bathed in tears of charity: when his emotion allowed him to resume, he said. "Thus the fruit of your crime will remain for ever in this world and the next, and, while its remembrance will yet subsist in that where you will no longer be, you will weep everlastingly in those terrible places where pardon never entered."

At these words, Agnes was seized with an involuntary tremour; but, with a sign of impatience, she testified she could not bear any more. The Prelate then retired, and made towards the door; on the point of shutting it, he stopped again, and his eyes fixed on Agnes: he waited till a word, a tear, should ask the favour he was longing to grant: the inflexible Agnes persisted in her silence, and waving her hand, she turned her head aside with an arrogance that extinguished all hope in the worthy Prelate's

mind.—“O Lord, it is then all over!” exclaimed he; “thou hast left her for ever: alas! I would have given my life to save her, but she will not be saved; or, rather, O my God! thou hast decreed that the sight of such horrid indifference and profligacy shall be an example for those, who, spotless yet, might grow blind on the consequences of a guilty sentiment.”——“My God,” exclaimed he, “if such be thy pleasure, I bend my head low, I submit, and depart.”

The Archbishop went and joined the little caravan that waited for him at the eastern gate of Damietta: he found there, with Montmorency, several Christian captives, who, having bought their own ransom, had availed themselves of that opportunity to engage in the service of the first baron in Christendom, and follow him into Syria. Their band was augmented by several pilgrim-monks who were on their way to Tyre, to find a ship to convey them to Europe. The rest of the caravan consisted of Turkish soldiers, charged with the protection of it; and such was the power of the orders they had received from Malek Adhel, that, during the whole way, not one of them departed from the respect and attentions which their master had commanded them to pay the Christians whom they escorted. They followed along the coasts of the Mediterranean, in order that the sea-breeze might enable them to bear the burning heat of the sands of Suez. All the cities through which they passed had fallen under Saladin's dominion; and there was none, particularly in Syria, that did not exhibit some monuments of the former splendour of the Christians, and where some church in ruins, some broken cross, did not reveal the name of its ancient owners. At the sight of those dear and respectable images, destroyed and lying in the mire, the Archbishop sighed heavily, Josselin shuddered with indignation; and, while the first asked of God to permit that all those brilliant cities might be retaken by the sons of faith, the last swore on his sword he would

recover them some day. They saw all the ports in activity preparing fleets for the destruction of the Christians; at that aspect, the young French hero, led away by his valour, could not contain his rage: his whole soul sprang forward, he longed to fight, and grew desperate that he could not engage yet. More than once unconscious of his situation and chains, forgetting that he was alone, and that thousands of enemies surrounded him, he would have drawn his sword on those destroyers of the true faith, had not the Archbishop's prudence prevented him; then he dropped his sword, scarcely able to conceal his spite and indignation: frequently, also, the wisdom of the Prelate had forced him to hide within his breast the ardour that fired him at the bare name of the Princess of England: it was not that he loved her yet, as vulgar affections spring: he looked upon her as a divine creature, who combining all that could be fancied heavenly, excited adorations which a single desire durst not have intruded; and, in his opinion, it would have been praise enough for angels to say they were like Matilda.

At last, after having seen successively displayed before them, during several days' march, the cities of Gaza, Joppa, Cesarea, and Ascalon, they perceived Mount Carmel, with its rocks and monastery; and, in the vast plain that separates it from Ptolemais, their eyes distinguished, with joy, at last, the banners of the cross flying over the tents of the Christians.

At that pleasing view, the Archbishop's bosom felt oppressed with a holy transport; he extended his arms towards his brethren, blessed them from afar, and, forgetting his age and weakness, hurried on to meet them. Montmorency alone could keep up with him, the rest of the caravan remained behind: meanwhile, the advanced posts of the Christians perceiving at a distance, a band of Mussulmen soldiers, and, a little nearer, a priest and a warrior, who seemed to observe the camp with attention,

knew not whether they might not be two Infidels in disguise; and, fearful of a surprise, they sounded the alarm and called for assistance: all the crusaders were instantly in motion, armed themselves in haste, ran out, and, at the moment when they appeared outside their intrenchments, perceived the venerable Archbishop of Tyre, with his gray hairs loaded with dust, and his staff in his hand. Lusignan recognised him the first; he sprang forward, exclaiming:—"Am I to believe my eyes! is it you that I see, my Father! are you the angel of peace, destined to bring back union and concord among us?—He had scarcely said, when Montmorency was already at the feet of Philip Augustus; that worthy monarch raised him up with goodness, pressed him in his arms, and testified the joy he felt at beholding again near him the firmest support of his throne. Richard more affected still, took the hand of the Archbishop, looked at him earnestly, not daring to ask a question. The Prelate understood him, and said:—"Great Prince, fear nothing. Few days have elapsed since I left your royal consort and your sister; they are in excellent health; I left them at Damietta, under the noble Malek Adhel's protection."—"Are they treated like slaves, my Father?" interrupted Richard, eagerly.—"They could not, even in the royal palace of England, meet with more respect and honours.—But," added the Prelate, "the detail of their situation, the motives that bring me hither, and the explanations I shall venture to beg of your Majesty, will be the subject of many a conference: my first care, at this moment, ought to be to solicit you on behalf of the Mussulmen who have escorted us. Allow them to repair to Ptolemais: it is a favour which I have promised them to obtain from you, and which will be the just reward of the generous manner in which they have attended us hither." The Archbishop's request was unanimously assented to: several christian soldiers, the red cross on their backs, helmet on their head, and sword in hand,

offered even to take upon themselves the duty of accompanying the Saracens as far as the gates of Ptolemais; and, reciprocally moved at this exchange of good offices, they seemed, during their short journey, rather disposed to assist each other like brothers than to fight like enemies.

Meanwhile the report of the arrival of the Archbishop and Montmorency had spread joy throughout the christian camp; not one of the crusaders but looked on the Prelate as the pledge of harmony and concord. One would have thought that all animosities were quelled at his approach, and that the confidence that he inspired was so powerful, that, even before he had spoken, all hearts were disposed to hear him. He begged of the King to assent to the convocation of a general council for the next morning; all promised to attend: he then traversed the camp amidst the general acclamations, and went to taste some repose under the tent of Richard, whilst Montmorency accompanied Philip Augustus into his, and saw all the French, delighted with his return, swarming about him, and making the air resound with the glorious name of their young hero.

In expectation of the council summoned for the next day, the Prelate did not remain idle; he was thinking how to prepare the minds of men to hear him: he inquired into the cause of the dissensions; he spoke powerfully to Richard, reproached Lusignan with an obstinacy that might ruin the Empire, and ventured to represent to Philip Augustus, that it was not to establish a king of Jerusalem, but to conquer the Holy City, that he came to the East; he also conferred in private with the Duke of Bavaria, who had the command of the Germans since the death of the Emperor Frederic. He obtained the support of Esmengard d'Aps, grand master of the monastic order of Hospitality; and, after a short conversation, brought entirely over to his opinion the Genoese, the Flemish, the Templars, and the Knights of St. John. He then reti-

red: before he allowed sleep to close his heavy eyelids, he went to the altars to return thanks to God for the hopes he ventured to entertain, and to ask for eloquent and persuasive words that might move the heart of kings, and bring about the next day the difficult and important work of the reconciliation of the Christians.

CHAPTER XI.

THE dawn had scarcely begun to tinge the East when the Archbishop was already on his way towards the council-hall; three thrones were erected there: Richard occupied one, Philip sat on the other; the third, destined for the Emperor of Germany, remained vacant; the Duke of Bavaria placed himself a little below; lower still sat the Electors of the Empire, and the Peers of France; the English Barons took their seats according to their rank; the Princes of the Church followed in the same order. The fourth side of the hall was set apart for the Eastern Chiefs: among them were the Prince of Antioch, and that of Galilea; the Counts of Jaffa and Tripoli; the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre, and of the Teutonic Order; in front, Lusignan and Conrad; these two proud rivals, placed on a seat of the same height, seemed indignant at an equality, which, to them, appeared an affront, and presented the assembly the strange sight of two Kings of Jerusalem disputing obstinately for the possession of a kingdom where a third king reigns. Scarcely were all the Sovereigns, with their sceptre, their crown, and their purple robes, seated, and in silence, when the Archbishop of Tyre arose, his head bare, and eyes inflamed. He laid before them, in strong language, the fatal effects of the discord that had prevailed in the camp; he proved that it was that alone which hindered the Christians taking possession of Ptolemais and marching to Jerusalem; he thundered against those who, preferring their temporal advantage to that of religion, were the only cause of the dreadful calamities that threatened the Crusaders; he endeavoured also to alarm their pride, in showing them that their vain dissensions made them the

sport of the Mahomedans. "A thousand times," added he, "I have heard them repeat among themselves: What then! have so many powerful Kings dragged their subjects and their treasures from the extremity of the West, only to form a camp on our lands, whence they dare not come out? This is not all," continued the Archbishop; "while you waste the most valuable time and most favourable season, think you that Saladin will remain an idle spectator of your fatal debates? In all his provinces he is collecting troops, in all his ports fitting out fleets; every where I have found his people in activity, preparing themselves for war with the most indefatigable ardour: master of such forces, what then is Saladin waiting for to rush upon and destroy you? Why, for the assistance of a more powerful auxiliary, more destructive than his armies, and who, carrying in its bosom thirst, famine, and pestilential exhalations, is daily advancing on you: when Cancer shines in the zodiac, when the dog-star sheds on you its devouring fires, when the mountains are dried up, when the plants and fruits fall withered on the burning ground, and incapable of resisting so many scourges, your exhausted bodies are no longer able to bear the weight of arms; Saladin then, like a destructive comet, will suddenly come upon you; the lion of war, the terrible Malek Adhel, will accompany him; they will display their bloody falchions, and all will yield before them; and, in the course of a few hours, of so many noble Knights who have taken the sword in defence of the Son of Mary, there will remain but a little dust, and a great disgrace; and this camp, where we are now; this camp, filled yet with soldiers and heroes, changed into a vast burying-ground, will only remind future generations of the shame of your defeat and the triumph of your enemies." Such a bold picture astonished the assembly; all minds were in agitation, a general murmur was heard; Richard and Philip Augustus moved with the fate that the Prelate had foretold

them, surprised that their courage should be called into question, arose, by a spontaneous movement, and swore, that if they must die, they would not die without glory. Lusignan seemed affected with a profound grief, but the countenance of the Marquis of Tyre did not change: inflexible in his projects, and proud alone to possess a city in Palestine, he fancied himself above the Kings that surrounded him, out of the reach of the disasters announced to them, and his will was not shaken. Meanwhile the Prelate perceived he had succeeded in moving his auditors, and that they perhaps would be frightened into discouragement, unless he revived their hopes; therefore, resuming, in a voice tempered with softness, he pointed out to them the incalculable advantages of a speedy reconciliation. "While the Saracens think you the prey of your fatal broils, and repose themselves on the thought, while Saladin is yet in Jerusalem, and Malek Adhel in Egypt, concentrate your forces; and like a hurricane that carries every thing before it, rush on your enemies without further delay; to-morrow, at break of day, let Ptolemais be attacked by all your collected forces, and in the evening you will enter it in triumph, and plant on its dismantled walls the glorious standard of the Cross."

The eloquence of the Archbishop growing animated by this bold image, he drew a lively picture of the triumphs that would follow this first; he showed the Infidels in dismay flying before the Christians, and these last pushing their victory with vigour, opening themselves a road to Jerusalem, and taking possession of it before Malek Adhel could have had time to advance to his brother's assistance. Similar to those divine men, who, inspired by Heaven, formerly showed futurity to the eyes of other men, the Prelate, imbued with the flame of enthusiasm and religion, pictured to all the listening Christians, the instant, the happy instant, when the gates of Sion would open before them, when their hands would rebuild the holy temple, and when they

would strew, with the palms of victory, those same places their Saviour impregnated with his blood, spilt for their sake. That hope which the Archbishop had conceived passed into the souls of his hearers; one only cry was heard, one only wish prevailed; all burned to fight, and Conrad's partisans, mixing with those of Lusignan, forgot their former animosity and only saw brethren in arms, in those whom, a few hours before, they looked upon as enemies. Meanwhile the prudent Archbishop did not rest satisfied with a reconciliation, which, springing from the effervescence of a moment, might not hold any longer: he wished it to rest on a more solid foundation; and availing himself of the dispositions the assembly seemed to be in, and the ascendancy he had obtained, he once more begged their attention, and said, "And I also wish that all these brave soldiers, these great captains, who are going to shed their blood to reconquer the holy city, may know to whom, next to God, they owe the homage of it. I see before me two Princes, who both lay claim to it; who both, supported by illustrious protectors, evince, with equal rights, as invincible an obstinacy. I know that the crown of Jerusalem belonged to Sybilla, and that, having died without posterity, she could only transmit the pious inheritance to her sister Isabella, the wife of Conrad; it should seem, therefore, that the Marquis ought to be looked upon as the only legitimate possessor of Baldwin's crown; meanwhile Lusignan, who was anointed King by the unanimous voice of his subjects, is still full of life and vigour; and I will ask of you all, Sovereigns who hear me now, can so august a character, so eminent a dignity, ever be forfeited otherwise than by death? and would he, who could strip him of them while he yet lives, and take possession of his sceptre, deserve any other name than that of usurper? I see, illustrious Monarchs, that this truth moves you, and as none among you would suffer the affront intended to be offered to Lusignan, none will permit that he

should bear it. However, in order that Conrad may not forfeit the claims which his marriage with Isabella has so justly and so lawfully invested him with, decide that, during the years which heaven may yet reserve for Lusignan to see, he alone shall be looked upon by the Christians as King of Jerusalem; but that after his death, whether the favour of a second marriage shall have gifted him with posterity or not, the crown shall still, and for ever, belong to Conrad and his successors." This proposal was received with universal acclamations, for it equally gratified both the impatience every one experienced of coming to a reconciliation, and the promises by which each party had pledged themselves to maintain the respective rights of their clients. Could not Richard say to Lusignan, I have pledged myself to cause you to be elected King of Jerusalem; you are so now, my oaths are fulfilled; and what had Conrad to ask of Philip Augustus? Had not the possession of Palestine just been secured to him? It might be that in their inmost soul, these two proud rivals were far from being satisfied; but, led away by the general impulse, and seeing that their most zealous protectors pressed them to come to a determination, they submitted, and acquiesced in the Archbishop's proposition. Then all the Kings and Princes arose, and drawing near a table where lay the book of the gospel, covered with a rich silk stuff, they respectfully touched it with their hands, and swore on that holy object of their worship, to execute punctually the conventions which had just been entered into by the Archbishop of Tyre. That ceremony over, Richard exclaimed, "To-morrow we assault Ptolemais!"—"To-morrow we take Ptolemais!" added Philip Augustus. To this exclamation of the two greatest Sovereigns in the world, the whole assembly answered by such loud and joyful shouts, that they resounded throughout the whole camp, and the soldiers, moved by such warlike acclamations felt their blood glowing with new audacity; and,

hoping they were again to be led to action, they gathered round the Council-hall, in order to learn sooner when they should dispose of victory. They hastened to tell them, that the next morning with the dawn they were to be under the walls of Ptolemais, and that before the evening they were expected to be masters of the town; all pledged themselves with that eager ardour, which, knowing no obstacles, and counting labours and hardships for nothing, would undertake to do impossibilities, because it feels conscious that nothing is impossible to it.

Meanwhile, before the meeting broke up, Montmorency asked to be heard. They all sat down again; alone he stood, and said, "Sovereigns and Knights, the cause of God, which we are going to defend, is most assuredly the noblest of all; but perhaps that of misfortune and beauty ought not to be less sacred in our hearts. Which of us does not weep to behold the Queen of England in chains, and Malek Adhel presuming to require a shameful retreat as the price of her ransom? But who will not be incensed, on hearing that this same Malek Adhel, inflamed with the charms of the Princess Matilda, wounds the modesty of that heavenly maid, in daily speaking to her of his guilty love? If, hitherto, he has not broken through the respect he owes the daughters of kings, who knows whether, soon tired of the rigours he meets with, he may not—I see you shuddering at the bare thought, Sire," continued he, turning to Richard, "and already your wishes, like mine, are addressing this august assembly, and entreating its noble members to swear they will fly with us to the assistance of those illustrious Princesses, as soon as our valour shall have cleared the roads to Damietta. I am far from wishing, however, that the whole army should abandon its conquests in Palestine to march against Egypt, but I demand only that all the Knights who have sworn to honour and serve beauty, be permitted to join with me to go and

deliver the Princess Matilda, and restore her pure and spotless to that heaven that awaits her, or those thrones in the world that claim and invite her." "If such be the vow one must have made to follow you," replied Philip Augustus, eagerly, "what knight will remain here?—are not honour and beauty the motto of every one? have Kings themselves any other? In the name of God, I swear, that Damietta shall see me at her gates."—"Sire," interrupted Richard, "we cannot both leave the army at once, and I think that your Majesty will not dispute with me the right of going to snatch away my wife and sister from that bondage the Turk has presumed to lay them under." "I think," exclaimed Lusignan, in his turn, "I cannot deserve to return into my Jerusalem, unless I begin by supporting the cause of misfortune; my arm, my blood, and my life, belong to the Princess Matilda; and I am not afraid to own, that, if the sacrifice of my crown only were necessary to obtain her hand, I would not hesitate to make it." At this declaration, Richard pressed affectionately the hand of his brother in arms, and seemed already to give him his consent. Montmorency perceived it; deeply hurt on seeing declared and countenanced pretensions which his modesty had hindered him from expressing, he resumed, proudly, "The intention of Lusignan appears to me inconsiderate; for I do not imagine that he would wish to have it said of him, that when he lost his kingdom, he was at the head of the army, and far away when it was retaken." Lusignan grew offended at this speech, and wished instantly to have satisfaction: but the two Kings interfered with their authority, and, with the assistance of the Archbishop, they succeeded to allay the resentment of the two Knights. They then took again Josselin's proposal into consideration, and resolved, that after the taking of Ptolemais, a band of a thousand warriors should be formed, under the name of *Knights of the Virgin*; that Richard should command them,

and Montmorency next under him ; but that the names of all the other volunteers should be cast into an urn, in order that fortune might decide between them, with the exception, however, of that of Philip Augustus, who could not quit the army at the same time with Richard ; that of Lusignan, who could not leave his kingdom at the time they were fighting to restore it to him ; and that of Conrad, who, proud and haughty, did not deem the honour of a woman worth the danger of a battle.

All those great interests being thus settled, they drew up the plan of the next day's attack. Richard, at the head of his English, and supported by the monastic Knights of Hospitality and the Flemish, was to take possession of the western tower. Philip Augustus engaged to storm that of Nazareth on the south : Lusignan was to march on the weakest points of the wall that surrounded the city, to place there the vast engines that had been long since constructed ; and Conrad, with a sarcastic smile, undertook to support him. Meanwhile, in order that all those preparations might not be perceived by the enemy, they enclosed the camp all around with high palisades : each Sovereign gave his orders, prepared for action, banished repose, and breathed war only. Scarcely had the twilight of the evening come on, when Montmorency, at the head of a thousand pioneers, availed himself of the obscurity to begin to undermine in silence the outer walls of the city, called the Barbican walls : Lusignan conveyed slowly a wooden tower, filled with deadly weapons, and placed it opposite an ill repaired breach : bodies of Tyrians carried on their shouldiers, rams, balistas, and other implements of war, which they applied against the walls : all those movements were performed cautiously, and in silence, and never did the forerunners of death announce themselves with less noise and show : whilst all were thus preparing for the terrible attack of the next day, the inhabitants of Ptole-

mais, resting with blind confidence on the dissensions which, until that day, had kept the Christians in chains in their camp, slept in peace, unconscious that the angel of destruction was advancing on them, and already flying over their heads. Scarcely had the dawn appeared, when, suddenly started from their sleep by the clangour of trumpets, the elashing of arms, and the neighing of horses, they ran to their ramparts, and beheld with terror the frightful preparations that threatened on all sides: their walls, attacked in their foundations by thousands of soldiers, were soon to prove but a weak defence. Hoping to interrupt the workmen, the Turks threw on them heated stones and melted lead; but soon they were forced to retire by the arrows shot like hail among them. Meanwhile, they returned to the charge, and, led by the brave Metchoub, to whom Saladin had entrusted the defence of Ptolemais, they opposed a constant and obstinate resistance to the unruly ardour of the Christians; already several towers were overturned, the ditches half filled, the breaches opened in many places, the crusaders on the point of mounting the assault, and still the besieged made no offer of surrender. Richard, indignant, felt his valour growing with their obstinacy; he encouraged his troops; their efforts increased; their intrepidity knew no longer any obstacles: the beams armed with iron, the sharp scythes, the dreadful rams, were turned against the eastern tower. It shook, and fell to the ground with a horrid crash, dragging in its fall the warriors who defended it. Richard sprang among the fragments; took possession of the suburbs; for some time the Saracens disputed the ground with him; but, soon perceiving that the Christians were masters on all points, they flew away in terror to take shelter in the second works. Philip Augustus, having entered the town of Nazareth, united his forces with Richard's, in order to give the vanquished no respite, and both prepared in person to attempt storming the second entrenchments.

While they thus followed their victory, they learned, with astonishment, that, on the sea-side, Montmorency had just obtained a more brilliant one still; that he was master of the port and towers that protected it, and that, opening to himself roads inaccessible to any other warrior, with the assistance of suspended bridges which he had caused to be thrown from the outward works over the city walls, he had but a few more enemies to overthrow, to be master of the western suburb, and join again the rest of the army. He was not long waited for. Except Malek Adhel's, there was no arm capable of opposing obstacles to his valour; and now he was at the foot of the second entrenchments, which the sword of Richard and the lance of Philip Augustus had already shaken, but the young hero wished for more expeditious means; with his own hand he placed a ladder against the wall, and mounted the assault the first: at some distance, Lusignan followed his example, and both, animated with the desire of surpassing each other, stood, with an audacity hitherto unseen, the arrows that were showered down upon them. Meanwhile, Montmorency had reached the battlements; he entered; he was already victor. Forgetting then the dangers that threatened, and the enemies who surrounded him, he threw away the shield that protected his head; and catching from the hands of his followers the standard of the cross, he first planted it on the top of the walls, and thus gave the Christians the splendid sign of their triumph. In vain did the Saracens endeavour to throw it down; the young hero maintained his victory with the same valour he had obtained it; he appeared standing on the top of the ramparts, jumped into the interior, placed himself before the sacred banner, and with his sword only kept the Infidels from approaching.

Meanwhile the ladder, by means of which he had opened to himself such a glorious road, was overturned with all the warriors it bore, and he

found himself alone amidst a crowd of enemies: but his courage was with him, and he feared not: the Saracens, ashamed of being repulsed by one single Christian, returned in numbers upon him: while his invincible arm kept them off on one side, he received from the other a blow from a battle-axe, which split his helmet in two; his head remained bare and defenceless. At the sight of his youth and beauty, the Mussulmen stood still, astonished to behold such unconquerable valour in such a tender youth. They seemed afraid of destroying him they could not help admiring; but from the height of the citadel Metchoub had recognised the hero, had ran with eagerness, encouraging his soldiers. "Fools," cried he, "what are you waiting for? If Montmorency fall under your blows, Ptolemais may be carried, but victory will no less be ours." He said, and, followed by his troops, he surrounded the Knight; this last, on the point of being overcome by numbers, opposed an intrepid heart and an unconquerable arm to the torrent ready to swallow him up: he placed his back against the wall, and, neglecting to defend his life, thought only of protecting the standard of the cross, waving over his head: already the victim of his generous zeal, his blood began to tinge his arms, when heaven, desirous of preserving him yet for a world of which he was the ornament and glory, sent him a defender. After being repulsed several times, Lusignan had at last succeeded in storming the rampart; thousands of Christians followed him: he was the first to perceive the peril Montmorency was in; he flew to his assistance; the Christians hurried on with him, and succeeded in disengaging the hero: scarcely was he free, when he threw away his broken sword, took hold of another, covered himself with a helmet that had belonged to one of the enemies he had killed, and, wounded as he was, sought for new combats. Metchoub, however, furious on seeing his prey escaping, turned all his rage against Lusignan; he slung a dart

at him so swift and well-directed, that the King of Jerusalem had not time to turn aside; he received it in his breast; the blood issued from the wound; the valiant warrior reeled, and fell on his knees: Metchoub then insulted him. "King of Jerusalem," said he, "since thou hast lost thy kingdom in this world, go and seek it in the other!" But Metchoub had not time to go on; all the works were carried; the whole army was in Ptolemais. Richard flew to the assistance of his brother in arms, saved, and revenged him. Conqueror of Metchoub, he had him put in chains. The inhabitants of Ptolemais, seeing their leader in irons, submitted to the victors, and accepted the capitulation that Philip Augustus offered them. Then were seen on all sides triumphant crosses raised high on the top of the mosques, and splendid banners unfurled in the air: the sun gilded them with its rays, and yet enlightened before its departure the triumphal entry of the army into the conquered city; the Kings of France and England, holding each other by the hand, marched at the head of their troops, and went to return thanks for their victory to the God of Armies in the great church of St. John. After having been consecrated by the Infidels to their Prophet, it had just been restored to its first worship. The Archbishop of Tyre, clad in his pontifical robes, had purified it; he began the holy ceremonies, and made the sacred name of Christ resound with the solemn accents of a hymn of gratitude; the voices of the heroes repeated it after him: monarchs, princes, soldiers, all prostrated themselves without distinction either of rank or title, united, mixed together, as they would have been before the Almighty. After having acquitted themselves of this sacred duty, the victors retired into the quarters respectively assigned them, and solaced themselves, after their hard and glorious labour, in tasting the repose that night and silence procure.

CHAPTER XII.

WHILE Ptolemais was thus falling under the dominion of the Christians, Saladin, fully relying on the solidity of its ramparts, the courage of its defenders, and still more on the dissensions that prevailed in the camp of the Crusaders, not even supposing that the enemy would venture to attack such a strong place, had advanced towards Mussul with part of his army, in order to defend that place against the attempts of the Sultan Emadin, its former possessor: a few days had been sufficient to reduce him, and he was returning in triumph along the river Orontes, when, at the foot of the Galilean mountains, he met the brave Metchoub, deputed by the prisoners taken at Ptolemais. That unfortunate warrior, his head covered with ashes, and despair in his heart, prostrated himself at the feet of his master. "Take my life," said he, "for thy foes have surprised me; they have possessed themselves of the city thou hast entrusted to my care, and have forced me to come and ask thee to put thy seal to the capitulation which I have been under the necessity of making with them."

At this unforeseen intelligence, Saladin remained struck and confounded: he could not believe, nor comprehend what he was told, that the eloquence of a single man had sufficed to appease the rankling animosities of the Christians, and that a single day had seen them take possession of the most important city in Palestine, next to Jerusalem. "Who then," demanded he, "is this extraordinary man, who has obtained over the minds of so many Princes a power that neither the interests of their glory nor their religion has been able to gain, and what hand has been strong enough to shake the

triple wall with which I had surrounded Ptolemais?" Metchoub replied—"Just as a single word of the great Prophet would chain the tempest in the air, so has the Archbishop of Tyre, by the force alone of his words, suspended that terrible quarrel that divided the Christians, and threatened to crush them. As to the other miracle, the sudden fall of Ptolemais, the valour of Richard and Philip Augustus has had its share in it; but, had it not been for Montmorency's thundering sword, they never would have achieved it."

"If I be not under the illusion of a dream," replied Saladin, "thy words are false; for, at the moment I am speaking, the Archbishop of Tyre and Josselin of Montmorency are prisoners at Damietta."—"They were undoubtedly," answered Metchoub; "but Malek Adhel has broken their chains; he has given them a numerous escort to conduct them across the desert to the camp of the Crusaders; they, having arrived with their brethren the 16th day of the moon of Redbeg, on the 17th the Christians were reconciled, and on the 18th became masters of Ptolemais." "Knowest thou what thou art about in telling me such things, presumptuous slave?" exclaimed the Sultan, in anger: "knowest thou that thou givest rise in my mind to strange suspicions against my brother?"—"God forbid," interrupted Metchoub, "that I should ever attempt to instil into thy Highness's mind any suspicions against the fidelity of Malek Adhel, thy most submissive servant! but what I tell thee shall be confirmed by the brave soldiers who have accompanied thy brother's captives from Damietta to the camp, and who, as a reward for that service, are now the only free Mussulmen in Ptolemais;—perhaps I could tell thee more, if I were not afraid to raise thy anger, and if we were not surrounded with so many ears, intent on listening to us."—"Come then, and speak to me alone," replied the Sultan with agitation: "and, on thy head, mind what thou sayest; for I know not whether I could forgive the sacrileg-

gious tongue that dare to insinuate that the brother of my heart, the dearest friend of my bosom, is a traitor whom I am to guard against." This said, he caused his tent to be pitched, and shut himself up with Metchoub. Scarcely were they alone, when the last exclaimed, throwing himself at his master's feet, "No, great Prince, thy brother is no traitor! but he is ruled by a passion too extraordinary not to be under the influence of some spell. A christian virgin, of such heavenly beauty that one might think her a houri escaped from our Prophet's paradise, has dazzled his eyes and broken his soul: since he saw her, the noble Malek Adhel is no longer what he was; he neglects the government thou hast entrusted him with, and equally forgets both the interests of his country and the orders of his master!"—"And what is the name of this dangerous beauty?" replied Saladin: "what woman has had the power to enervate the great soul of Malek Adhel?"—"The Princess Matilda of England, the sister of King Richard, a girl sixteen years of age, is the beauty who holds at her feet in chains, like a vile slave, the lion of war, the thunder of the East: it is on her account that he has dismissed contemptuously all the women of his seraglio; it is because she desired it, that he has broken the chains of the Archbishop of Tyre and of the valiant Montmorency. Without a doubt, if she had commanded it also, he would have escorted her himself to the christian camp; for he has sworn that whatever Princess Matilda should ask should be granted instantly."—"That is an abominable falsehood!" replied Saladin eagerly; "and, I am confident that Malek Adhel has taken no such oath. If the Princess of England thus swayed it over him, would she not have commanded him to give up to the Christians all the places he has under his government? would she not have prevailed on him to become a Christian himself and join with my enemies? Answer me, Metchoub; has he done so?"—"No, undoubtedly," replied

Metchoub, "he has not done it yet; but know, then, that the proud European has not even made any trial in that respect. I am told that hitherto, inflexible and severe, she keeps obstinately away from him; that all his adorations, entreaties, submissions, have not obtained from her either a kind look or a favourable word; and, in short, that he undertakes nothing for her service, because she does not deign to express a wish. But, if, on a sudden, dismissing her disdainful pride, love were to take the place of coldness, and as the price of her affection she were to require of Malek Adhel the sacrifice of his religion and country——Sultan, believe me, I say much for thy brother, when I say that he would hesitate."—"No, he would not!" interrupted the Sultan, throwing a glance of anger on Metchoub. "Malek Adhel is as incapable of betraying me, as I am of suspecting him. Perhaps he may be in love; most probably he is, for it is said that the women of Europe possess to a supreme degree the art of enlivening, by feigned rigours, the most unconquerable warriors; but proud, beautiful, as thou describest this English Princess, tender as she may be, she never will obtain from Malek Adhel more than the sacrifice of his life—of his honour she cannot. Hear me, rash Metchoub! If thou hadst not shed thy blood for me in many battles, I would make thee pay with thy life the suspicion with which thou hast dared to pollute my brother's great name. But be not alarmed; for it is to the clemency of him thou hast accused, that I am going to entrust the charge of thy punishment. Go this instant to Damietta, appear before Malek Adhel, confess to him thy fault, implore his forgiveness, give him the orders I am going to prepare, and be a witness of his fidelity in executing them."

He said, and Metchoub retired. After two hours he sent for him, and giving him the letter he had just written to his brother, to which he had applied his royal seal, he exclaimed, "These will inform

Malek Adhel of my pleasure, and I am certain he will not swerve therefrom in a single point. I command him in the first place to send the Queen of England to Cairo, and have her kept there in close confinement, in order that Richard, moved with the sorrows of a wife he loves, may accept the price I shall set on her liberty: an immense price however, for it is Ptolemais that I intend to demand as her ransom: without a doubt, the other Sovereigns, who have conquered that city with Richard, and have as many claims to it as he, not having the same interest in restoring it, will not approve my proposal, and I hope then their refusal will operate towards creating fresh dissensions, more cruel, more fatal still, than the former, against which all the Prelate's eloquence will prove of no service, and which I shall avail myself of to crush my fierce enemies for ever! Meanwhile, Malek Adhel shall collect without delay his scattered troops, and, joining those of Damietta with those of Cairo, shall come at their head to meet me in the mountains of Khouroutba, where I am going to wait for him. Before his departure, he shall send the Princess of England back to the King her brother: a vessel shall be ready for her in the port of Damietta; and, if Malek Adhel grant thy pardon, thou, Metchoub, shalt have the care of conducting her to the christian camp, and shalt direct thy vessel toward the port of Ptolemais. I will take care to acquaint Richard with thy expected return, and, in consideration of the prize we give him back, I will obtain a safe conduct for thee. Hence! bear my orders to Malek Adhel, and see whether he will balance between his brother and a woman."

Having spoken thus, Saladin caused two of his best camels to be given to Metchoub, with the like number of Arab horses, whose swift feet left scarcely any mark imprinted on the sand, and many slaves to escort him. The night was not yet very far advanced, when Metchoub had already passed Sefour, and saw in the shade of night the small for-

tress of Ramla rising at the entrance of the desert.

But, while he is thus swiftly advancing towards a place where he was going to create so much disturbance, let us see what was passing there, and what had happened since the departure of the Archbishop.

After he left Damietta, Matilda, faithful to the promise she had made him, had kept herself religiously confined in her retirement, resisting with equal firmness the reasons the Queen gave that she should meet the Prince, and the slight wishes her own heart ventured to form in that respect. Far from seeing in the Archbishop's absence a reason to be less rigid, she found one to be more timid and felt well, that, bereft of the experience of her guide, she could find no safety but in the silence of a deep solitude, and that her duty as well as her interest, prescribed to her to deny all the entreaties that tended to draw her aside. At last the tender Bérengère, tired with employing fruitless solicitations, fearful of the anger her obstinate refusals might excite in the Prince's breast, discouraged by the prolongation of her captivity and the mortal sorrow of being away from her husband, could no longer withstand so many griefs combined together: the condition she was in also increased her weakness, her health grew worse, and soon her life was in danger.

Scarcely was Matilda informed of it, ere she forgot her own dangers to think only of the Queen's; she ran and shut herself up with her, left her neither day nor night, and endeavoured to recall her courage, in saying all that could revive her hopes. Malek Adhel, on his side, lavished on his royal captive the most constant attentions and delicate care: he sent to Alexandria for an Arabian physician, celebrated throughout the East, and for the most salutary plants from the extremity of Yemen; but all these cares became useless. Bérengère grew weaker every day, her eyes were dim, her

strength failed her, and Matilda felt in her inmost soul the presentiment of a dreadful misfortune. One night, as, all in tears, she was watching by the Queen's bedside, she turned round to her, and expressed in a faint voice how much she was touched with her affectionate kindness. "Yes, that affection might have restored me my life," added she, "and I am going to die." The Princess in despair took hold of her hand, and pressed it on her bosom. "Speak," said she, "speak, pray, you never can tell me soon enough how I may save you."—"All that I request of you," replied the Queen, reviving a little, "is that you will receive Malek Adhel only once more: speak to him in my favour, obtain from him (it depends on yourself) that he send me back to Richard, in spite of all the contrary orders he may receive from Saladin. Restore me the hope of seeing my lord again, and you will see my strength daily returning: I shall owe to you my life, and that of the child I bear in my womb. Ah! my sister, can you be guilty when doing such a service?"—"I should be very guilty if I denied you," replied Matilda warmly. "Be easy, my sister; you shall be obeyed; I will see the Prince, fall at his knees, and implore his pity." "Have only a little pity on the torments he suffers," interrupted the Queen in a low voice; "without answering his love, behold him without anger, speak to him with moderation, and you will see him express his gratitude only that you condescend to ask him any thing."

The promise of Matilda had already shed a wholesome balm in the wound of the Queen; her hopes revived, and her anxiety cooled; she knew the power of love; she knew that he who loves, runs, flies, precipitates himself, harbours but one thought, and stops at no obstacle, thinking every thing both lawful and practicable. Since Matilda had taken charge of her destiny, and Malek Adhel was the disposer of it, she found she could breathe in peace, and taste some repose. In fact, sleep, which for a long time past had forsaken her, in

spite of all her efforts and the remedies administered to her, came on, in consequence of her more peaceful thoughts, and restored at last a little calm to her broken frame. Seeing her asleep, Matilda drew softly the curtains to hide the light, and went into the oratory, in order to return thanks to God for the Queen's improving state. Wholly occupied with that beloved sister, it was only for her that she asked from heaven support, strength, and happiness; that interest was the first in her mind: it made her forget all others, and she did not recollect that Bérengère was recovering her peace only because she was to expose her own. The day was already advanced, and the Queen, feeling herself stronger, had left her bed; she had been removed near the window, where she breathed a fresher air, and her eyes, fatigued, wandered with pleasure over the verdant fields of the Delta. Kneeling before her, the Princess was singing to her some hymns in a low voice when a slave entered, and told them that the Prince had come to inquire for news of the Queen, and was waiting for an answer in the great Jasper-hall. At these words, Bérengère threw on her sister one of those expressive and supplicating glances which contain more prayers than any language can express. Matilda squeezed her hand with a soft smile: "I understand you," said she, "and am going to fulfil my engagement." She then arose, and, passing into the Jasper-hall, appeared before the Prince with that calm dignity which give to a woman's looks something celestial, because she owes it only to what is most divine on earth—innocence and goodness.

On beholding her before him, after having so long and so uselessly requested it, the Prince exclaimed with involuntary surprise, he knew not whether he was awake; so lively a joy had overpowered his heart, that it had, as it were, suspended both life and motion; fixed to the spot, oppressed, he neither could understand, believe, nor

express, his happiness. The virgin stopped at the entrance of the room, and, bending her head with a soft and modest look, she said, "My Lord, I come hither in the name of an unfortunate Queen, to implore your generosity."—"Hold!" interrupted Malek Adhel eagerly, "never say that you come to implore.—Implore me!—you! Ah! angelic beauty, it is not prayers, but commands that you must address to me; here am I at your feet, ready to hear and execute them.—Speak, command, absolute sovereign over Malek Adhel's thoughts!"—"I wish, my lord," replied she, blushing, and retiring a few paces, "I wish much you would not thus humble yourself before me." He exclaimed, "No, I do not humble myself by kneeling before you: on the contrary, I honour myself, and take pride in submitting to your power. O Matilda! how can I not adore you! what more just than to adore what is most beautiful, most perfect, on earth?" "My Lord," interrupted she, "the Queen remains very ill; I cannot therefore leave her long. Deign to hear the motive of my visit: a deep sorrow has affected her health; it threatens her life; I tremble for her, I dread to see my brother's wife perish; you alone can prevent so great a misfortune; the promise of restoring her to her husband may recall her from the brink of the grave; and, if I have cherished the hope that the heart of Malek Adhel would grant me that favour, I have trusted much less to my prayers than to a generosity on which no one can ever presume too much." "No!" resumed the Prince, "I never experienced such ecstasy; never yet did such delightful harmony strike my ears and intoxicate my senses. Where am I! This is no longer the same palace, this air no longer the same I used to breathe—all is changed when I behold her. O Matilda! where you are it ceases any longer to be like earth." "My lord," interrupted she once more, at a few paces farther off, "the Queen, distracted with grief, is on the point of death; you are master of

her life, and she awaits her sentence."—"I know not," answered the Prince, "what will be the consequences of what I am going to do; but this I know, that, happen what will, you shall be obeyed. You wish the Queen to be free; behold, she is free. You wish her to be restored to her husband; she shall be restored to him: and now what can you desire more? Shall I place at your feet all the kingdoms of the earth? shall I lay down my life?"—"Ah! magnanimous Prince," replied the virgin, much affected, "why so many favours? one alone is enough to command my eternal gratitude. My family will know happiness yet; you will be the cause; to you I shall be indebted for it!"—"Heaven who hears her," exclaimed the Prince, "heaven who created her, and who wonders without doubt at the beauty of its own work—can it be true that Matilda blesses me! Tell me, O tell me, what have I done to deserve such supreme felicity!" There was such an exalted transport in the voice, the air, the look, of Malek Adhel, that it caused some emotion in the heart of the Princess: she then thought it was time to retire; and, walking a few paces back, she said to the Prince in a faltering voice, "Permit me to withdraw; while the Queen is ignorant of your generous kindness, my heart does but half enjoy it."—"Go, Matilda, go, I will not detain you," replied the Prince with enthusiasm; "you must be impatient to see the Queen happy; but know, that neither the happiness she is going to enjoy, nor that which you experience in imparting it to her, can equal what I feel at this moment. Matilda, gratitude is to me every thing, and I owe you much more than I have given you."—The Princess did not make any reply; she advanced towards the door, and when on the point of going out, she stopped, laid one of his hands on her heart, and said, "Gratitude is there, and to my latest breath!"

She then hurried on her steps, and entered precipitately the Queen's room, crying out, with joyful

emotion, that they must return thanks to the mercy of God, who had disposed the Prince to hear her. "Your liberty is promised, my sister, and the return of your health will fix the moment of your departure."—"O my king, my husband, my lord," exclaimed Bérengère, raising herself, and joining her hands, "I shall see you then! My heart leaps with joy at the thought, and I feel a new life in my veins: I shall soon be able to go, and recover the strength that is to bring me into your arms!—And thou, my God, forgive the feelings of a wife, that she gave thee but her second thought!—Matilda, dear Matilda, thou my saviour on earth! O! it is in heaven alone, where your soul dwells already, that you can find a reward proportionate to the service you have done me; and thou, generous Prince, where art thou? when shall I see thee? when will the voice of my gratitude reach thy ear?"—She could not say more; her emotions had exhausted her strength; Matilda entreated her to compose herself; she reminded her that excess of joy was hurtful, and excess of any thing reprehensible before God.—"Ah, my sister," interrupted the tender Bérengère, "I cannot obey our God, when my husband is in my thoughts, and Richard ranks before him in my heart."—"I have already perceived it," replied the Princess, smiling; "and but for that fault you would have none, and no creature on earth can claim perfection."—Then, seeing the approach of night, she prevailed on the Queen, to make truce with her pleasing thoughts, and to take rest after her joy. Bérengère yielded; her women approached, and removed her into her bed; she soon went to sleep, and Matilda, less tranquil, sought in vain the same refreshment. The day had been extremely sultry; the night was the same; oppressed by the heat, unable either to breathe or find any repose, she went into a closet contiguous to her room, the windows of which opened on the gardens of the palace, to which there was a descent by a private staircase: the Princess

was not ignorant of it, and would have been strongly induced to enjoy, for a few moments, the freshness of the air and the serenity of the sky, if she had not been frightened at the idea of being alone in those extensive gardens, and in the dark. She sat down near the window, the better to enjoy the balmy exhalations of the night. She reached a table before her, opened the Bible, and began to read; but, during her lecture, she fell into frequent fits of absence; her eyes, without being sensible of it, closed now and then; her head reclined on her hand; and, whilst a fanning breeze shook and turned over the leaves of the sacred book, she involuntarily suffered her fancy to wander over the most minute circumstances of her interview with Malek Adhel: if some unexpected noise recalled her to herself, she abruptly tore herself away from her reverie, reproached herself with having indulged it, and resumed her lecture, determined not to quit it any more; but, insensibly, some transient ideas, that she instantly banished, and which as instantly returned, fatigued, suspended her attention, and at last took possession of it; her eyes were reading yet, when her mind was flying elsewhere, and, as her mouth uttered words that her ear received, she did not perceive that her thoughts heard them no longer, and had returned wholly towards an image which left her no rest. The night passed thus in a constant rotation of short lectures and long reveries: at last, tired with so many fruitless efforts and importunate recollections, the Princess threw herself on her bed, and scarcely had she slept a few hours, when one of her women entered to tell her that the Queen was awake, and wished to speak with her.

She arose instantly, and went to meet Bérengère; she found her in the oratory, seated in a large arm chair, of scarlet velvet, fringed with gold, opposite her little crucifix; a monk was standing by her. On perceiving the Princess, the Queen's pale countenance became tinged with the flush of a slight

emotion; she held out her hand to her, telling her that she was very well, that her rest had only been broken by pleasant dreams; that at last, seeing herself quite out of danger, she had wished to begin her day by the august ceremony which carries up the benedictions of mankind to the throne of divine mercy.—“Come, sister, I would not proceed to prayers without you,” added she; “for, near Matilda, one is sure to be the better heard of heaven!”

The sad Princess had too little reason to be satisfied with the thoughts of the night, not to blush at such a praise: she thanked the Queen that she had sent for her, and afterwards humbled herself before the Almighty with that ardent faith, and that boundless love, which operate so powerfully on the soul that feels them. When we turn to God with a true fervour of heart, he seldom dismisses his children without shedding on them that grace which reanimates their courage, banishes sorrow, drives away fear, nourishes piety, and produces tears: therefore, the ceremony was scarcely over, when Matilda, already more calm, had recovered her accustomed peace. When the Princesses were alone, the Queen requested Matilda to sit near her chair; she took hold of both her hands, looked at her with solicitude, as if going to speak, and, stopping on a sudden, apparently unable to determine, she at last said to her, in a faint voice, “When yesterday you spoke to the Prince in my favour, and he granted you my liberty, did you then also request your own?”—“Mine!” exclaimed Matilda, with surprise; “was there any occasion for it? is it possible that he should intend to part us?”—“I suspected as much,” replied Bérengère; “the chief difficulty subsists still, and how shall we triumph over it?”—Matilda turned pale, and, in a tone of fear, asked her if she supposed the Prince could entertain the guilty design of detaining her near him. “Poor innocent soul,” answered the Queen, “in your judgments, as well as your actions, you only consult virtue and

justice; you never think of love: meanwhile, it surrounds you, it attacks you, it speaks to you incessantly, and still remains a stranger; in vain it shows itself to you under all shapes. Violent and criminal under the features of Agnes, passionate and respectful in the Prince's professions, tender and legitimate in my heart, your chaste eyes turn aside, unwilling either to see or understand it."—"How then!" replied the Princess; "have I not pledged myself never to know it? is it possible to break one's vow?" The Queen smiled, apparently moved, and, after a pause, said, "You are right; that is not possible; and such an engagement ought to suffice undoubtedly, to shut not only your heart, but your eyes also, against love: as for me, my sister, who am allowed to know it, I cannot be ignorant of its effects on the soul of Malek Adhel; the Prince will not suffer you to depart."—"What do I hear!" exclaimed Matilda, "what dreadful misfortunes am I then destined to undergo, and what project does the Infidel form against me!"—"I do not imagine he forms any that you can precisely be alarmed at yet," replied the Queen, "for he loves you much, he reveres you still more; but to consent to part from you—I know not whether, in a heart possessed with love, there ever remained strength enough to obtain from it so great a sacrifice."—"I see well," replied Matilda, sorrowfully, "that I shall be obliged to return once more to the Prince, and solicit him again."—Bérenghère rejected that resource, sensible that it was not by inflaming her judge that she could overcome his reluctance, and that the more sweetness and grace Matilda should display in her prayers, the less would love permit the Prince to yield.—"I will speak to him myself," said she; "perhaps I shall be able to prove to him, that the obstacle which parts you can never be shaken, that it is not on your shame he ought to build his happiness; and, if my prayers be fruitless, if he refuse me, it is in vain that my liberty shall have been restored to me

—here will I die.”—“Why should it be in vain, and why should you die?” exclaimed Matilda: “because God has destined me to suffer, does it follow that you should be a victim too?”—The Queen answered faintly, that her duty would not allow her to leave her alone at Damietta.—“Your duty,” replied the Princess, firmly, “commands you to go and join your husband, as soon as the road shall have been opened for you; and my duty commands me not to lay on any person the weight of those troubles that fall to my lot. God will be my refuge, my support; his protection is better than all human assistance, and his strength will prove sufficient. Go, then, O Queen, go without any apprehension; for, though you leave me alone, you do not leave me forsaken.” As she finished these words, the eyes of Matilda, raised towards heaven, expressed such divine confidence, that it seemed already as if, far from the earth, sheltered in the bosom of God, she thence dared the world and men, sure of being out of their reach.

The Queen, struck with the heavenly charm with which hope and faith embellished the virgin, inclined herself before her with a sort of respect, and said, “Assuredly I will go, not without regret, but without fear, and will carry joy into the great heart of Richard, in telling him that his sister has refused to be a queen on earth, only because she feels herself destined to be a saint in heaven, and that she has not the features only, but the soul of an angel!”—Matilda thanked the Queen with a smile full of softness, but at the same time replete with such melancholy, that it might have been thought that she had just revived the presentiment of all the pains she was to undergo, and all the efforts she would have to make, before she could attain that glorious rank of angels, wherein she seemed placed already.

CHAPTER XIII.

THAT same day the Prince was introduced for a short time into the apartment of Bérengère, whom Matilda no longer left : on seeing him, and hearing him express the joy he felt at her recovery, the Queen with emotion exclaimed : “ That life which is now restored to me, I owe to you : soon will I tell Richard so ; all Europe shall know it.—Some day will I tell it to that son I bear within me, and the name of his benefactor will be the first he shall learn to pronounce. O great Prince ! may all united blessings be the reward of your goodness—the earth has none greater to offer.”—“ But heaven has,” added the Princess, blushing deeply, “ and Malek Adhel might lay claim to them ;—will he then never try ?” The Prince looked at her, but made no answer. The emotions of his heart were too powerful to leave him the strength of governing them if he spoke, and he no longer chose to allow the violence of the passion Matilda inspired him with to appear before her ; he had often observed that the vivacity of his transports had alarmed the virgin’s modesty : this perhaps was the cause of the deep retirement she had obstinately adopted : perhaps to obtain more confidence, he ought to show her more regard, veneration, and deference, and carefully conceal his passion until the moment he might hope she would no longer be alarmed. When he felt he was a little more master of himself, he replied to the Queen, that he wished or expected no other recompense for what he had done for her, than the happiness of having preserved her life and made Matilda happy. The Queen then, her eyes suffused with tears, with a timid and embarrassed air, and a faltering voice, said to him : “ It is not surely to me alone that you have restored liberty ?

My sister."—"Your sister has not asked me for her own!" interrupted the Prince impetuously. "Could she think it requisite, my Lord? have you not promised never to part us?"—"Do you wish to depart, madam?" inquired Malek Adhel of Matilda, endeavouring with all his power to suppress the terrible agitation of his mind; "do you wish to quit this palace?"—"Assuredly I do," replied the Princess;—"my sad eyes, turned towards my country, languish after it, and my heart calls for it always." At these words the Prince changed colour: he made a sign of surprise and grief, and retired precipitately. Stopping on a sudden, however, he returned slowly, drew near a window that was open, and there, leaning his elbow on the marble, and his head on his hand, he remained plunged in a deep reverie. At the other extremity of the apartment the Queen and the Princess were looking at him, and communicated to each other in a low voice the hopes and fears the Prince's long meditation caused them. At last, he returned to them with a more tranquil countenance, and said to the Queen in a voice rather constrained, that, when her returning strength would allow her to name the day of her departure, it would be time enough to think of that of the Princess; "and if, before then, you condescend to hear me sometimes," added he, looking at Matilda, "I will tell you what reasons induce me to combat that wish; meanwhile, if none of my reasons can move you, if you persevere in your intention, if you desire to leave me, if you say, "Malek Adhel, thou wilt die without doubt, but it matters not; I will go!—then, madam, you will be free, then will I detain you no longer. I will see you no more—no, never! Don't you know, that to obey you I would sacrifice my life without reluctance?" Meanwhile, in spite of his efforts and courage, some tears stole down his manly cheeks, and betrayed the violence of his grief. Matilda saw them, and her own fell in abundance. Agitated by his own emotion, but still more by that

which the Princess exhibited, Malek Adhel felt that unless he quitted her that very moment, he should be unable to contain any longer the force of a passion which never yet had reigned so impetuously; then, without saying a single word, without so much as looking at her, he went out of the apartment. Matilda continued to weep; the queen embraced her, and said: "Do not despair; your departure will meet with less obstacles than I had apprehended. I see that with tears and prayers there is nothing which cannot be obtained from the most noble and generous heart that ever existed among men." "But is it true, my sister, that my departure can cause his death?" asked Matilda, wiping her tears. "If you continue to treat him with such uncommon rigour," replied Bérengère, "you may perhaps urge his despair to an excess that may give us every thing to fear; but, in seeing him sometimes, in speaking to him with serenity and kindness, you will soothe his torments, and make him partake of that peace that prevails in your soul; and if you do not succeed to fill his own with the image of your God, at least you will convince him that to a hero like him virtue ought never to be such a painful effort as to cost his life." Matilda adopted these reasons, and consented not to shun the Prince any more.—Meanwhile, in taking a resolution so contrary to what the Archbishop had prescribed to her, she still thought she did not disobey him, because, her situation no longer being the same, it seemed to her that her conduct ought not to be the same; and in reasoning thus, she was not aware that Bérengère's illness having opened her heart to compassion, there was but one step from that to tenderness; that the sad and passionate looks of the Prince had made her take that step, and hence, consequently, it was not her situation but her heart that had changed.

Meanwhile, it frequently happened that during her prayers a thousand earthly ideas would sudden-

ly disturb her; it seemed to her then as if God was leaving her, and giving her up to the eternal foe of mankind, who filled her soul with dangerous illusions and fantastical errors. Uneasy, terrified, she then had recourse to tears and penance; but those tears, that piety alone did not cause to flow, gave her no relief, and, amidst the severest penances she could inflict on herself, her thoughts were always wandering elsewhere.

The young novice frequently thus passed whole nights in that state of inward anguish, of which she knew neither the cause nor the remedy, and her countenance, altered by her anxiety of mind, struck the Queen several times; but that impassioned wife, who perceived nothing but through her own heart, persuaded that being away from Richard was the only sorrow that could be experienced, saw, in the melancholy of Matilda, the fear only of not being able to depart, and the ennui of remaining at Damietta; and entertained no doubt but that, once arrived at the christian camp, she would recover her former tranquillity. Meanwhile, the grief that preyed on Matilda increased every day; broken by fastings, uneasiness, and penance, she languished and drooped towards the earth, similar to the lily of the valley, which the too ardent rays of the sun had struck; her eyes were dim, her complexion lost its colour. Alas! that interesting melancholy served but to give her new charms, and Malek Adhel, who saw her, gazed with rapture, and grew more and more inflamed. But he remained silent, for he had learned from that divine girl what he had been ignorant of till then—to respect modesty! Provided that, on his approach, the young virgin's discoloured cheeks covered themselves with a blush, he felt he could ask no more, and that, to obtain what he wished, he must appear to hope for nothing.

His silence made Matilda less timid; he saw her confidence growing up under the shade of that

reserve he imposed on himself; sometimes she condescended to raise her eyes on him, to smile, to reply to his questions, and no more to retire when he approached: too happy of those slight favours, he spoke not of his love, but his eyes, his voice, his manners, spoke for him every moment; the fire that consumed him surrounded, pressed, moved, the Princess, and broke forth outwardly the more it was confined; not daring to pass through the Prince's lips, it overran on all sides, and gave to his gestures and least speeches a seduction the more dangerous as it seemed concealed, and against which virtue itself could not stand on its guard—and innocence still less. How could Matilda, who never knew any other than that divine love, which carries a soft and salutary calm into the soul, suppose that love was the cause of the agitation she felt, and how could she think of stopping its progress? A heavy weight, however, oppressed her bosom; her looks were vague and absent; at times a burning heat spread itself over her face, the moment after deadly paleness succeeded, accompanied by a chilling tremour over all her person; thoughtful and melancholy, she retired into the most lonely places, to the darkest corners of the palace, and instinctively concealed herself from all eyes, though ignorant she had yet any thing to conceal.

But several days had already elapsed, and Béren-gère had recovered her strength; she felt herself able to depart; it was time to speak to the Prince, and to ascertain whether at last Matilda should accompany her. It was not without a struggle that she was to return again to that subject, and resolve upon tearing that heart to which she owed her life; but her duty and her interest prescribed it; for, in case she were not to succeed, she was determined to set off alone; and could she allow herself to leave Matilda at Damietta, without having previously tried all the means of getting her away?

The evening came; the Queen caused all the blinds in the Jasper-hall to be pulled up, and sat down with Matilda on rich cushions near a window, whence they could perceive the blooming groves of the Delta, and at a distance the sea's restless waves. The Prince entered, and seated himself at the feet of the Princesses. Bérengère, in silence, was seeking in her mind for those soft and flattering expressions which women often know how to employ with such wonderful advantage, in order to lessen the bitterness of the sacrifices they impose; but she could find none satisfactory. In whatever manner she should announce to the Prince that Matilda was to go, she was sure to rend his heart; she had not the courage to begin with the dreadful subject; every time she opened her mouth, the remembrance of her obligations to the Prince withheld what she was on the point of uttering, and stayed the blow she was going to inflict. Torn between her duty and her want of resolution, she knew not what to do, and fell into such a profound reverie, that she no longer saw those around her, and hence Matilda felt herself as it were left in a tête-à-tête with the Prince, who was then labouring under the most cruel embarrassment; her lips could not find a word to say, nor her eyes an object to rest upon; which ever way she looked, she still perceived the eyes of Malek Adhel fixed upon her; if she turned towards the fields, he bowed gently, and with his lips ventured to touch the bottom of her dress. Matilda was sensible she ought not to suffer it, but if she removed, she was fearful he would guess the cause of her flight, and she fancied that if she let him perceive she had observed his secret temerity, she would have too much to blush at it. Meanwhile, in proportion as it lasted, her situation became more painful, and Matilda hesitated no longer; she arose with the intention of going away. That movement snatched at once the Queen from her absent fit; she held Matilda back, and

said, in a quick and precipitate tone, "My Lord, the day is come when I can fix my departure, and avail myself of your generosity; I shall die if I do not go, but I cannot go without Matilda." She stopped as if oppressed with the sight of the Prince's grief. Matilda, who was then standing, saw her fate was on the point of being decided, and sank back gently on her seat. Malek Adhel replied with an affected moderation, "If your sister require it madam, this day shall be the last she shall see me near her; but in return for this submission, I beg of her to permit me one moment's conversation without witnesses; when I have told her what I wish to say to her alone, if she then persist in her intention to go with you, I will no longer oppose her departure, and you will only have to name the day." As he finished these words, the Prince sighed heavily, as if already resigned to his fate. Bérengère looked at him with surprise, then, turning to the Princess, asked for an answer; she received none. Matilda, reclining her head on her bosom, remained silent and motionless. At last, the Queen arose, and said to her: "You have heard the Prince; your going depends on yourself alone. I leave you with our generous benefactor; hear him; you cannot dispense with it."—"Cannot I, indeed?" demanded the Princess, in a trembling voice.—"No," replied the Prince abruptly; "you cannot, without unparalleled cruelty; think that on a few minutes' conversation it is my life that is at stake."—These words decided Matilda; she slowly dropped the Queen's hand, which she was still holding; Bérengère left the apartment, and Malek Adhel sat down in her place.

A long silence prevailed: the Prince seemed fearful to break it, and Matilda still more so. But, though he spoke not, he kept gazing on her: his eyes, wandering on so many charms, could not be satiated with looking; and now, if he persisted in silence, it was no longer from the fear of speaking,

but because he had forgotten what he was going to say; he only thought of seeing and loving Matilda; the more he looked at her, the more enraptured he grew; he drew nearer, he touched her: burning sighs were exhaling from his breast; a deep colour had tinged the virgin's cheeks; she felt oppressed; the veil that hid her bosom seemed animated by the heaving motion it received; Malek Adhel saw it, and hope revived in his heart; his emotion increased, his senses misled him; he ventured to press in his arms the Virgin of the Lord!—The unfortunate!—the fire of heaven is not quicker in consuming its prey. Modesty was alarmed, Religion shuddered; she pushed away with horror the audacious Mussulman, and hid in her hands her face bathed with tears. At the sight of them, Malek Adhel fell on his knees before her; he felt he had offended her, and was in despair; for, in those happy climates where chivalry was held in honour, never did love light up more sincere flame than that which consumed the heart of the young Arab. Prostrate before the Princess, he swore inviolable respect, and pledged himself never to speak of a passion that offended her; but he entreated her to listen to him; she would not. She raised her head with dignity, looked at him with firmness and pride, and went away without his daring to oppose her. Meanwhile, kneeling on the place she had just left, he spread his arms towards her; he entreated her in the most doleful expressions to hear him for one instant, but one short instant, promising not to approach her nor quit the place where he knelt. Matilda stopped then, and, casting on him a cold and stern glance, she said: "I can hear but one single word from you, and that word ought to be the order for my departure."—"Is my pardon to be obtained at that price alone?" demanded he with a humble and passionate look.—"If my liberty be restored to me," replied she, "I swear to preserve only the remembrance of your generosity, and to bury that of this instant in eternal

oblivion."—Alas ! she knew not she had just promised what she could no longer perform, and that the remembrance of that instant was going to mix with her reveries, and haunt her during the silence of the night as well as the tumult of the day.

The Prince still remained in suspense ; he hesitated, sighed, looked at Matilda, and could not find strength enough to promise to see her no more ; but she seemed impatient ; she moved as if going out ; he decided for himself—futuraity disappeared, the present moment was all ; to prolong for some minutes the pleasure of beholding her he loved, he was going to condemn himself to eternal despair. " Remain, Matilda !" exclaimed he in a heart-rendering accent ; " I am going to obey." The Princess stopped again ; a sweet satisfaction beamed on her countenance, as she raised her eyes and hands to heaven. " O my peaceful cloister ! O joyful times of my youth ! O my country ! I shall then see you again !"—" Ungrateful and cruel girl !" exclaimed the Prince, precipitating himself towards her, and seizing hold of one of her hands in spite of her efforts, " must your lips bless the moment that will break my heart, and joy sparkle in your eyes when I pronounce my own fatal doom ! Not a word of concern for my situation, not a tear dropped on my grief ; and when I am treated with that barbarity, kept back by an imaginary respect, am I to fear giving offence to her who tears my life away without condescending to feel the least compassion ! —No, no, you shall not leave me, you shall hear me in spite of yourself ;" and, forcing the Princess to sit down, he knelt before her, took both her hands in one of his, laid the other on the back of her chair, and, gazing on her with eyes replete with the frenzy of love : " Yes," continued he, " thou shalt hear me ; thou shalt learn what passion distracts me, what transports I have subdued, and what horrible torments I daily undergo : since neither my silence nor my respect have been able to move

thee, know then my love; hear its voice; lend an ear to its cries: in spite of thyself, perhaps, thou wilt be moved, perhaps they will find admittance into thy obdurate heart."—The Princess at these words threw herself back, in turning her head aside with terror. "O, look upon me!" added he in a supplicating voice; "out of pity look upon me; there are more joys in one of thy looks than in all the alluring pleasures of the earth.—No, it is in vain that I should promise it; I cannot part from thee, I cannot cease to see thee—this alone is beyond the bounds of my obedience; permit me only to remain beside thee, and command.—Wilt thou return to Europe, I am ready to conduct thee thither; wilt thou reign in this place, wilt thou accept of a throne, thou shalt ascend it.—O thou absolute mistress of my heart, command thy slave; here am I speechless before thee, but my silence speaks enough for me."—He stopped oppressed, he trembled; burning tears fell in abundance from his eyes, and bathed the hands of Matilda; he could detain her no longer; the excess of his emotion had deprived him of all his strength; he held her no more, and still she staid; it was no longer the Prince's hand, it was her own weakness that kept her there. Malek Adhel saw it, and full of hope, he enjoyed supreme felicity; but, similar to all earthly joys, which, between hope and regret, hardly stop a moment, the Prince's transient view of happiness vanished on a sudden, together with Matilda's weakness; she perceived she had been free for some time, and blushed at having remained but a short moment with Malek Adhel: that virtue she still loved best was bidding her to fly without more delay, and she was going to obey. The Prince saw her intention; he saw that a force which he could not overcome, ruled in that chaste and religious heart; discouraged by this obstacle, he ceased to utter useless wishes; but, advancing towards Matilda with despair in his soul, and eyes replete with a gloomy and frantic grief, he presented her

with a dagger, and said :—" Well, since thou wilt leave me, thou art free ; quit for ever this abode ; but, before thou goest, out of pity plunge this dagger into my breast—the wound will be less painful than thy departure !" With her weak hand the virgin raised the homicide weapon, and looking at the Prince, seemingly much affected, she said : " Rather than plunge it into so generous a bosom, I would assuredly shed all my own blood. O magnanimous Prince ! why do you give yourself up to such violent grief, why do you harbour such guilty tenderness ! what are your hopes, what do you venture to ask of me ? Can there possibly exist any bond between the sister of Richard and the brother of Saladin ? can there exist any but what would be a crime between a christian maid and a mahomedan Prince ? Is a sacrifice above your courage, and and is it easier for you to die than to be virtuous ?"

These few words appeased the Prince's transport ; he was struck with the mixture of dignity and softness expressed in Matilda's countenance. She perceived she had succeeded in calming him ; and resumed instantly with an angelic smile—" And, if, soaring above all terrestrial desires, you suffer me in peace to follow the road that heaven has traced out for me, what man shall ever obtain from me what I will grant to you ? Who will have greater rights to my gratitude, my esteem, my veneration ?"—" And your love, Matilda," interrupted the Prince, " your love will belong to another husband !" —" My love will belong to God alone !" exclaimed she with a pious enthusiasm : " he alone will have my wishes and my heart ; they never can be the lot of any mortal.—Noble Malek Adhel, leave me ; suffer me to return to the altars of that God to whose service I am destined, of that God who perhaps had not prevailed against thee, hadst thou been a Christian !" She said, and stopped, astonished at what she had uttered. Malek Adhel exclaimed :—" Whoever be that God who inspires thee, I yield to his power. Wonderful and sublime creature, be

free ! Dispose, command thy attendants, choose the road, my slaves are thine, and all shall submit to thee here, as to myself."—At these words, for fear of a new weakness, she hastened to retire ; but, before she passed the threshold of the door, she stopped, turned round, and said :—"Receive my farewell, receive my blessings ! In that cloister where I am going to live secluded, I will pray for you to the end of my life, and, if the Lord deign to hear me, a day will come when our thoughts will embrace the same end, conceive the same hopes ; and, if, in this world, every thing conspire to separate us, in heaven we shall be united for ever."

She said, and he saw her no more. What do I say ? he saw her no more !—every where she was present before him : he saw, he heard but her. In the disordered state of his mind, he paced the room hastily, unconscious where and who he was ; many slaves came forward, spoke to him : he heard nothing, looked at them stedfastly, and made no answer : they surrounded, they interrogated him, but he went away in silence ; he walked towards his room, sat down, remained motionless, and for some moments forgot the earth where he lived, and fancied he inhabited a world full of Matilda's image.

In the mean time, Metchoub had just arrived ; this was the intelligence his slaves had brought him, and which he heard not. Already the news of the taking of Ptolemais had spread in Damietta ; the people, affrighted, fancied already the Christians had become masters of Jerusalem, and were crowding about in the mosques to implore their deaf Mahomet ; the soldiers were assembling round the palace ; the emirs requested to see Malek Adhel, but he had shut himself up, and none durst intrude on his retirement. While all around him the rumour grew and spread itself, he remained a prey to his reverie, and alone ignorant of the taking of Ptolemais.

Meanwhile Metchoub demanded loudly to be introduced to the Prince; he produced the Sultan's orders; at that sacred name all the gates flew open, the guards of Malek Adhel not venturing to offer resistance. Metchoub advanced, and now he was before the Prince, who wondered at his bold intrusion. Metchoub showed him in silence the letters of Saladin, bearing the royal signet; that sight recalled the claims of friendship into the mind of Malek Adhel: he kissed respectfully that paper which came from a brother he loved, and asked Metchoub where he had left Saladin.—“On the mountain of Kouroutba,” replied Metchoub, “where he waits impatiently for thee, having only thy warlike arm to depend upon to recover the proud city of Ptolemais, which the Christians have taken from him.”—“Are the Christians masters of Ptolemais?” exclaimed Malek Adhel, struck with astonishment.—“Thou oughtest not perhaps to wonder at the blow,” replied Metchoub boldly, “since thou alone art the cause of it!”—“What darest thou say, presumptuous slave?” interrupted the Prince angrily.—“I say that it is the voice of the Archbishop of Tyre and the arm of Montmorency which have reduced Ptolemais; thou hast restored them their freedom, to thee therefore is the ill fortune of our arms to be attributed. Thee have I accused before thy brother; and now I will not retract my words: if thou thinkest them false and perfidious, punish me; my life is in thy hands.” Malek Adhel was struck with the justice of the charge; he saw his faults, and, feeling he had too many resources to make amends for them, to need to be afraid of an avowal, replied:—“Go, faithful servant; it is not with me that thy sincerity and zeal can prove hurtful to thee. Thou hast accused me, and I accuse myself too; but if I have committed an error, I can redeem it, and restore Ptolemais to my brother.”—“Without doubt thou mayest; to recover it thou hast only to appear before the walls; but the blood of all those faithful

Mussulmen who have perished defending it, how wilt thou redeem that?"—"Metchoub," replied the Prince with a gloomy look, "say no more, thou hast wounded my heart; for I know that blood ill spilt never wants an avenger.—Leave me alone now, and let me see what expiation my brother demands of me, in return for a weakness the consequences of which have proved so fatal, but the cause of which is too noble ever to lose its empire in my heart."—"What sayest thou, illustrious Prince?" replied Metchoub; "ought a warrior like thee to suffer his fame to be tarnished by an ill-timed passion, and dost thou prefer a wandering Christian wench to thy country in tears?"—"Hold! on thy life presume not to speak another word, thou rash slave," replied the Prince sternly, "and if thy life be dear to thee, govern thy sacrilegious tongue, and beware not to let another insulting word pass thy lips, respecting the Princess of England."

Metchoub retired, but did not obey the Prince's orders, for his soul was deeply ulcerated against him. The shame of having been beaten by the Christians, reduced to give them himself the keys of Ptolemais, the image of all those soldiers cut off in that woful day, the recollection of his family plunged into captivity, and his sons slaughtered, had lifted up his soul to an enmity against the author of so many disasters; he therefore could not contain his resentment, and before the officers and emirs, the troops and the people, he inveighed in bitter reproaches against the Prince's weakness, and expressed all the contempt and horror which the Christian who was the cause of it, inspired him with: but the troops and the people, the emirs and great officers were too sincerely attached to Malek Adhel to give countenance to such complaints, and not to reject all such as attacked the honour of a Prince they adored; yet, if they took up his part against Metchoub, they coincided with him in accusing the English Princess; she alone in their

eyes was the cause of the Mussulmen's disasters: they heard therefore with great demonstrations of joy, that the Sultan's orders were to remove her from the Prince, and that Metchoub himself was entrusted with the care of conducting her back to the christian camp. But, while the news designedly propagated by Metchoub throughout the different towns, gladdened the hearts of their inhabitants, Malek Adhel opened the letters from Saladin: he saw therein the confirmation, that to the release of the Archbishop and Montmorency the loss of Ptolemais was owing; he felt in that respect how many reproaches his brother had a right to make, while he had none; he saw that attempts had been made to raise in the Sultan's mind suspicions against his fidelity, and that the Sultan had rejected them all: instead of complaining of him, that he implored his assistance, and begged when he might command. Was he to answer such confidence and affectionate kindness by committing new faults, and to do nothing in favour of an offended brother, who being his master, spoke only like a friend? The sacrifice, undoubtedly, was immense; to part with Matilda, to see her no more! But then, did not Matilda herself require it? had he not promised not to oppose her departure? and when Saladin commanded it, when the interest of his country required it, was love to prove more powerful than faith, duty, and friendship? O! what a dreadful struggle they caused! how they tore and distracted the young Arab's breast! But love, however violent it may be, does not always overrule a great soul; and, if no man ever felt it like Malek Adhel, no man at the same time was ever more capable than he of those great resolutions, those flights of heroism, that soar above every thing, subduing weakness, apprehensions, dangers, nay, and passions too. The struggle was over—Matilda should depart, he was resolved; he swore it; and, on hearing that oath, virtue triumphed, and sounded her noblest victory.

But, when the ascendancy of friendship had prevailed over love, generosity struggled against that same friendship, and Malek Adhel's magnanimous soul had felt more strength to consent to Matilda's departure, than to resolve on breaking the promise made to the Queen. He had just sacrificed his love to his brother, but his honour was dearer yet, and his honour commanded him not to retract the word he had pledged to Bérengère. Still the orders of Saladin were in that respect both precise and strict. Metchoub knew them; he must have divulged them; and Malek Adhel had no other means to disobey, than causing his soldiers to revolt against the Sultan's supreme authority: he knew he had power enough to do that; but had he the right, and because his brother had left him absolute in Egypt, was he to avail himself of it to betray him? And now that it was no longer between his weakness and his duty that he had to struggle, but between two duties both equally binding, what was he to resolve, and which should he sacrifice! At last he exclaimed, "To-morrow the ship that is to convey Matilda to Ptolemais shall be got ready, and the next day's dawn shall see her sail. I will go up the great river with the Queen, leave her at Cairo, free, mistress in the palace of the Caliphs, and instantly proceed to meet Saladin, and obtain from him the order for her deliverance. I shall not have to ask it in vain; I shall not in vain urge the promise I gave the Queen: Saladin will ratify it, for he holds perjury in abhorrence, and would not permit that his brother should disgrace himself by committing it."

Meanwhile, the night had elapsed in that long struggle of the noblest and most violent sentiments; already the sun was on the point of emerging from the deep; its beams were reflected from afar: Malek Adhel sighed; he could not see without dismay the approach of a day which he had promised to begin with so great a sacrifice; but, supported by the voice of friendship and of his

country, his courage did not forsake him: he left the palace, went to the port, selected the vessel which was to carry Matilda, gave all the orders requisite for the voyage, and, to guard against a weakness which he feared and blushed at, he resolved to leave Damietta without seeing the Princess, and not to return till she was gone. He met Metchoub, and said to him, "Slave, the Princess shall sail with thee to-morrow! Take care of that sacred trust; else thy life shall answer for it." Afterwards he charged him to deliver a letter to the Queen, wherein he explained the motives of his conduct, and said, that rather than cause a rebellion at Damietta, he had determined to delay, but only for a short time, the performance of his promise; that in two days he would come back, to conduct her to Cairo; and swore, that in a very few days after, he would send an escort, to attend her to the christian camp.

Then, without looking at the palace, without so much as daring to think of Matilda, he left Damietta, and went to Pelusium and Pharamia; he visited the different cities near the Coast and the mouth of the Nile; he collected his troops, and prepared them to march, conformably to the Sultan's orders, towards the mountains of Kouroutba.

CHAPTER XIV.

DURING that night which had so cruelly destroyed the hopes of Bérengère, the most pleasing dreams had occupied her fancy: having learned the day before from Matilda that the Prince permitted them at last to depart together, she was already fixing in her mind the day when she should quit Damietta, and that when she should see her husband again. In the midst of her joy, she remembered the Princess of Jerusalem, and in order to afford her conscience as much satisfaction as her heart felt, she resolved to make that unfortunate woman participate in her happiness, and went to her apartment to announce to her, that at last the day was come when she was able to fulfil her promise, and bring her back to her own country.

For a long time Agnes had not seen the Queen: confined to her apartment, she gave out that contrition alone detained her there; but her only reason was, to shun the presence of persons she hated, and who, she thought, had a right to despise her. Resolved not to remove far from the Prince, she kept spies, who gave her an account of all that he did, and of the progress of his love for Matilda. In hearing their reports, her soul drained the bitter cup to the dregs; and to work up her revenge, she was waiting till she could be certain that the Queen's departure was not to be followed by that of Matilda. "If she should not go," exclaimed she, in her fits of solitary rage; "if the perfidious man venture to detain her near him, he shall not long enjoy that adored sight: and this dagger shall remind him that Agnes is living, and has not forgotten how to strike!"

She was one of the first to learn the arrival of Metchoub; she desired to see and to speak to him.

Bribed by her presents, her guards introduced him secretly into her apartment; she discovered the orders he was charged to execute; and, in describing to him the Prince's passion as likely to draw him to the greatest crimes, and Matilda's character under the most odious colours, she contrived to augment that profound mistrust he had conceived against the Prince, and to infuse into him a more ardent zeal to urge Matilda's departure.

He had scarcely left her and received Malek Adhel's orders, when the Queen went to see Agnes. She was surprised at the unexpected visit, and knew not what to attribute it to, when Bérengère, addressing her, said with a kind smile: "I come to acquit myself of my promise; I come to propose to Agnes to leave these walls, the witnesses of her shame, and follow us far away from the Infidels, their chains, and their cities, into that christian camp where she will be able to shed tears among her brethren." Agnes replied: "How, then! is your majesty ignorant that you are no longer allowed to depart?"—"What do you say?" replied Bérengère, disturbed; "Malek Adhel gave his word yesterday to my sister."—"And it was a few hours after he had given it that Metchoub, Saladin's messenger, arrived; he came to announce the taking of Ptolemais, and without doubt, madam, that great conquest will soften your misfortunes and the hardships that will fall to your lot."—"Ptolemais taken!" exclaimed the Queen with wild surprise, "and you talk of the hardships that will fall to my lot! Has that great victory been purchased by some dire calamity? Have any of our most valiant sovereigns perished?—Philip Augustus—" Her faltering tongue did not allow her to utter another name. Agnes replied: "I am told that siege has caused a horrible carnage, and that the Christians have paid dearly for their victory; but Metchoub is ignorant of the name of the victims, and does not in particular speak of Philip Augustus. The only thing he has told me is, that Saladin requires that

the Princess Matilda may be sent back to the camp of the Crusaders, and that your majesty may be detained at Cairo in close captivity, until Richard shall consent to give up Ptolemais as the price of your ransom."

The unfortunate Bérengère heard no more: she had no strength against so many griefs; her senses forsook her, and she fell fainting on the floor. On seeing her in this condition, Agnes exclaimed: "She now has need of my assistance. I am going to protect her in my turn; I alone am not to suffer and to die." She caused the Queen's women to be sent for. At the noise of this accident, Matilda came running, and, on seeing her sister pale and inanimate, she cried aloud with grief, threw herself by her side, pressed her in her arms, bathed her in tears, bestowed attentions on her with a zeal, an activity, that no one could equal, and, after repeated exertions, succeeded at last in recalling to life that unfortunate for whom she would joyfully have yielded up her own. Bérengère opened her languid eyes. She perceived Matilda kneeling before her; and, farther on, the cruel countenance of Agnes. That sight recalled to her mind the blow she had just received, and the hand that struck it. Moving away with horror, "O my dear Matilda," exclaimed she, "take me from this place, deliver me from the sight of that barbarous woman, who seems but too happy at being able to rend my heart." Matilda turned round with surprise; "Is what I hear possible? Agnes, is it you the Queen is complaining of?" "The unhappy accuse every body," replied she, with disdainful coldness; "and because I happened to tell the Queen that Saladin dooms her to eternal captivity, she is now accusing me, as if I had decreed her fate." "Eternal captivity!" interrupted Matilda, alarmed; "ah! my sister, fear it not; such cruelty is impossible; there are none even among the Infidels wicked enough to order it; repose yourself on the word of Malek Adhel; that noble Prince will not break his promises."

—“Your power over him is very great, very well known too,” replied Agnes with bitter irony, “and no one doubts what price you will offer him for the Queen’s freedom; but, however powerful these means may be, they may perhaps fail you; do not therefore depend on them too much; the name of Saladin will be stronger here than your’s.”—“I depend only on the faith of oaths and the strength of virtue,” replied Matilda, with a noble pride, “and such helps never fail.” Agnes replied to her ironically, that her enthusiasm would not impose on all, and that the artifices she had employed to seduce the Prince would easily be seen through. That reproach, far from irritating Matilda, inspired her only with a profound pity for Agnes. “Unfortunate,” said she to her, “thou knowest then no longer what effects virtue can produce, and what strength it gives; wilt thou for ever remain a stranger to it? will not God and repentance bring thee back?”—“I only repent,” interrupted Agnes angrily, “of having suffered you to enter here.”—“I shall not remain long,” answered Matilda coldly; “the Queen is now able to remove into her apartment: we will leave you, and may you, Agnes, soon return to us! Our arms will always be open to receive you.”

As she said these words, assisted by the Queen’s women, she conducted her into her room. Bérengère, weak and sickly, threw herself on her bed and, bathed in tears, called loudly for the Prince to come and see her for a moment. Matilda, deeply alarmed at the condition her sister was in, sent for the Duke of Lancaster, and entreated him to relate to Malek Adhel the grief and the wishes of the Queen; the Duke interrupted her, and said: “Madam, I fear it will be too late now. As I was coming hither, I heard that the Prince was on the point of leaving Damietta, and that he had entrusted to the terrible Metchoub, during his absence, the execution of Saladin’s orders. To-morrow without fail your highness is to embark for Ptole-

mais.”—“O my sister,” exclaimed the Queen, “if Malek Adhel leave us, I am lost. Run to him, obtain my liberty, or this place will be my grave!”—“I will,” answered Matilda eagerly; “compose yourself; I will throw myself at the Prince’s feet; he shall either see me die, or recover your liberty. Duke of Lancaster, attend me.”—She ran, left the Queen’s palace, and entered a court full of guards. That young and timid virgin felt no apprehension; she only saw the peril of her sister, before which all other disappeared: if there is no innocence without timidity, there is no virtue without courage, and Matilda had a soul that could at times rise superior to all fears. She was going to enter the Prince’s palace, but they stopped her; she asked to see him; alas! he was gone, he was no longer at Damietta! At this fatal intelligence, she fancied she heard the Queen’s last sigh; she turned pale, and trembled; she knew no longer how to save Bérengère. The terrible Metchoub now appeared; and, without regard to her rank, or compassion for her grief, he told her harshly that there were no means left to change her fate; that tears and prayers could be of no avail; that the next day he would take her from the palace, and that the Queen, conducted in the mean time to Cairo, should be detained there a prisoner, until Ptolemis was restored to the Mussulmen. Matilda shuddered; the image of Bérengère expiring would not allow her to leave any means untried: she embraced the knees of Metchoub, yes, she embraced them, and blushed not; for what is most humble becomes most great when urged by charity.—“Take pity,” exclaimed she, “take pity on a wretched Queen; she will not outlive her misfortune long; and would you have to answer for her death?”—She said, and her voice was drowned with tears. Metchoub was surprised: he could not comprehend how, when he had spoken, any one dared to have a farther hope, and saw only a frantic woman in her who strove to oppose the Sultan’s will. “Christian,” said he

to her, "what dost thou ask of me! Dost thou not know that Saladin's commands are sacred to all his subjects; that none dare resist; that, if he had demanded thy life of me, I should instantly plunge this dagger into thy bosom, and that, if he asked for my head, I should go myself, and offer it before him? Retire then; to-morrow, with the dawn, be thou ready to depart, and give Richard's wife this writing, that Malek Adhel has left me for her; it contains the commands of Saladin;—I cannot change a letter of them."—He went away. Matilda looked on the paper he had just given her, and a faint hope revived in her heart; she could not believe but that the Queen must find some consolation in a letter from Malek Adhel, and she hastened to deliver it. On seeing her enter, the Queen exclaimed, "What has the Prince said, my sister; what has he said?"—Matilda, in silence, gave her the paper she had brought.—"What is it?" inquired Bérengère, taking it with a trembling hand: "is it the order for my release?"—She opened it, she saw the fatal command, and saw that *only*: neither the deep regret the Prince expressed, nor the promises by which he pledged himself, could alleviate her despair: the prolongation of her captivity, and the departure of Matilda, were all that struck her.—"So," exclaimed she, with a wandering look, "the Prince has left Damietta, and you have not seen him! you will be gone when he returns, and he has left Metchoub the arbiter of our fate!"—The Princess made no answer, and pressed her in her arms, weeping.—"Thou answerest not," replied the Queen, in a kind of frantic fit: "I ask thee whether my doom is irrevocable, and thou answerest not; then is all over!" She stopped pressed both her hands on her bosom, as if unable to bear the weight that oppressed it; her eyes were dry and vacant.—"Why weepest thou," said she to Matilda, "why weepest thou? Thou art to go and see Richard again; thou art not answerable for a creature that asks life of thee.—O! leave, leave her tears to the wretched

wife, who is going to die far from the object of her tenderness, to the inconsolable mother who will never behold the fruit of her love." She fainted away; her pale face, her limbs cold and stiffened, rent the heart of Matilda, and inspired her with a thought, a design—a daring thought, a rash design! but she did not hesitate to adopt them, and fixed courageously upon a project which might save the Queen. Impatient to communicate to her what she took to be the effect of divine inspiration, she hastened to afford her all the attention which was likely to recall her to life; and scarcely had she succeeded in reviving her, when she dismissed all present, that they might be alone.—“Sister,” said she to her, “hear me; for you may be consoled: hear me, for, believe me, you may set off to-morrow!”—The Queen raised her languid head, and with a look of surprise, exclaimed, “What sayest thou, Matilda?”—“That, dressed in my habit, covered with my veil, you shall to-morrow depart instead of me for Ptolemais, while I remain here, too happy to wear the chains destined for your royal hands!” She stopped, oppressed, for she had spoken with that precipitation which seemed to indicate a fear lest her courage should vanish before she had uttered what she intended to say.—Bérenghère fixed on her a look replete with anxiety and joy.—“O thou miracle of goodness, thou bright saint!” exclaimed she, “what darest thou to propose? Dost thou think me capable of taking advantage of such heroic goodness, and abandon thee to the passion of a Prince who adores thee, and to the vengeance of an indignant Sultan?”—“Were all the seductions of the earth to encircle me,” interrupted the pious Princess, with animation, “and a whole army ready to rush upon me, my heart should feel no terror, for the Almighty is my protector, my refuge.—Sister, it is no longer time to hesitate: the moment is come when we must bid each other a long farewell; to-morrow one of us must necessarily depart. Go, go

to join your husband, to save your child ! God commands it as peremptorily as he commands me to remain here, and to suffer in your place."

In speaking thus, Matilda felt well that she was making a sacrifice, and it was on that account she spoke with so much assurance : had she found in her inmost soul the least doubt of the purity of her intentions, any single thought that attached her to Damietta, her noble enthusiasm must have vanished, and, consequently, less generous, perhaps she would have wished her to go ; so true is it that great and virtuous sacrifices can be conceived by innocent hearts only. If, in that instant, Malek Adhel's love offered itself to the recollection of the Princess, it was only to make her find, within herself, all the strength requisite to triumph over it. The Queen, deeply moved with gratitude, gazed, with a religious admiration, on that young and timid beauty who, from an excess of charity, consented to expose herself alone, without any other assistance than God's, to all the snares of love, and all the wrath of a powerful monarch. Such extraordinary resolution astonished her : she wished to believe that Providence had brought Matilda into the East, only to confound the Infidels by the brightness and the example of her high perfections. She knew that the noblest, the most sublime privilege of virtue is to communicate itself by example, and she asked herself whether it would not be opposing the supreme decrees to steal away that young virgin from the trials which were to procure her immortal glory : Bérengère, therefore, in yielding to her own inclination, persuaded herself that it was the voice of God that she obeyed, and replied : " No, it is not only because my interest urges me to it that I assent to your project, but because it seems to me that heaven itself has spoken through your lips. Matilda, your mind appears so great, so superior to all human souls, that I should think myself guilty in acting otherwise than you have decided—I will go my sister ; I will go and teach the Christians, that the time of miracles is return-

ed for them, and that the Divine Spirit has descended on the earth under the angelic form of a young virgin: I will tell Richard what holy and dazzling brightness your name will reflect on the illustrious house of Plantagenet, and if, in these days of tribulation that may prove your lot, your soul should ever feel dejected, think that you have saved my life; that, but for you, the child in my womb had never seen the day! and let that thought support and console you."

Matilda sighed, squeezed the hand of Bérengère and made no reply: she was far undoubtedly from repining, and even experienced no fear; but true piety is not presuming, and her own, that saw the triumph the Queen promised to her, as the most desirable of all comforts, durst not look upon it as the most secure, and contented itself with wishing for it ardently, without expecting it with full confidence. In the mean time, while the day was passing, the women who were to attend the Princess were busy around her, making preparations for the journey. Soon night came on, and Matilda availed herself of its silence and obscurity, to hide, under the large folds of her chaste linen robe, the visible marks of Bérengère's condition: she fastened her virginal veil on the head of that fond wife, and took care to cover with it her face, her bosom, and her shape. She regretted parting with her plain habit, and did not see herself without confusion attired in the Queen's magnificent garments; but already the darkness had disappeared, the wind was blowing fair, the mariners awoke, the ship unfurled her sails, a distant and confused noise warned the Princesses that men were approaching their apartments, and that the hour of departure was at hand. Bérengère changed colour. Matilda, ready to faint, revived at the sight of the Queen's weakness, whom she pressed to her bosom.—"Courage," said she, "for God above, who sees us, supports and approves our enterprise. Raise up your soul to him, I will pray for you." In finishing these words, she broke away

from her distressed sister, and ran to shut herself up in the oratory. Bérengère had scarcely time to drop her veil, when the Duke of Lancaster entered, followed by Matilda's women and the Prince's guards. "I come to fetch your highness," said he; "they are only waiting for you." Bérengère in silence presented to the Duke her hand, wrapped up in the long sleeve of her robe. "Shall I not be allowed," inquired the Duke, "before I go, to offer my homage to our illustrious Queen. Bérengère shook her head, and made a sign that the Queen could not receive him.--The Duke did not insist, and supported the trembling steps of her he took for Matilda; he walked with her towards the port without wondering at her emotion, or daring to address her. No one suspected the pious fraud, and the Queen entered the vessel without raising her veil. Metchoub received her; she bowed to him in silence, and passed on: the Prince's guards retired; the breeze shook their flags on the mast head; they weighed anchor; the mariners, with their nimble oars, plied the waves, the ship skimmed swiftly along, and soon the coasts of Egypt disappeared. In the mean time, the Queen, confined to the close and obscure cabin which was allotted to her, feigned to be sick, and showed herself only to the Duke of Lancaster and to her women, who, far from betraying her, learned, with transports of joy, that their Queen was free, and that they were going to deliver her into the arms of her lord. Metchoub, indifferent both as to the fate and the grief of his captive, did not once visit her, and they had already entered the port of Ptolemais before he conceived the smallest suspicion. But, since the Queen, sheltered from all dangers, is now going peaceably to enjoy the happiness of seeing again her husband and her brothers, let us quit her, and return to the sweet victim who had thus offered herself a willing sacrifice.

CHAPTER XV.

ON parting with Bérengère, Matilda had retired into her oratory, and, forgetting to pray for herself, her lips appeared only to implore heaven to watch over the Queen, when Herminia, Countess of Leicester, and the most faithful friend of the Princesses, uneasy at the thought her sovereign was in solitude, abandoned to all the pangs of despair, ventured to enter the oratory, where she thought the Queen had retired. Matilda heard her, knew her again, made her a sign to shut the door, and discovered herself. Herminia gave a scream. "Peace!" said Matilda: "let nothing of this important secret transpire; for, if I should be recognised this day, a swift-sailing vessel might be despatched after the Queen, overtake her, and bring her back. Such a misfortune would undoubtedly prove the last my wretched sister would have to bear. Countess of Leicester, you must hinder all eyes from seeing me;—say the Queen is indisposed. They will easily believe it; and, if to-morrow the Prince should return to Damietta, and ask to see me, I hope it will then be too late to have any thing to apprehend on the Queen's account; and as for me, O heavenly Father! leaning on the strength of thy invincible arm, my soul rises superior to all fear." She was in the right; the practice of virtue never seems to be more easy than at the moment when we have just made a painful sacrifice to it—so great is its haste to reward, and to inspire with new fortitude the heart that has had the strength to prefer it to every thing. Meantime, while Matilda reflected on her situation, she could not conceal from herself the violent impression that the sight of her would produce on the Prince. To divert its effect, she endeavoured to trace the consequences; but this

thought offered something vague, confused, and alarming, which her modesty turned aside from, and to which her prudence incessantly brought her back. Never had so many new ideas crowded on her mind; for now, far from rejecting them, she adopted and examined them. The time was gone by when she deemed it her duty to banish all that could enlighten her ignorance; since she was surrounded with perils, and left alone to defend herself, she must necessarily learn to know them. It was in this long meditation that she spent all the day and part of the night, blushing at times to have to fathom mysteries unknown to innocence; at others, terrified that she understood them too little to know how to guard against them. If, sometimes, she felt her soul disturbed at the contemplation of the misfortunes ready to rush upon her, oftener still she expected with resignation that futurity God had reserved for her. There are so many shades of hope and submission in a tranquil conscience, that the Princess, unblemished yet with any reprehensible thought, felt herself as it were in the happy impossibility of ever losing the peace and security she enjoyed.

Two days had elapsed since the Queen's departure, and the Prince had not yet returned; every one in the Palace thought Matilda was on her way to Ptolemais, and joy inhabited the heart of Agnes; but that joy was to prove as transient as her days of former happiness. Already the third had begun; a noise of arms and warlike instruments was heard; it was Malek Adhel entering Damietta with the troops he had brought with him: the hero would not lose a day, for he well knew that it was in those moments when he gave himself up to repose, that Matilda's image resumed in his heart an empire against which his fortitude could not struggle long: he gave orders that his largest galley should be prepared for the next day, to proceed up the river as far as Cairo, and sent to beg of the Queen an audience.

Herminia hastened to acquaint the Princess that Malek Adhel was following her closely. The

Princess started: in the disorder of her mind, she forgot what she had intended to say, and knew no longer what she ought to do: that solitude that she was in, struck her with terror—so alarming is it for a young girl to look in vain all around her without being able to find a friend who can give her advice and assistance. Matilda, however, thought she might surround herself with all the images that God permits his children to have of him on earth: they would prove her support, and invigorate her strength. Revived by that hope, she went into the oratory to receive the Prince's visit: she covered her head with a thick veil, and, prostrate before the crucifix, she raised her eyes on Mary's divine Son. Extended before her on the cross of martyrdom, he seemed to tell her that here was no victory without combats, and that a true Christian ought to support, with courage, sufferings which are always light compared with the severe insults and the horrible blasphemies that the world had heaped upon him who came only to save it.

While Matilda was successfully striving to allay her fears by these acts of pious inward oraison, the Prince arrived in the palace, crossed the Jasper-hall, and the Queen's chamber: all these places where he had seen Matilda, and been so happy, now that she had left them for ever, seemed to him bereft of all hopes of happiness, and silent as the tomb. These monuments of a bliss lost for ever weakened the hero, and love resumed possession of a heart whence it had been so courageously banished. The Countess of Leicester conducted him in silence to the oratory; he had never been there before. "Whither do you lead me?" demanded he. Herminia, too much affected to be able to speak, made no reply; and the Prince, too much agitated himself to perceive the Countess's emotion, did not think of inquiring again. He reached the door of the oratory; Herminia opened it, and named the Prince; and Matilda, prostrate before the crucifix, and her head covered, made a sign that he might

enter. Malek Adhel appeared ; the Countess retired, drew the door after her, and they remained alone. The Prince did not recognise Matilda in the Queen's attire, and entirely covered by a long and thick veil. Respectfully he sat down at some distance, and said, "I see with pleasure, madam, that your piety has preserved you from despair. You may rest assured, that it was extremely painful to me to afflict you ; but your sorrow, lady, will not last long ; you are certain soon to behold again the object of your affection ; you are not parted from him for ever ; your grief will not be eternal." As he finished these words, the young Arab could not refrain from tears. Matilda saw them through the gauze of her veil ; she saw likewise the profound discouragement imprinted on the Prince's countenance ; hence the grief he laboured under, augmenting her fears for the moment when he should know her again, intimidated her so much, that she did not feel the strength to answer him. He went on—"Let us only talk of you, madam ; let us only think of those pains that will have a term. I am going to conduct you to Cairo, where you will remain in the palace of the Caliphs as free as you are here. The instant after, I will assemble my troops, meet the Sultan, obtain the order for your release, and send it to you. Then you will depart, you will join your husband, you will again see her I am to see no more !—Will you speak to her of me, madam ? Will she condescend to hear you ? Tell her that her departure has filled my soul with bitterness and disquiet ; tell her that war and sorrow will soon deliver me from this wretched life—the anticipated image of hell, filled like it with heart-rending regrets, griefs without end, and, like it, bereft of hope for ever !—Alas ! she knows not what adorations I should have paid her ! I never yet ventured to tell her to what excess I adored her—I now tell it to all that saw her here, to those silent walls, those peaceful, happy groves, to all nature around, to you, madam—but nothing answers

me ; all seems deserted and forlorn, all dead, since Matilda is gone. He said ; and growing weaker as his thoughts dwelt on the remembrance of her he loved, he reclined his head on his hands, and heaved deep sobs. The Princess, moved to her inmost soul, arose, and, making efforts to restrain her tears, ready to flow, in a tremulous and inarticulate voice she said, " My lord, it is no longer time to dissemble." Malek Adhel knew the sound. Struck to the heart, he rose up with a dreadful scream ; he doubted what he heard, durst not believe what he saw, knew not what place he was in, or even whether he still was on earth ! Heaven was open before him ; and, in the frenzy of his burning imagination, he paced the room with hurried steps ; his soul wandered, lost in an ecstasy of happiness and delight. Matilda, with downcast eyes, resumed, in a soft and humble voice, " The Queen was on the point of death, my lord ; she was to be saved at any price ; she passed unsuspected under my dress, and I remained in her place. Open her prison to me. Too happy to live there secluded from the world, innocent and free from reproach, unseen by men, and known to God alone, my destiny will be happy enough, nor will I complain."

Since the moment she had begun to speak, Malek Adhel had stopped suddenly ; stood fixed before her, scarcely able to breathe, and gazed on her in silent transport, unable to utter a word ; a joy too violent, too sudden, had overpowered his heart : lost, inflamed, a prey to a keen and intoxicating sensation, mixed with a torture capable of tearing life from the body, he feared he could not withstand what he felt. At last, he fell on his knees, and, raising his arms towards her, exclaimed : " Is it possible, O adored beauty ! is it possible that you have felt yourself unable to give me my death wound ? You have remained then to save my life ?"—" My lord," interrupted she, " I have already told you that it was only on the Queen's account that I had resolved to impose so great a sacrifice

on myself." The Prince looked at her with a mixture of melancholy, love, and pleasure: "It is in vain," said he, "that you would endeavour to rob me of my happiness by your words; your presence is more powerful than they; at the moment when I thought I had lost you for ever, and when I find you again, you would speak to me of your indifference, almost of your aversion; but, you shall not hinder me from being happy." "My lord," resumed the Princess, with as much severity as she could possibly assume on her countenance, "I flatter myself that you will not take advantage of the absence of all my friends, to speak to me incessantly of a sentiment which I cannot hear without confusion. Though apparently forlorn, God and my courage remain with me; I am not alone, therefore, and they will not abandon me." At these words, Malek Adhel arose, he drew near her, and taking one of her hands which she tried in vain to withdraw, he said: "Matilda, I may promise to respect you always, but I cannot engage to love you no more, or to cease telling you that I do; on the contrary, I will henceforth no longer set bounds to my passion, for the indispensable necessity that presides over our fate, in forcing you to remain here in spite of yourself, and, I will almost say, of me too, teaches us that it no longer will allow us to part, and that, our destiny being always to live together, our duty ought to be to love each other always."—"What do you presume to think?" exclaimed Matilda, much alarmed.—"I presume to think," continued he, pressing on his heart the hand which he held, "that, by dint of prayers, cares, attentions, and love, I shall be able to move you some day, and then that you will consent to become my wife!"—"Your wife! I your wife!" interrupted the Princess, drawing back a few paces: "horrid blasphemy! O heaven! forgive him, for he knows not what he says."—"Hear me!" replied Malek Adhel; "I love thee to such an excess, that thou canst no more understand, than I can express it;

and now thy armies, thy family, thy God, nay, my brother himself, are no obstacles to my love, and ought not to hinder thy becoming mine. Meanwhile, remain a christian, if thou wilt; I will revere thy faith, nor presume to change thy belief; but thou must love me, thou celestial beauty; thou must belong to me, together with thy soft expression, thy humble graces, thy modesty—that divine modesty which distracts me and I adore! Possessed of thee, Matilda, were worlds falling in horrible confusion on my head, they should not chain my transports, nor have the power to stop them.”—He said, and fell at her feet again, So much love astonished Matilda. She would have found strength to resist the violence of passion, but she had none against such a tender sentiment; her tears flowed abundantly, her eyes had lost their severity, she never experienced such emotions; their sweetness overpowered, while their novelty alarmed, her, and made her wish to be alone, that she might lay them before God, and ask him if they were guilty. “My lord,” said she, “to-morrow I shall be ready to depart for Cairo; but, if it be true that my prayers have some influence over you, I entreat you to leave me now.” He looked at her: “You wish it, Matilda?” said he. She nodded assent. He arose, walked towards the door, and on the point of going out he stopped and said, “Hear me, Matilda; you have seen the despair which overwhelmed me when I came in, what joy seized me when I found you again, what ardent transports were misleading me, what respect kept them back; so many violent and tumultuous agitations must have proved to you that no passion ever equalled mine; and, if you are dear enough to me to make me find my happiness in preferring you to myself, think at least, when I am no longer here, that you would in vain seek throughout the whole world a mortal who loves you as I do.”

He went away, and Matilda could not help obeying him; if she considered only with terror

the bonds the Prince was hoping for, she thought again with emotion of the sentiment he expressed, and believed in fact that no mortal loved like him. What danger in that thought! and how difficult it is for the most humble, the most pure, heart, to forbear a sort of tender pride at the idea of being the object of a deep-rooted and only passion, such as no man on earth ever knew before! The Princess sighed and wept, but there was love in her tears, and they already concealed from her the perils that surrounded her, and by which she had been frightened but that same morning. Malek Adhel's submission and prompt obedience struck her with surprise; she thought she could build thereon powerful grounds of security; to send him away, she had hardly need of a prayer—a look, a mere sign, had been sufficient: what then could she apprehend from a Prince so respectful and obedient? and why dread the approach of him to whom a single word was an order? Thus Matilda, contented to preserve herself chaste, was on the point to forget she was to remain pure; and, provided her virtue remained unshaken, she no longer would think that those interviews with a man, those passionate addresses she listened to, were so many attempts on her innocence; that those same things she would now look upon as harmless, she had deemed criminal on her arrival at Damietta; she no more would remember that it was thus that, in neglecting to count every step taken in the path of seduction, and resting secure on those which might be yet taken, from the certainty of going no farther, the heart is led down an insensible declivity into that abyss of human passions where no choice remains between death and shame.

But it was the first time that Matilda was attempting to justify her faults, and, when the mind is guilty for the first time, conscience is very quick in giving warning of it. Therefore, while she was endeavouring to persuade herself that she might be easy, she was not so, and that security she was

trying to instil into her soul brought thither more agitation than calm; for it is not in giving way to our passions, but in resisting them, that we gain the true peace of the heart. Astonished at that secret uneasiness that tormented her, when all around wore such an aspect as to make her secure, she sought in the Holy Scriptures the cause and the remedy of her complaint. A thousand times had the Archbishop recommended to her to have recourse to them, comparing them to sacred and mysterious meads, the wholesome and nourishing herbs of which feed the soul, and support it against the languors and bitter trials of life; but in vain she tried to read; for a long time she felt herself incapable; love did not allow her. Meanwhile, her eyes amidst their absent wanderings fixed themselves on this passage that struck them: "The security of the wicked arises out of their pride, but in the end they are deceived."—"O my God!" exclaimed she, "is it to me thou speakest? Is my security but vanity also, and dost thou warn me that I shall be deceived some day?" She had turned the page, and read again, "It is not opportunities that make us frail, they only show us that we are so." She stopped on a sudden: that emotion that she felt near the Prince, that secret inclination that persuaded her to be secure as to such faults and such dangers—all crowded at once into her mind, and set in plain evidence before her, that there are no perils so great as those we are tempted not to see. She took up her book again, and read, "Next to the wrath of kings, the abysses of the deep, and the thunder of storms, what thou hast most to fear is thy own heart!" she did not stop here—she did not wish to descend into her heart; she feared too much to meet there the image of Adhel, and to shun that degrading apprehension she passed on quickly to the following lines: "It is much easier to subdue the enemy, when we shut the entrances of our soul against him, and repel him at the instant he appears before the door."

She stopped then, dropped her book, and exclaimed :
“ Yes, O my God ! I swear to repel, with all my
might, that fatal enemy, who, under the most sweet
and most seducing forms, has thrown such a disturb-
ance in my soul ; but I swear, that, be my weak-
ness what it will, he shall not discover it : always
distant and stern, I will close my ears against his
complaints, and my heart against his love, let me
only soon discover a termination to my trials. Ah !
would to God that my last day were arrived, and
that all that is to come were already over ! ”

She said, and the repentant soul endeavoured
to appease divine justice by the penance and mor-
tifications she imposed on herself ; but such slight
wounds could not give egress to the inward fire.
O chaste virgin, what will become of thee !—Can
the enemy have vanquished thy courage ? and has
that love, against which thou struggledst, increased
to such a degree that thou canst no longer find in
thy modesty a veil to hide it from thee ?

CHAPTER XVI.

ON going out of the Queen's oratory, the liveliest satisfaction appeared on the countenance of Malek Adhel. Those who had seen him enter, sad and sorrowful, could not comprehend how Bérangère had produced such an alteration; each formed various conjectures, but none could guess the truth; and the Prince concealed it in his breast. Before declaring the happiness he had experienced of being deceived, he wished to examine his situation, and to fix upon the resolution he was to take. His first and irrevocable determination was never to give up Matilda. Either that he could not well appreciate all the young virgin's generosity, or that his penetrating eye guessed all the emotions of her soul, and dived into the deepest recesses of her heart, it appeared to him, that Matilda never would have decided herself to remain at Damietta, had her heart been as averse as her religion to the love he professed for her. If the one could be moved, Malek Adhel hoped that the other would be sacrificed; before such a happy futurity he no longer hesitated. Now it was not his love alone that led him away, his will too determined him: and that was not a feeble will which had been able before for a moment to subdue such a passion. And now then he abandoned himself to his ardour, in the same manner as we yield ourselves to our destiny; but, if that thought was the first in his breast, it was not the only one; and while he was taken up with Matilda, he could not forget his brother—that brother who expected him, who would not fight without him; the fate of the empire perhaps depended on it; no time was to be lost.—But was he to take the Princess with him? was he to conduct her to a place so near the christian camp? was he

to expose so rich a prey near those fierce ravishers, who might snatch her away from him for ever? But if he left her in Egypt, he must even then part with her! And yet, what was an absence of a few days, compared to that eternal absence he had been threatened with! and if he had contemplated such a misfortune with fortitude, was he to be broken down by a less one? No, the brother of Saladin ought not to permit the lover of Matilda to show such weakness; and the hero had already fixed on the following resolution.

He determined to set off for Cairo with the Princess the next day, in order that, in that city, where she was not known, it might remain some time longer unperceived that the Sultan's commands had not been executed: it was for Matilda's own security, that he wished that Egypt should not know of the Queen's departure, until Saladin himself was acquainted with and had approved of it. He would surround his adored beauty with a sure guard; and, while she lived unknown and tranquil in the palace of the Caliphs, he would march to Kouroutba, combat by the side of his brother; and thus, true to all his duties, wait with more confidence for the happiness he hoped for in futurity. Instantly all his orders were given, and his troops, assembled under the command of one of his best officers, marched towards Pharamia: there they were to wait for the hero, who promised to join them in a few days with the brave soldiers he was going to conduct from Cairo. Hope had restored to his countenance all its wonted pride; he raised his haughty brow, and the happiness love had conferred upon him animated his features with such a bright expression, that he caused no less admiration by his beauty than surprise by his joyful looks.

In the mean time, Agnes, always vigilant, always on the watch, had learned by her spies that the Prince, broken down with grief on his arrival at Damietta, had only wanted a word from the Queen

to be consoled ; she knew that he was to depart the next day for Cairo ; that Bérengère was to follow him thither ; that, without losing an instant, he was to assemble his troops, and lead them into Syria : Agnes, however, heard also, that, notwithstanding the abruptness of his departure, and the rapidity of his intended march, he had such important news to communicate to Saladin, that he could not wait for the moment when he might mention them himself ; but that, before the close of the day one of his slaves, charged with his letters, was to set off for Kouroutba. This intelligence surprised her ; her suspecting mind sought a mystery therein, and jealousy inspired her with the same thought as generosity had suggested to Matilda.—She wished to ascertain the fact without any more delay, and, going into the Queen's apartment, asked to see her.—Herminia would not suffer her to enter. " Her sovereign," she said, " was weak, dejected, sickly, and unable to speak to any person." Agnes replied, that she was well enough to speak to the Prince, and would be able to set out the next day.—To so much obstinacy the Countess opposed her mistress's orders ; and the daughter of Amaury, convinced they were deceiving her, looked at Herminia in a stern and threatening manner, which seemed to say that she had discovered the secret. Seeing fully that her attempts would be fruitless, she did not insist any more, and returned into her apartment with rage in her breast, for she was nearly certain that Matilda was not gone ; but it imported her to know whether Malek Adhel had participated in the odious plot, and hence she employed to betray him the wealth he had lavished upon her.—All her jewels and treasures were at once put into the possession of the slave who had been entrusted with the Prince's letter ; thus she obtained the object of her search, and read as follows :

" Brother, I wish to obey thy commands ; but, doubtless, I ought not to have wished it, since I

found they could no longer be executed. Heaven would not permit that I should resign the beauty I adore ; nor that I should break the oath I had made to the Queen, of sending her back to her husband. During my absence, Metchoub, who was charged with the execution of thy supreme will, has been deceived ; he therefore is not guilty ; but neither is thy brother guilty ; and I hope to convince thee of it in a few days, by driving away the Christians from Ptolemais, and bringing back to thy sacred feet the keys of that bulwark of the East."

"She is then here!" exclaimed Agnes, and her trembling voice, her pale and livid cheeks, announced the presence of the furies who tortured her breast.—She said nothing, but contrived her revenge. The slave, who was before her, took possession of the gold, the price of his treason, and asked her for the letter back—"I will not give it thee back, slave," replied she. "Take away thy wealth ; go and seek with it a shelter in Antioch ; there the arm of Malek Adhel cannot reach thee !" The guilty servant hastened to withdraw ; he flew to save his head from the rage of his insulted master, while the Prince, secure and easy, thought he was on his way to Saladin's quarters.

The daughter of Amaury, now left alone, was casting gloomy and furious glances around her. She demanded her arms—those arms that were to prove her avengers ! and, the art of seduction being familiar to her, she succeeded in prevailing on one of her guards to give her back the helmet, the buckler, the breast-plate, and her poniard too, which she longed to plunge into the heart of her victim. On seeing those arms displayed before her, a malignant joy sparkled in her eyes ; for now she was sure that the next day's sun would behold her vengeance, and that Matilda would not follow the Prince to Cairo.

CHAPTER XVII.

MATILDA knew not yet what were the Prince's projects; she was ignorant whether he intended to remain with her at Cairo, or to take her with him to Syria; she equally rejected these two plans, and adopted none but what would separate her from Malek Adhel.—A prison, however horrible, provided no man's looks were to enter it, seemed to her the first of all blessings, since it would free her from that mysterious, confused, seducing danger which surrounded, pressed, and frightened her; which threw bitterness into her soul, allowing her at the same time to taste no rest. But already the day appeared; the Prince entered precipitately into the apartments where Herminia of Leicester, assisted by Bérengère's women, was making preparations for the journey. He said he came to fetch the Queen, and asked to see her; the Countess pointed at the oratory, to which he ran, and imparted to Matilda the reasons which made him wish that she should persist in wearing her disguise: she heard them, and approved; but yet answered, "O Prince, why should you rebel against Saladin's pleasure? He forbade that the Queen should depart, and the Queen is gone; but he commanded my departure; and, in sending me away, you will prove to your brother that, in what depended on you, his injunctions have not been disobeyed. O! why more cruel than Saladin himself, would you wish to detain me here, when he had consented to my release?" —"Matilda," said he, "I never knew such cruelty, such hardness of heart, as your's; it is inaccessible to every sort of emotion, to every feeling of compassion. Unable to fly from me, you wish at least that your hatred should part us; but, whatever be the fate you reserve for me, hope not ever

to be restored to your brethren. As long as this heart palpitates, you shall not quit the empire I govern: console yourself, however; for, if I conduct you now to Cairo, I shall not remain there with you; my country and Saladin call me, and, scarcely will you be lodged in the palace of the great Caliphs, ere I shall fly to battle."—"O wretched Christians!" exclaimed she, raising her eyes to heaven, "O my brother, brave and beloved Richard, have I then bid thee an eternal farewell, and art thou destined to fall under the sword of our enemy!"—"Matilda," replied Adhel, deeply afflicted, "is it I whom you name your enemy?—is it by my hand that you dread to see your brother fall? O inhuman beauty, and still less inhuman than thou art adored, thou knowest my heart but very ill indeed, if thou thinkest that even, at the moment when I might perish the victim of thy inflexible rigours, my last wish would not be to spare thee a cause of sorrow—to save thee a tear. Live in peace, Matilda. If thy brother should attack me, it is not he who will perish. If the blood-stained sword of death should be lifted on his head, I will spring forward, and his head shall not fall; but, Matilda," added he, throwing himself on his knees, "when I have saved thy brother at the expense of my life, and nothing remains of the wretch who adores thee but a cold and inanimate body, extended at length in the grave, will not your aversion be softened, and will you not drop on my ashes one of those tears of compassion which my love or my despair, have never been able to wring from you."—

Raising his hands towards her with a supplicating look, and his eyes filled with love and grief, his words, so sorrowful and tender, had deeply affected the feelings of Matilda. He implored her pity: ah! could he have read her soul, it was not pity, it was not love even, that he would have asked of her; he would have blessed his fate, and asked for nothing.

Matilda, standing near him, leaned her head on the back of the Queen's arm chair, and endeavoured to conceal from the Prince the tears that the doleful images he had just placed before her had provoked. Kneeling close by her, he was silently waiting for an answer, when suddenly a terrible noise was heard, piercing screams resounded in the next room, and the door, bursting open with a dreadful crash, a warrior, armed with a naked sword, appeared, and sprang towards the Princess.—She would have died with terror had not Malek Adhel exposed his life to save her. Without arms to defend her, he had but his life to give, and gave it with transport. He threw himself before her—the sword of Agnes was going to pierce Matilda, but her arm lost part of its strength on her seeing Malek Adhel was pierced. The wound was slight but the blood flowed. Matilda saw it—that human blood which sprinkled her, and which, in her thoughts, she had always associated with an idea of death, struck her with terror: she fancied Malek Adhel was on the point of expiring; she believed it, and fell lifeless to the ground.

In the mean time, close after Agnes, Herminia had rushed in. She saw the state her mistress was in, and flew to her assistance. The Prince, having placed his beloved in the arms of that faithful friend, thought only of taking revenge on that rash warrior whom he had not as yet recognised. Wounded and defenceless, he ran violently against him, with an intent to throw him down. Agnes stepped back a few paces, presented the point of her sword to him, and said, "Beware, for thou hast not to encounter a weak or an indulgent enemy." He knew her voice, and shuddered. "Wretched Agnes!" exclaimed he. She interrupted him, with a strong and menacing voice, "Wretched, indeed, for she has missed her revengeful blow!—but, perhaps, ere long, others will serve her better!" She then withdrew precipitately. The Prince earnestly recommended Matilda to the

Countess's care, and, heedless of his wound he ran after Agnes, to oppose the furious designs she meditated.

On recovering from her long fainting fit, Matilda found herself on the Queen's bed. Herminia was near her, several slaves were attending. She examined them with a vacant eye, and tried to recall her thoughts; but they crowded on her mind with so much agitation and confusion, that she could only muster unconnected images of all that had passed. She raised her head, looked around her, perceived the blood on her garments, and this view threw a vivid light on all her recollections. "Tell me," exclaimed she, with a sentiment of horror, "pray tell me if the Prince is living?" Much disturbed, and with her eyes full of tears, the Countess drew nearer, and answered that the Prince was alive and fighting at that moment. Matilda wondered, and demanded, "What enemies can attack him in a place where he commands?"—"Ah, madam," replied Herminia, "that perfidious woman whom your goodness protected—that Agnes, so passionate, so terrible, has caused the tumult that prevails here, and the sedition that has taken place in the city. Her sword in one hand, the Prince's letter in the other, she has gone to tell the soldiers and the people, that Saladin's commands had been scorned; that the Queen of England was gone; that you were yet at Damietta; that, dupes of your artifices, the Sultan, Egypt, and the whole empire, were the sport of a vile Christian.—She added, that the Prince, the victim of your seductions, was himself on the point of betraying his country, if you were not snatched away from him. Her frantic cries have alarmed the populace, have brought them to the door of this palace; and now, while a furious band is asking for your life, the Prince has put on his armour and flown to your defence."—"Run!" interrupted the Princess—"O! run, and tell him to let me perish, rather than expose himself to any dangers

for my sake.”—“None of us can go there,” replied Herminia. “Before he left the palace, the Prince, out of care for the preservation of your highness, placed at the door a numerous guard, who allow no one to enter or go out.”—“O my dear Herminia,” replied the Princess, weeping, “is it certain then that the blow he has received is not mortal?”—“It would have been so, undoubtedly, madam, if Agnes had wounded him by striking your heart; and, if love had not weakened her arm, the Prince must have perished.”—“Perished to save me!” interrupted Matilda, in an exalted tone; “I owe then my life to him, do I not, Countess of Leicester?—it is to him I owe my life!” She stopped, much affected and oppressed, and it was only after a pause that she found strength to resume and inquire how many hours had elapsed since that cruel scene.—“Seven at least,” replied the Countess, looking at the large gilt clock that adorned the room. “And are there no means to learn whether he is safe?” repeated the Princess, with anguish.—Herminia, with a sorrowful look, made signs that there were none. “We then must wait, and hold ourselves resigned to the divine will,” replied Matilda, with a sigh. Pale and dejected, she now arose; the sight of her dress made her shudder. “In the name of heaven,” exclaimed she, “take off these garments, where the Prince’s death seems written in sanguinary characters.” Herminia offered to replace them by other of the Queen’s robes. “No!” said the Princess; “return me my own; since all is discovered now, I may quit these brilliant worldly trappings, and resume my humble attire.” Without doubt, she hoped to recover with them that peace of mind and innocence of thought of which they were the symbols. But, alas! the garments avail but little to the inward tranquillity; Matilda experienced this, and lamented it. This last event had just discovered to her the extent and depth of the wound love had made in her heart; and, at the moment when the Prince was again exposing his life in her service,

she durst not beg its cure. "Alas!" exclaimed she, "when he has just shed his blood for me, when, on my account, his life is still in danger, should I not be ungrateful, should I not be guilty, if I endeavoured to banish the recollection of it? Undoubtedly I will do it when his life is secure; but, till then, O my God! can I be forbidden to pray for him?"

The striking of the clock had just informed them it was midnight, and Matilda was praying still, when the doors of her apartment were opened, and the Duke of Norfolk appeared.—"I come," said he, "to calm your highness's fears respecting the sedition raised against you by a frantic woman: all is tranquil now: The Prince has shown himself to the people; he has spoken to his troops; and, to make them all return to their duty, he has not even had occasion to fight. Agnes, seeing her hopes destroyed, has disappeared, and they have sought for her every where in Damietta."—"But the Prince," interrupted Matilda, "the Prince has been dangerously wounded by her; are then no apprehensions entertained for his life?"—"If he never receive a more fatal wound," replied the Duke, "the Christians will long yet have to deplore that the hand of Agnes has not been more sure."—"O heavens, what do I hear!" exclaimed the Princess; "do you wish that the hero had perished the victim of assassination?"—"Had I been near him at the moment," replied the Duke, "I would have exposed, to defend him, the remains of that old blood that flows in my veins; but I cannot forget, nor can your highness forget, either, that it is the arm of that formidable warrior which overthrew Jerusalem, shook the empire of Christ, and is now preparing to destroy it for ever; and, in short, that the true faith having no greater enemy, the day of his death would be the dawn of its prosperity."—Matilda cast her eyes downward, and made no reply: the Duke of Norfolk withdrew, and she was left alone. O! how had one single word now changed her ideas and dis-

positions ! but a moment scarcely, and she allowed all her thoughts to follow the inclination of her heart, gave herself up with complacency to the tender concern she felt for a hero who had preserved her from the homicide dagger, and was fighting against a whole people to save her ; but suddenly they reminded her that the Prince, who engaged thus her whole attention, was he who had destroyed Jerusalem, shaken the empire of Christ, and was preparing to crush it. She felt her heart filled with one only image ; that of the enemy of her brethren and her God. The solemn darkness of night reigned around her ; but a more gloomy darkness reigned in her mind : she could enjoy no repose : she remained standing, now walked about, then sat down, and at length exclaimed : “ O my God, forgive my error, for a crowd of ideas, which afflict my soul and strike it with mortal fears, have arisen in me : how shall I escape unhurt, how shall I subdue my weakness ? My heart rules and tyrannises over me ; but I would rather undergo all imaginable tortures, I would rather die, than indulge the sentiment that it has given admittance to ! ”—She then prostrated herself, and added with fervour : “ O thou who sayest to the sea, Be calm ! and to the unruly winds, Blow no more ! command me to be tranquil, and soon I shall recover my wonted serenity. ”—But, alas ! she prayed in vain ; for if she invoked heaven, she still thought on the Prince : and the sight of the Redeemer, stretched on the cross before her, moved her less than the remembrance of the blood Malek Adhel had lost for her ; therefore, the misguided virgin arose from the feet of the gracious Consoler of all troubles without being comforted ; for it is to pure hearts only that prayer becomes efficacious. The unfortunate courted sleep, and found only the image of the Prince—She awoke, and found it again.—There was no difference between the state she left and that she entered into ; for the importunate and cherished image followed her equally through both,

oppressed her with the same weight, hunted her with the same thoughts. Like a vivid and piercing flame, it parts, destroys all that is not itself, makes its way through all that resists, penetrates on every side, and succeeds to reign alone over the pangs of conscience and over piety in tears.

Meanwhile, Matilda was yet struggling against that empire she held in detestation. She rose abruptly, ran to her window, and asked of that heaven, sparkling with the fire of thousands of stars, a support against the seductions that encircled her; but that same heaven, in whom she trusted, seemed to betray her, like the rest of nature. All seemed then to be over, all abandoned her—men, reason, God himself! In that forlorn state, the virgin, in despair, was on the point of losing her resignation as well as her innocence; she was going to accuse the Almighty, to call him to account for denying her the strength she wanted, and to reproach him with having permitted that she should love a Saracen!—But no; those pure lips stopped; they knew not how to blaspheme, and uttered no other murmurs than those of repentance. Ill-fated Princess, thou art kneeling, pressing to thy breast the valuable relic the Abbess had given thee, calling to thy aid the Archbishop of Tyre, asking of the Almighty to take pity on thy tears; but, when all these succours have abandoned thee, when all are deaf to thy cries, how wilt thou tear from thy breast the dreadful sentiment that tortures it? Wilt thou raise a criminal hand against thy life? Thou art ready, without doubt, to yield it up to God, but will he accept the bloody sacrifice? Amidst such anxiety and remorse, perhaps she was going to adopt that criminal project, and thus precipitate herself for ever into the snares laid around her by the ancient enemy of man, when a divine thought broke upon her mind, and calmed it instantly. She recollected the holy hermit the Prelate had spoken to her of: she hoped to find near him a remedy for her pain, and, in a sud-

den fit of zeal, that did not allow her a moment for reflection, she engaged herself, by a solemn vow, to go to the hermit; and a vow taken on such an occasion, and uttered with such ardour, could not meet with any obstacle, and must necessarily be fulfilled. Matilda was so convinced of it, that she already received part of the benefit she expected to reap from the counsels of the holy man: she raised that confused and heavenly hope between her heart and the Prince's image; and under the shade of that divine shelter, her bosom, relieved, began at last to breathe, and somewhat shake off the power that tyrannised over it.

Meanwhile, the Prince having prepared every thing for his departure, his wound did not detain him; but now, in going to Cairo, he no longer intended to leave Matilda there; he apprehended the superstitious frenzy of a blind multitude, and could not be easy without he saw her always near him. What imported it that he was about to conduct her near the christian camp? what could he have to fear? he, always invincible till then, could he cease to be so, when he would have to defend the beauty he loved? Therefore, he intended that she should follow him to Cairo, whither he was going to collect the remainder of his troops; she should go with him to Suez, where his other soldiers were waiting for him.

Meanwhile, as he would be obliged on her account to travel more slowly, as he knew that Agnes had bribed the slave, and taken possession of the letter he had been preparing for Saladin, he wrote another, and added, to all that the first contained, the particulars of Agnes's perfidy, and of the sedition at Damietta; then after entrusting it to the most faithful of his servants, he went to take some rest previous to day-light appearing, when he proposed to acquaint the English Princess with his new intentions. He had in vain caused strict search to be made for Agnes throughout the city; she could not be found. As soon as that vindictive

woman had perceived that the sight, the speeches, and the ascendancy, of the Prince calmed the people, and brought back tranquillity, she had escaped; and, clad in armour, and mounted on a horse she had paid a high price for, she, alone, took the road to Kouroutba; seeking in her mind what means remained to destroy her rival, as well as the ungrateful Prince, whom she still fancied that she hated. While she was thus musing and deeply engaged in contemplation, a man, riding on a swift camel, was on the point of getting before her. She recognised in him Malek Adhel's most faithful servant.—“Whither art thou going?” exclaimed she, in a loud voice.—He made no answer, and hastened on. She plunged her spurs into the flanks of her horse, and sprang after him.—“Give me that thou carriest, or defend thy life!” cried she.—He raised his lance; she flung her javelin, and made the Mussulman bite the dust: he fell the victim of his zeal. The merciless Amazon snatched from him the letter he had in his care, and certain she should now be able to revenge herself, took delight in the blood she had spilled, and smiled at the mischief she was about to do. While she was following the road to Kouroutba, Malek Adhel was explaining to Matilda the reasons which had made him change his mind, and induced him to take her with him to Saladin's camp. She listened to him in silence, her head reclining on her hand; she was moved less with what he said, than with observing the paleness of his countenance made so by the blood he had lost for her sake. Meanwhile, the more affected she felt herself, the more she persisted in her wish to fulfil her vow. “My lord,” said she to him, “proceed whither your destiny calls you, but leave me at Cairo.”—He urged again with new vehemence the dangers to which the fanatic fury of the people might expose her, when he could no longer be her defender, and described the torturing solicitude of his love. With

a stern and firm voice, she interrupted him in these words: "My lord, you see what are the effects of a guilty passion, and in what a dreadful manner the Almighty chastises the sentiments he reprobates.—It is at the price of your blood he has made you expiate your faults. If you persevere one day longer, your death perhaps will be the punishment he will inflict. Ah! do not force me to weep, and without doubt to weep eternally the loss of him to whose magnanimity I am indebted for life!"—She stopped, as the recollection brought back all her weakness.—"Well Matilda, go on!" replied the Prince, "and make me lament that I did not perish by the hand of Agnes."—The Princess concealed the violent agitation this reply caused her, and, in order to punish herself for what she experienced, she resumed in a still sterner voice, "Having been for a long time kept far away from the altars of my God, deprived of that celestial manna he distributes to his children, and ignorant when I shall be able to enter again his adorable sanctuary, I should wish to go and purify myself from the numberless stains I must have imbibed during my compulsive residence with the Infidels. On the borders of the Red Sea stand the ruins of a monastery where a son of Basil, conqueror of the world, which he had laid at his feet, lives unknown to men, but well known to the lord, who feeds him with the bread of his angels! Thither does a sacred vow call me; thither a sad captive begs of you to let her go on a pilgrimage!"

Malek Adhel looked at her, and listened with profound astonishment: "Matilda" said he, "what do you propose? Are you aware of the least part of the difficulties that oppose your enterprise? Do you know that, once arrived at Cairo, you will have to cross a barren, extensive, and burning desert, scattered over with lawless soldiers and plundering Arabs?"—"God, who reads in my heart the motive that guides me," replied she, raising to heaven looks replete with piety, "will defend

me against all perils. That wild and barren Thebaid that I wish to traverse is a desert for the incredulous only :—for the true believers, it is inhabited by the descendants of the Anthonys, the Pacômes, and, above all, by the immensity of the God of Jacob, who never abandoned his children in the hour of need.” Malek Adhel looked at the Princess with new surprise ; he could not believe what he heard—that a young person should for a moment have entertained the thought of such a dangerous journey ! Had he known that religion was not the only cause of the fanatical delirium which possessed her, it would not have been with surprise alone that he would have beheld her ; but from the severity of her deportment, God, who reads the hearts of men, could alone know what passed in Matilda’s, and he alone perceived that she would have contemplated the perils of the Desert with more timidity, had she felt less terror at those to which her heart exposed her.

After a short pause, the Prince resumed, “ Hear, Matilda !—Did not my duty even command me to go and join my brother without delay, were I even free to follow you on your journey, I would not on any account permit you to expose yourself to the numberless dangers that must threaten you in those vast solitudes.”—“ Ah !” interrupted she enthusiastically, “ they would not inspire you with any fears, if you knew, as I do, that God is all powerful. Why can I not convince you, that, to save me, he needs the assistance of no one ; and, if he decree my fall, is not my life his ? Let him take it back ; I give it up with joy.” The ardent faith that shone in the virgin’s countenance convinced Adhel that the moment was not favourable to dissuade her from her project. Being resolved also to oppose it with open force if she persisted, he intended to wait till their arrival at Cairo before he positively refused his assent, hoping that, in that space of time, her intention would of itself grow weaker.

“Hear!” said he: “to-morrow, with the dawn, shall my galleys be ready; together we will go up the great river as far as Cairo: there, while I assemble my army, you will consult with yourself on the dangers of the enterprise you have formed, and learn whether I have exaggerated them. You will judge whether I can consent to expose you to certain destruction; and, if I have not said any thing in that respect but what you find exactly true, then, Matilda, I make no doubt but you will abandon your project, and resolve at last on accompanying me to Saladin’s court.” This said, he withdrew. The Princess, far from being affected by the same terrors as he was, and unconscious of the nature of the peril that awaited her, renewed at the feet of the Almighty the engagement of venturing into the deserts of Thebaid, swore never to leave them rather than return near Malek Adhel, and blessed that God who causes to be felt the effects of his clemency at the same time with those of his severity; for, it is by shedding extraordinary bitterness and intolerable disgusts on guilty allurements and unruly sentiments, that he obliges his creatures to seek after pleasures free from pain and remorse.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SCARCELY the next morning had the sun's first rays began to tinge the East, and the cries of the sailors resounded in the air, when the Princess, attended by the Duke of Gloucester, her faithful Herminia, and some English officers, repaired to the banks of the Nile. The sun was rising, a thick dew had cooled the earth, and the sky was serene and cloudless; numbers of white birds were swinging on the branches of trees, their silvery plumage agreeably contrasted with the deep green of the date leaves; thousands of turtle-doves were skipping about among the orange-trees; and flights of pigeons, descending among the rushes near the river, were in quest of food.

Matilda entered the galley which the Prince had caused to be prepared for her; he did the same, and sat down by her on a Persian carpet, under the shade of a canopy made of golden stuff, and lined inside with the richest Indian silks. The most rare perfumes of Yemen were burning in rose-wood stoves, and mixing their fragrance with that sweeter incense of the groves of almond and jessamine, the thickets of balm, sweet basil, and rose trees, which bloomed along the banks. Through silver-gauze curtains, Matilda perceived the various sites of a pleasant champaign country; and viewed that Delta, already so much celebrated at the time of the Pharaohs for its abundance and rich fertility. There were seen the sycamore, twining its branches with the tamarind, and the lofty cassia tree, adorned with bunches of yellow flowers, similar to those of the citsus: above, the heads of the fruitful date tree, loaded with its luxuriant bunches, peeped over the grove: every where odoriferous herbs spread their fragrance, and the golden fruit of the citron cover-

ed the labourer's cottage : here, the large leaves of the banana afforded their thick umbrageous shelter from the sun-beams ; there, twined in pleasant arbours, the pomegranate grew nearer the river, and reflected therein its yellow foliage and scarlet flower ; while, from the midst of the waves, king of aquatic plants, the nuphar raised its proud head and azure calix. Canals of a pure and limpid water cooled these delightful groves ; and all the charm of flowing waters in a hot climate, all the beauty that verdure can confer under a cerulean sky ; in short, all that a soft, voluptuous, and balsamic air can inspire, would yield but a feeble conception of the gifts nature has scattered on that favoured land which the Nile embraces with its love.

In the mean time, the sun, having reached its zenith, darted its fiery beams on all nature. The zephyr was silent, the leaves unruffled, the water still ; the mariners, resting on their oars, looked overcome with sleep, and the track of the galley seemed scarcely to furrow the surface of the river. Every one sought a shelter from the heat, and found it in sleep alone ; all became drowsy, but Matilda and the Prince ; they alone were restless, when all slept around them. The Princess, in the morning, had taken care to wrap herself up very close in the thick folds of her garments ; her chaste veil was drawn farther over her head than usual ; she wished, if possible, to have concealed herself entirely under her dress. Alas ! she would have employed less care to hide herself, had she known that it only helped to embellish her the more, and that modesty, the most seducing of all virtues, is still also the most alluring of all ornaments. She sat at the greatest distance possible from Malek Adhel ; her head reclined back ; her hands, a little raised, were joined, and her eyes fixed on heaven. On beholding her ethereal attitude, her long linen dress, and those veils, the shades of which dimmed the lustre of an alabaster complexion, the Prince fancied

he had never seen her so beautiful, and felt he had never loved her so much. He gazed on her, and asked nothing; still he looked on her, and drew nearer; he had not yet touched her, and already his blood ran in a burning flame through his veins.

Matilda remained silent; she was thinking on the vow she had made, on the resolution she had taken, to venture every thing to quit the Prince; on that eternal separation which she had sworn should take place between them; and this project, which was to make him so wretched, would, without doubt, render her just then less stern and distant. It is always when a sacrifice is on the point of being accomplished, that we feel more poignantly all the grief it is going to inflict, and see less all the reasons that demand it; they grow weak before the anguish we experience, and more so before that which we cause; hence, at the thought of the Prince's tears, Matilda scarcely recollected what could be important enough to have urged her to afflict the preserver of her life. Alas! every thing conspired against her; gratitude and compassion spoke in favour of Adhel; love strengthened their voice with all the power of his own; the air she breathed, pregnant with voluptuousness, produced a sort of unknown emotion that disturbed her spirits, and which her innocence wondered at. She sighed, turned her eyes aside from the object who was near her, and could not comprehend how so much affability could accompany so much anguish, and so many pangs so much felicity. By degrees the Prince had drawn so near her, that, even without looking at him, she lost none of his movements, none of his sensations. The knowledge of this had something contagious in it, that augmented her trouble. Absent, in deep thought, her head inclined downwards, alas! it was no longer her God she was thinking on; her imagination went neither so high nor so far. The Prince undoubtedly guessed her situation, for he ventured to take her hand, and press it to his lips. Matilda tried to draw it

back; but it only served to show her weakness—a weakness she felt, though unable to get the better of. Thus, equally tortured with repentance, fear, and love, her heart swelled, and her face was covered with tears. Adhel saw her tears, and fancied he beheld his victory. He pressed Matilda in his arms—she started and pushed him away. During this moment, the virginal veil that covered her forehead got loose, her fine flaxen hair fell in ringlets on her shoulders, and the relic she wore on her bosom became untied, and fell to the ground. She saw it; and instantly her duties, her errors, appeared to her at once in all their extent, and the situation in which she found herself struck her with terror. Every soft emotion vanished, repentant qualms succeeded, and now she gathered strength to withstand the seductions that surrounded her. She ran, and precipitated herself at some distance, covered with tears, and the prey of a frightful despair. In vain did the Prince speak to her; she heard him no more; God alone was present to her sight—alone he was before her eyes as an inexorable judge, ready to avenge his scorned laws, and to punish her eternally. “Forgive!” cried she, in the transports of her grief, “forgive, all-powerful God, that I remained near thy enemy!—Thou hast witnessed what struggles I have undergone; thou hast seen what abhorrence I felt against my weakness. Ah! had I been able to shake off that yoke which is to me heavier and more painful than death itself, I would have done it—But in vain did I ask thee for support. Thou hast denied me; and, bereft of thy strength, what strength can avail me?”

Malek Adhel was listening to her with a mixture of fear, surprise, and happiness. If, sometimes, on seeing the emotion of the Princess, he had flattered himself he should be able to obtain her love, often still had her silence, her severity, deprived him of hope: never had his submissions, his respect, his earnest entreaties, been able to obtain a confession he would have purchased with his life; she seem-

ed to have no other wish but that of shunning him, and hastening her departure; but, now, did not what he heard calm his apprehensions? Had she remained indifferent, would she thus have reproached herself with weakness? Meanwhile, he could not enjoy what he had reason to hope, when he saw how much Matilda suffered: her reason seemed to have forsaken her; it was because remorse had overpowered her, that she had let the cause of that remorse be guessed, and the words only that escaped her acknowledged she loved, because they at the same time confessed an error. Pale, dishevelled, drowned in her tears, a prey to the most violent transports, she did not even recognise the object that might prevail in a soul like her's over her oaths and her God; and, if it be true that deep-rooted passion belongs to men of all climates and religions; if it be true, there are no prejudices that it will not destroy, nor habits that it will not overcome; no one need wonder that a disciple of Mahomet should forget himself for the sake of her he loved, and that Adhel should no longer be happy when Matilda was wretched. He reproached himself with her grief; and to see her tranquil, he was ready to resign the hope of being loved. If he dared not leave her in her present condition, still less did he dare to come near her. "Matilda," said he, with a submissive voice, "deign to hear me;" "Almighty Powers," exclaimed she, in her still increasing delirium, "remove—remove that voice that haunts me!"—"O my beloved," said he, "if my presence afflict you, I will retire."—"My God," continued she, "why didst thou show him to me!—Before I had seen him, I lived peaceful and happy. My heart, pure like thy heavens, obedient like thy angels, had never formed a thought that it feared to let thee know.—Why does the Infidel follow me every where? why do I find him incessantly? why hast thou allowed his impious hand to profane the bride of thy Christ, and not instantly crushed him with thy thunderbolt?"—"Alas! Matilda," re-

plied the Prince sorrowfully, "do you then call down the vengeance of your God on my head!"—"Have I done so?" exclaimed the unfortunate, raising her hands to heaven; "have I uttered such barbarous wishes?—O my God, reject them!—Punish me, but avenge me not." On hearing these kinder words, Malek Adhel advanced some paces nearer to the Princess, and said, "Matilda, deign to hear me. Matilda, if it be true, if it be possible, that you love me."—At this word she exclaimed, with an expression full of indignation, "Saracen! what can give thee a presumption to suppose that I love thee?"—"Matilda," replied he, "forgive my presumption: my hope arose out of thy repentance.—If thou hast no love, why accuse thyself?"—"O! wretch that I am!" interrupted she, "have I then confessed my shame? am I fallen so low that an Infidel now can claim the right to make me blush? O my sad heart! replete only with weakness, folly, and bitterness in suffering thyself to be moved by a Saracen's addresses, thou hast well deserved the shame of seeing him informed of it." Then, her head inclined downwards, her hair scattered about over her loose veil, in a supplicating voice, she said, "O Prince! let the abject state to which you see me reduced suffice the pride of the demon that reigns over you. Turn your eyes away from my wretchedness; do not force me to discover it still more, and to seek in my soul for that which I could not behold without horror. Ah! if my shame is to be confessed, let not the confession be made to you! Suffer me to shed my tears far away. Leave me, restore my peace! let from this instant an eternal separation take place between us! I know not, O Malek Adhel, how dear and painful the sacrifice may prove to you; but learn, that man can make none so great in this world, but God has in the next greater rewards to remunerate him."

As she uttered these words, the virgin's countenance beamed with a celestial fervour; she humbly

bent her head towards the ground in sign of repentance and contrition. At the sight of the contrite innocent, Malek Adhel was struck with a holy respect; for there is a beauty, a nobleness, a grandeur—there is something of the divinity, in innocence humbling itself! After a long pause, he replied in a voice deeply affected, “Never did I hear such words or feel such sensations! Thou hast penetrated my heart, and surely there is something superhuman about thee. O noble maid! live in peace under the wing of that God who can bestow so much force and power on the timid weak sex. I swear never more to mention a love that offends thee. Doubtless I shall sink under my woes but to offend thee were worse than death.”

He retired, left the Princess’s canopy, and went to bury, in the remotest part of the vessel, the profound grief that overpowered him. O incomprehensible fate! it was at the instant when the hope of being beloved had entered his heart that he forever lost that of being happy. A stranger to the precepts of that sublime and severe religion which alone has the fortitude to struggle against the passions, and the strength to triumph over them, Adhel had attributed Matilda’s coldness to her indifference only, and made no doubt, that, if he succeeded in moving her heart, she no longer would reject his professions; but now, that, however feeling she had shown herself, he had seen her, more firmly than ever, rejecting his tenderness, and, in preference to the most seducing joys of love, adopting penitence, humiliation, and death, he resigned all the hopes of happiness he had previously embraced, and turned away, shuddering, from the contemplation of a futurity that afforded nothing but the choice of an eternal misfortune either for him or her whom he loved.

On her reaching Cairo, the Princess carefully hid herself from all observation; she was seen only by some few Christians, scattered about in that climate, who, having learned her arrival at Cairo, had ga-

thered joyfully around her sacred person. She inquired of them respecting the dangers of the pilgrimage she proposed to make; they were dreadful, but not of a magnitude to intimidate her; and that heart, so feeble before the Prince, now soared with matchless intrepidity above the terrors of death. "Hear, my brethren," said she to them: "I have made a vow which nothing can break! What is life, compared with it!—I wish to cross that desert, and I will execute that wish; for I fear nothing in the world but God and sin!—Who of you, my brethren, will follow me?"—"All!" replied they, unanimously; for such angelic beauty, such fervent piety, such heroic resolution, admitted of no hesitation. "Preserve a profound silence on what I entrust to you," added she: "proceed secretly to make preparations for the journey, and ere long you shall be informed of the time and place of rendezvous."

Scarcely was she left alone, when the Duke of Gloucester appeared.—"Madam," said he, "condescend to approach that window, and cast your eyes on the banks of the Nile.—There the most active, the most enterprising, of warriors has assembled his army—behold how brilliant and numerous! O ill-fated Christians! when led by such a captain, with what horrid perils does it threaten you?" Matilda came forward, and soon distinguished the three feathers that adorned the head of the hero who was riding between the ranks; she cast her eyes down, and said, in a timid voice, "is the Prince preparing to set off to-day?"—"No, Madam; these numberless battalions he thinks are not yet sufficient; he is going to collect more troops at Memphis and Arsinoë, and to-morrow he will come back. The day after is fixed upon for the departure of the army, and of your highness too; of which this letter, which the Prince has given me in charge, will doubtlessly inform you."—The Princess took it, read, and a soft blush tinged the lilies of her face. Stung with remorse at hav-

ing offended her, Malek Adhel durst not appear before her; that hero, who under her eyes was easily distinguished from all the surrounding warriors, by the proud confidence of his looks; who, ready to encounter a thousand deaths, seemed born to command the world, and to know no fear, was still arrested by that of displeasing her, and a stern glance awed and made him tremble, whom the whole universe would not intimidate. How could she forbear being affected by so much love, and flattered by so much power? But the more interest Malek Adhel obtained in the heart of Matilda, the more she felt the necessity of flying from him. "The day after to-morrow," said he in his letter, "we will depart together; I will conduct you to Saladin's court, to that Jerusalem so dear to your piety: if you require it, I will not see you, will not speak, but submit to every sacrifice, except that of giving you back to the Christians, and will obey all your commands, except that of permitting you to cross the Desert."—"No; whatever might be the Prince's will, Matilda resolved to be true to her vow; she had sworn it to her God—to fail were a sacrilege, and her ruin would be the punishment.—Secure in the Duke of Gloucester's entire obedience, she imparted to him her situation and her project, and, moved with the greatness of soul which the august sister of his master manifested, he asked her to let him share the glory of her enterprise.—She consented, and mentioned the place where the united Christians were making the preparations for the journey, and added, "Tell them, that all must be ready this evening, and at the entrance of night, when Malek Adhel shall have left Cairo, you are to bring me word.—We will all then meet, and, under the auspices of our God, go and seek the saint who will teach us how to pass through the world without errors, and how to reach the goal without losing the way."—The Duke of Gloucester obeyed; Matilda, remaining alone, fixed her eyes more earnestly on the hero who was on the point of crossing

the Nile on his way to Memphis; she was going to lose sight of him perhaps for ever, and her eyes filled with tears.—If she found her death in the Desert, she should quit life without seeing him again, without having undeceived him from his fatal errors, without having blessed him for all the kindnesses she had experienced. That magnanimous Prince, whom the Christians cherished and revered, in spite of his blindness; that Prince, who had no paragon on earth; that Prince, to whom she owed the life she was going to offer to God in expiation of a guilty love—she durst almost love him at that moment, because that moment was surely the last when her eyes might behold him in this world.—“O!” exclaimed she, involuntarily, “look on me, see my tears!—Let them console thee for all the privations I am about to inflict.” She wept, and could not proceed—she wept, wondered, and grieved, and then reproached herself with the various movements by which she was agitated. Alas! where were those tranquil pleasures, those peaceful joys, of her youth! what had she gained in seeking other comforts, and what had she not encountered away from her peaceful retreat?—clouds and darkness, cruel pangs, and an infinity of evils, the very names of which were unknown to her in her former state of innocence.

CHAPTER XIX.

WHEN Adhel parted from Matilda for two days, he was far from suspecting the flight she meditated: if he had been surprised at her forming the bold project of crossing the Desert, still he deemed it impossible that she should carry it into execution, and the idea that she was going to avail herself of his absence, to undertake secretly that great journey, was so strange, that it had never once occurred to his mind. A single doubt in that respect would have prevented his going, and at the moment when he was marching towards Memphis, could he have guessed the misfortune that threatened him, how soon would he have turned back, and how completely would every other concern have vanished! Alas! two days after, on his return to Cairo, when he found the Princess was gone, he was indifferent to what might become of him, and unable to determine what path to pursue, except to abandon every thing in pursuit of her, and to dispute his prize with the Desert, death, and God himself. On her part, Matilda did not think love would suggest such a design to the Prince; she so little suspected to be pursued, that, on quitting Cairo, she thought never again to see Malek Adhel: but this torturing idea, though it distracted her, did not suspend her designs, and, on the very day of the Prince's departure, she sat about accomplishing them.

At the instant when night was coming on, the Duke of Gloucester came. She went out with him, and feigned to go to the little village of Matarea, thus named from its having a spring of clear water, famous by ancient tradition: there it was that, to avoid Herod's persecution, the Holy Family took

shelter, and the divine child was bathed in that fountain.

It was easily believed that the devotion of the Princess called her to visit a place so sacred to the faith she professed, and so celebrated for the miracles which had taken place there, that the Infidels themselves held it in veneration. Arrived, she found there, together with the christian monks she had spoken to, all her faithful English, who had also sworn to follow her into the Desert: two camels, three guides, dried fruits, a little flour, and several skins filled with fresh water, were concealed in a neighbouring cavern;—they were all the supplies the Christians had been able to procure unsuspected by the Mussulmen. At length the band met in the cavern, where the torches could scarcely dispel its deep gloom; but in that very place Matilda, before undertaking the journey, desired one of the priests who attended her to celebrate the holy mystery; she would not, as yet, partake of it; because, to deem herself worthy of the heavenly victim who daily devotes himself for mortal man, she waited till the sins she accused herself of had been remitted by the saint of the Desert.

During the first day, the caravan crossed a fertile plain, where the Doura, with its reedy leaves, raised its proud head, crowned with large bunches; by its side the pistachio tree covered the earth with its wide branches; the deep green colour of its foliage, and the delicate purple of its blooming grapes, were contrasted agreeably with the azure of the sky; at its feet the lin plants spread their bluish hue: farther on, the palm tree of Thebaid displayed its leaves in the shape of fans; and the cucumber and golden melon lay on the banks of the numberless canals with which the great river had intersected the land. But on the second day that pleasant prospect changed; they entered the sandy plain of Elbakara, the extent of which offered only a boundless and dreary waste; among the rocky dæcipices, and on the banks of the wintry torrents,

they met with but little verdure, and saw the acacias, that produce the gum arabic, the senas, and the scorpion wood, together with some other plants. Ostriches, camels, wild goats, and tigers, inhabited the caverns of the rocks, and leaped across the sands, where no herb or turf ever grew to gratify their wants. In vain would the traveller seek for some spring to quench his tormenting thirst. It was only at the foot of Mount Kaleil that a spring of brackish water was to be found, the only one where ferocious beasts and men could refresh themselves; two or three sycamores stand around it, and above is perceived grottos of hermits, now abandoned by their inhabitants, whom the fervour of the first ages of Christianity had led into that horrid solitude.

The Princess looked at them with a sigh: "Ah!" said she to herself, "happy were those who once chose this wild residence! there, secluded from all intercourse with mankind, nothing disturbed their peaceful days. Mine still would be so, had I not passed those sacred walls which concealed me from the eyes of men. Seduced by the presumptuous hope of doing more than my companions, by going to pay my adorations to the Saviour of the world, it is to vanity my ruin may be ascribed." Whilst plunged in this deep reverie, thinking only of her errors and remorse, the camel that she rode was descending, without her perceiving it, the rapid delivity of the mountain. Soon alarming cries resounded in her ears, and on looking up, she saw the partners of her pious toils frightened at the prospect which lay before them, resembling one sea of sand, all the vegetable substances of which the sun had dried up. This terrific ocean of dust the wind raised up at times in circling eddies, the immense extent of which had no other bounds towards the East but the horizon, and towards the West but a semi-circular range of arid parched rocks. The intrepid Princess contemplated that dreary view, and saw it with a firm look. What

could she have to fear in her situation? What were all these dangers, compared with that she was flying from? What could she tremble at, except the idea of going back? and what terrors could death present to the unfortunate wretch, who, harbouring a dreadful passion in her breast, heard the voice of heaven incessantly bidding her to resign it? Careless as to what disasters awaited her, Matilda was solicitous only about the safety of those who followed her; she comforted and encouraged them; made faith, religion, and hope, speak to them, and, raising her hand to heaven, pointed at the end of their journey. "To reach that," said she, "a few hours of pain is but as nothing!" She reminded them of those words of Jeremiah: "Blush, Sidon," said the sea, "and what for?—men undertake long voyages for a small benefit, and will hardly walk a step towards everlasting life." "Ah!" continued she, "what has death so dreadful in it for him who beholds therein only the gates of eternity, and what has life worth regretting, when its temptations, trials, and miseries, are known! Alas! if, with long life, we do not advance in goodness, we die only the more loaded with iniquities." She said, and similar to the evening dew which, falling on the earth, restores life to the plants dried up by the heat of day, the words of the virgin descended into every heart, and revived and reanimated all. At the soft unction of her voice, the warriors recovered their courage, the Christians their ancient fervour; and all, astonished to see a delicate and timid virgin encounter, with the assistance of her zeal only, fatigues and hardships under which they were almost overcome, thought God had imparted his strength to her. Moved at the miracle, they bent their heads reverently low, and fell on their knees singing before her, *Hosanna in excelsis*.

The repentant Matilda blushed; for, far from being proud of the praises lavished upon her, she humbled herself, convinced that she did not pos-

sess those virtues within which they were admiring. Alas! they who surrounded her knew not that it was the remorse of a criminal love which conferred that extraordinary courage upon her. "Hold!" said she to the little band prostrate at her feet in the face of the frightful Desert, "do not profane those sacred words, by uttering them before a poor sinner, for none here are stained with so many iniquities as I am." All listened to her with new admiration, and took that confession for the pious ardour of a saint, who, in avowing herself below all, did not yet think herself low enough. Meanwhile, as they saw that their admiration afflicted her, they remained silent, arose, and followed courageously the heroic virgin into the burning regions that extended before their sight.

They advanced all day amidst those sandy plains on which the fiery rays of an ardent and perpendicular sun darted, the reverberation of which reflected a blaze of light destructive to their eyes, and a heat so intense, that the most robust of the men could scarcely endure it. The night brought them but little relief; for the winds then ceasing to blow, the calmness of the air exposed them to the suffocating exhalations of the burning sands they rested upon; but, amidst so many hardships, not a complaint, not a single regret, escaped Matilda. Far from thinking she purchased too dearly the salvation she was going to seek, she wished that greater sufferings should atone better for her weakness, and would have rejoiced to find her body torn with the most acute pains, if they could, by reaching as deep as her heart, destroy that love which filled it, and which hitherto nothing had been able to weaken.

But, if she hailed the evils she endured as welcome, to those of her companions she was compassionate and kind. Whilst they lay breathless on the parched earth, charity supplied her with strength to relieve them; she dressed the wounds of some, bathed the bleeding eyes of others,

encouraged one by cheering words, soothed another by prayers, and, in short, combining humanity and penitence together, she deprived herself of part of the water allotted to her, and divided it herself among the feeble and the sick.

After having wandered two days and two nights in that dreadful waste, the exhausted travellers heard afar the hollow murmur of the waves of another sea than that which they had just crossed; soon their eyes discovered, at the extremity of the horizon, the extent of the liquid plain. At that distance, the undulations seemed to blend themselves with those of the desert sands; but already the blessed prospect had revived their spirits, dispelled all fatigue, and their parched lungs began to draw a fresher air. They hastened, and having arrived, all rushed into those salutary waves which offered them their grateful relief, and the inexpressible benefit of which the traveller who has crossed the Desert alone can appreciate. The modest Princess turned aside, walked away, and sat down in the projecting shade of a rock; there, her feet bare, and wading into the sea, she discovered, on going some way along the shore, the extremity near which the Chief of the Israelites passed with all his people through the hanging waves, and on the South the celebrated mountains of Oreb and Sinai, where he received the tables of the Law. Having halted there for some time, the caravan assembled again, and coasted the shores. How many beauties, compared with the barren Desert, did those cool banks afford to the sight! Marine plants spread over the rocks covered with shells out of number, and from the waves arose forests of corals, the scarlet heads of which contrasted marvellously with the greenish hue of the sea. But the sorrowful Matilda remained as indifferent to the charms of nature, as she had been to the horrors of the Desert. One only thought engaged and absorbed her. Except the venom that killed, and the remedy she was going to seek, nothing could find

room in her heart or imagination; and the only pleasure the sight of these shores excited, arose from the hope of sooner reaching the ruined monastery, where the son of Basil was to open to her the road of salvation and mercy.

The travellers spent the whole day in endeavouring to discover some traces of the habitation whither all their wishes tended; they dispersed to and fro, inquired from each other, grew discouraged, and murmured at finding in those vast solitudes no living being who could direct their wandering steps. Meanwhile, the Princess was advancing alone some way before them; she perceived afar a projecting rock, the foot of which was in the sea, with a sort of arrow appearing above. She drew nearer, her heart palpitating, and soon distinguished the cross that indicated the saint's residence. At this sight, she felt her faith and virtue reviving. Resting with full confidence on the wholesome instructions that awaited her, and not doubting but they would deliver her from the influence of Satan, already she thought herself saved, and in an ardent burst of gratitude she blessed the Almighty's sacred name.

Her little band joined her again; with one hand she pointed at the revered sign of Redemption, while with the other she untied her sacred veil; and her hair flowing, her feet bare, her eyes cast downwards, her hands crossed on her breast, and in the attitude of contrition, she humbly advanced towards the hermit's grotto.

Before she reached it, she wandered long amidst the mazes of a monastery, the ruins of which bore witness less against the injuries of time than the recent impiety of the Infidels. Two wild peach-trees grew among the fragments, and several trunks of Corinthian columns, with a cross in the middle of the capital, strewed a pavement of red granite, loaded with hieroglyphics. Advancing through those remains of antiquity, Matilda reached a vast portico, the height of which her eye could scarcely

measure; beyond, she perceived the darkness of the sanctuary; and at the moment when she was on the point of diving into it, she stopped, seized with a sudden and religious tremour, as if she durst not penetrate into that profound night, where dwelt the supreme majesty of a God! but, on a sudden, she heard a voice, the melodious sounds of which inspired her with heavenly thoughts; she fancied the Almighty's eternal self was calling her. Guided by the rays of the moon, which broke through the decayed dome, she explored the sides of the church, and perceived at last the pious hermit prostrate on the steps of the altar, and singing the praises of the Lord during the calm and stillness of the night.

She fell before him, reclined her face on the ground, and said, "O respectable Elder! O Saint of Saints!" The hermit, surprised, turned round; for thirty years that he had filled the Desert with his long and marvellous penitence, it was the second time that ever a human voice had saluted his ear. He approached; but what was his surprise on beholding a young and beauteous maid in the creature who had uttered those sounds! By what miracle had she had the strength of traversing so many deserts, and found zeal enough to come so far to reach him? But the virgin's uncommon beauty soon gave rise to other thoughts—he fancied it was Satan himself, who, under that enchanting form intended to put his wisdom to the trial. "Away!" exclaimed he, in his religious terror, "what comest thou to seek hither? and what wouldst thou with me!"—"O my Father! replied the Princess, preserving her humble attitude, "do not reject me. I came hither at the peril of my life. I have encountered great dangers, to obtain from you the assistance which alone can save me. If you deny it me, who can I have recourse to, where am I to find a support against my own heart? I shall become the prey of a Saracen, and my immortal soul will be lost for ever?" These words, and her ex-

pression in particular, persuaded the old hermit, who kindly raised the distressed virgin, and said, "I will hear thee, daughter; and, whatever be thy errors, the faith that brought thee hither—faith! the greatest of all Christian treasures, shall save thee. But thou, undoubtedly, didst not travel alone? where are thy companions? Let them come, let them share with thee the feeble assistance I can offer."—"They remain behind," replied Matilda; "but I fancy I hear the sound of their steps in these ruins." The anchoret advanced, and easily distinguished them by the light of the moon, which under the pure and serene sky of the tropics, sheds a greater lustre than even the sun in the nebulous climates of the north. Affected on beholding men after so many days passed in the solitude of a desert, he smiled to his brethren, and called down on them the blessings of the Most High. "O you!" said he to them, "whom Providence has conducted hither, surely the same faith unites us!—But what shores do you come from? Were you born in that fertile Europe, the happy nations of which all acknowledge the law of Christ, or have you beheld the day in those sacred walls which faithless nations surround, and where the Christian is forced to dispute with them incessantly the ground stained with the blood of his Redeemer?"—"It is in the name of Mary's divine Son that we visit you," replied the Duke of Gloucester. "These," pointing to the pilgrims, "are Christians, natives of Syria and Egypt: those, warriors. I have abandoned the flourishing Albion, our country, to come and fight the Infidels, and that young and beautiful virgin is Matilda of England, sister of the valiant King Richard, whose high deeds in arms resound throughout the world."—"Ah! my daughter," exclaimed the hermit, turning with emotion towards the Princess, "under a form so delicate, what an intrepid heart dost thou bear! Born amidst the glories of a throne, thou hast had the fortitude to tread them under foot, to come and seek hither the retreat of the humblest of hermits:

whoever has, like me, renounced the world, and all its vanities, will undoubtedly count thy birth for nothing, did it not enhance the rare virtue which, in the bloom of life, has made thee prefer the sackcloth of penitence to the purple of kings. Many are the obscure men who have sheltered themselves in the Desert from the terrible temptations of the flesh; but what sacrifice was ever greater than thine?"

Matilda heaved a sigh; for, indeed, if she believed her heart, no sacrifice was ever greater than her own. "Come, august virgin," continued the hermit, "and you, my brethren, come also, and share with me the only productions of these shores; come and quench your thirst at my fountain, and when you have tasted some rest, you will make me acquainted with the great catastrophes which have agitated the world since its last reports have reached me."—He said, and entered his cell, to prepare the frugal meal: he lighted a torch of the resin that flows from the turpentine tree, and instantly the vivid and odoriferous flame enlightened and scented the interior of the humble cell: he prepared a cake seasoned with sesame oil, together with wild peaches, dates dried in the sun, a honey-comb, and some cocoa nuts, filled with sweet milk: he laid these on a polished stone, the only table he had; the coarse mat, that he used as a bed, was the only seat he had to offer; and in presenting all that he possessed, he grieved only that he had not more to give.—"For thirty years that I have inhabited this Desert," said he, "I have never yet felt my poverty, for this is the first time I find myself in want of any thing." "My Father," replied one of the oldest warriors, "there is more hospitality in these few words, than could be found now in the palaces of the great and the courts of Kings."—"My son," answered the hermit, "has France then lost her monarchs? their court was formerly the asylum of religion and every virtue."—"The young heir of that vast empire," replied one of the Christians of Asia, "seems to possess all

the brilliant qualities which formerly distinguished his ancestors; but too great an ambition, and an insatiable thirst for conquest, induce his subjects to fear that his reign will not be that of the peaceable virtues: Philip Augustus is his name. Now in Syria, he has joined his army with that of Richard, in order to march in concert to the recovery of the holy city."—"What do I hear!" replied the Anchoret, "does the house of Bouillon no longer reign on the throne of Jerusalem, which she had bought with so much blood and toil?"—"Two lions, rushing from the plains of Mesopotamia," replied one of the English soldiers, "have stripped that ancient race and swallowed up the empire of the Christians; all is fallen, all is overturned, under the terrific swords of Saladin and Malek Adhel."—"Ha! what fatal names have you pronounced!" interrupted the old man; "I heard at the time that these two frightful meteors had suddenly appeared in Egypt, destroyed the Alidean family, and exercised great cruelties against the Christians; one of them, who had escaped from the scaffold, took shelter in the Desert, and came here; he spoke to me of this terrible Saladin, whose ambition made all the East tremble; of that Malek Adhel, more terrible still, whose ardent valour already threatened all the descendants of pious Godfrey. On hearing that account, I pitied the Christians, foresaw their disasters, and wept over the crimes of the world, which must have been very great, since God, to punish it, had allowed that two new Goliahs should appear together, without a David to arise and encounter them. Soon after, the fugitive Christian became tired of my profound retreat, yet, fearing the bustle of cities, and not daring to return among the persecutors of the faith, melancholy preyed upon him, and he died in my arms. With him expired the only human voice I had heard since my arrival in the Desert, and all was buried in silence. I found myself alone again though less so than before, for I remained

with a tomb near me : there it is," added he, showing a large stone at the entrance of the grotto ; " I dug it myself ; in it lies the only human corpse the sand of this shore covers, and the only society of men that has remained with me."

While the hermit spoke, Matilda kept her eyes on him ; she could not enough admire the happy serenity that beamed in all his features : the news of the fall of Jerusalem had not even disturbed it : it should seem that worldly calamities could no longer reach him, who had placed thirty years between the world and himself : that life, the blandishments, the faithless joys, and the idle friendships of which he had scornfully rejected, was now for him only a road of peace, conducting him to that heaven where all his thoughts already dwelt. Time, therefore, who stamps his course on the face of men only by the means of sorrows and agitations, never finding any uneasiness in the hermit's mind, scarcely left on him the usual marks of his passage, and multiplied years on his head without being able to give his old age the air of decrepitude.

CHAPTER XX.

THE travellers, exhausted by fatigue, were soon overpowered with sleep. Matilda went to rest a few hours on the little bed of moss that had been prepared for her, and the hermit availed himself of the moment when he saw his guests sleeping, to gather on the shore some shell-fish and turtle-eggs for the consumption of the next day. When alone, he abstained from touching any creature gifted with life; but the meal of the day had exhausted his little stock of provisions, and his first duty was to think of his brethren.

He afterwards proceeded to deck out the altar, where, for the first time, the prayers of many men were to join with his, and ascend together to the Almighty's throne: the expectation of that instant, so much wished for by Matilda, hastened the time of her waking: she arose and looked around her, but the good old man appeared not; she quitted the grotto to seek after him; and at the moment when her eyes discovered on the East the Arabic Gulph, she remained dazzled with the grand spectacle it exhibited. The rich crimson, purple, and yellow, tints, spreading on the horizon, and half plunged in the sea, reflected therein their softened lustre. All yet rested in silence, and the waves, agitated with a slight tremour, seemed respectfully waiting for the arrival of that sun which was on the point of emerging from them to mount up to heaven. On a sudden it appeared, at first like a luminous point, sparkling on the water; soon it changed into a globe of dazzling ruby, which reflected, like a track of transparent gold, on the whole circle of the horizon; at that magnificent aspect, the top of the white cliffs, that lined the shore, shone with a thousand fires, each wave rolled sheets of gold, and the

brilliant author of so many wonders, scattering in torrents its fiery sheaves, inundated its vast empire with its pure light, and ascended towards the celestial vault with the splendour and majesty of the king of the universe, the father of life, and the conqueror of darkness and time.

Leaning on a rock, the foot of which was washed by the waves, Matilda contemplated in silence, and with holy veneration, the magnificent scene which the sea, the earth, and the heavens combined, presented, and exclaimed: "Immense luminary, who seemest as though thou wert immortal, one day, however, wilt thou be extinguished, one day wilt thou fall with the world! Terrible and awful day! The angel will sound the sacred trumpet, the generations, shaking off the dust of tombs, will assemble before the Almighty's throne, and, in his strict justice, God will weigh the faults of men; we shall be forced to appear before him, discover our weaknesses, and show our hearts openly.—Ah! wretched Matilda! thou wilt be forced to show thy love—that guilty love which consumes thee, and which the awful idea of the last judgment cannot remove; thou wilt then be forced to own thy criminal regrets, to confess that the joy thou tastest in serving God is so weak, that it cannot suffice thee; and that thy heart, which cannot exist joyless, is so untrue to its duty, as to seek delight in a Saracen's love; thou wilt, in fine, be forced to acknowledge that the Saracen interests thee more than all the wonders of this world, and that thou aspirest but coldly after that heaven he is not destined to inhabit with thee."

The voice of the Princess, as she uttered these words, had a something of bitterness and heart-rending that resounded in the hermit's ears; he listened attentively whence these doleful sounds could come, and hastened to bring peace to the afflicted, who seemed in want of it. "Daughter," said he, "whence proceed thy lamentations! what shameful secrets, concealed within thy soul, thus agitate thy conscience. Can it be that under the outside of the most heavenly innocence, thou carriest the remorse

of a crime !”—“ I have not committed any, Father,” replied Matilda; with a deep sigh ; “ but my heart is not the purer for it, for it encourages its wanderings, and cherishes the sin which God has forbidden. This day I will speak to you, my Father ; I will taste neither rest nor sleep until you have heard me, and I hope that a new sun will not rise without finding me reconciled, through your holy interference, to that God I have so grievously offended.”—“ I will hear thee, my daughter,” replied the Hermit; “ but now, as thy companions are waking, let us proceed altogether, to offer a sacrifice to the Almighty.—Humble thyself; shed before him that meek contrition of sins, which proves a more grateful and fragrant sacrifice than that of incense and perfumes. It is that valuable perfume which he saw with so much pleasure shed on his sacred feet by the sinner, for he never rejected a contrite and repentant heart.”—“ Alas !” replied Matilda, following him with her head cast down, “ how sweetly I could once, in approaching the holy mystery, shed thereon, like Magdalen, the tears of a heart imbued with divine love ; but where can that copious effusion of holy tears be found, when the heart is elsewhere engaged !” The hermit understood her, but made no answer ; for he could apply no remedy to her complaint until he knew its cause and extent. He continued to walk in silence as far as the place where the Christians had lain down to rest, whom he found had arisen. “ My brethren,” said he, “ let us consecrate this memorable day : the altar is ready ; let us join our prayers, and let our voices, ascending to heaven, bear witness there that no desert is so barren, no retreat so solitary, but that the God of Jacob can find therein faithful children and zealous worshippers. All bowed ; and he advanced amidst the ruins, the Christians following him ; who could not sufficiently admire those scattered and broken columns, those heaps of pilasters, those traces of ancient magnificence, and those numberless fragments, which

astonished the soul by their grandeur, as they made it sad by their state of ruin. "Alas! my Father," said one of the warriors, "will that majestic nave, that yet exists in part, that double row of pillars, and that arch so lofty, that the eye grows dizzy in measuring its height—will they all decay?" Scarcely had he spoken, when, breaking on the silence that reigned throughout these extensive ruins, a loose stone detached itself, fell, and answered him. On hearing this voice of destruction, all assumed a mournful and gloomy countenance; the hermit stopped, and, raising his arms over his head, exclaimed, with animation: "Formerly this was a temple, inhabited by pious monks, whose sacred hymns were daily intermixed with those of angels. Here yet stands the grotto of its founder, St. John Climaque, who retired therein to deplore the crimes of the world, and disarm celestial wrath in its favour; then they approached this place with a purer heart, and a more ardent faith; but the Infidel at length appeared, and all was destroyed. Death seized the servants of God, the sacred hymns ceased, and silence and destruction took possession of this desolate mansion; a little time, and the only voice that now resounds in these ruins will be extinguished also, and this miserable body become dust, like these columns that lie on the ground after having towered to the sky; a little time yet, and they and I will be entirely dissolved, and nothing remain of us but a few particles, that will be blown away and mixed with the sands of the Desert. Then, when faithful men come hither, seeking for the venerable remains of this monument, they will seek in vain; all will then have disappeared, and piety herself will no longer recognise the place where she used to shed her tears. But then, O my brethren!" continued he, with a prophetic enthusiasm "I shall then inhabit with you that immortal temple that was not built by the hand of man, which destruction and impiety cannot approach, where the sacred choirs of cherubim never cease, where no-

thing passes, changes, or ends, and where the happiness of the just has no other term than that eternity which is unlimited !”

In speaking thus, the venerable hermit, with his goat-skin calix, his bald head, his white beard, and his brow bound with evangelical palms, seemed, among the ruins, like the angelic precursor, of divine mercy, standing amidst the fragments of the universe. Meanwhile, he advanced, and ascended the altar ; the Christians ranged themselves around him ; the Duke of Gloucester, his head bare, knelt down with the English round an enormous block of granite, over which a thick moss had already spread itself ; farther on, the pilgrims, veterans of Christ, were prostrate near a broken column ; among all these, the virgin, the only one of her sex, was less distinguished by her dress than by her pious deportment and wondrous beauty. Dissolved in tears, she repeatedly offered up her heart to God, endeavoured to sink the past in oblivion, to leave futurity to Providence, and to give the present to heaven ; but still an invincible inclination was always drawing her towards other interests than those of immortality ; the name of Malek Adhel was mixed with all her prayers ; if she began them for herself, she ended for him ; and when she was begging of God his victorious graces, and her beautiful face covered itself with a more lively expression, it was not for herself that she prayed. But much more vehement would her prayers have been—what fervour would gratitude have infused into them, had she known what was passing in the Desert, had she been informed that the Bedouins were threatening her, and that, while she was intreating of God to save Malek Adhel, Malek Adhel was advancing to save her !

The august ceremony being over, the hermit brought back his guests to his cell, called them to partake of the repast he had prepared in the morning, and repeatedly inquired concerning the propagation of the faith, and the prosperity of the king-

dom of Christ. He particularly asked after the Archbishop of Tyre, that great apostle of evangelical doctrines. "When I quitted the world," said he, "William was young, but, even then, the superiority of his information, his eminent virtues, and an indefatigable zeal for the faith, had caused him to be invested with the second episcopal dignity in the East, and a unanimity of voices seemed to design him for the patriarchate of Jerusalem, as the only prelate capable of fulfilling adequately the duties of that honourable and sublime place. Has he been called up to it yet?"

"My father," replied the Duke of Gloucester, "I will not profane the holiness of this solitude, in giving you the account of all the disasters, of all the scandalous acts, of the court of Jerusalem; the vices of its kings, much more than the arms of the Infidels, have brought about the ruin of that great kingdom. When it existed, if, instead of calling an Heraclius, a monster of debauchery, to the see of Jerusalem, they had elected the virtuous William, the sanctity of his morals would have edified and protected the Christians, and we might have seen then the difference of one man to another in influencing the preservation of empires; but I will not dwell any longer on this subject; but only add that the Archbishop of Tyre is still the same unaltered man. Long by the wisdom of his counsels, he upheld the throne of Jerusalem, tottering on the brink of ruin; and, when the profligacy of the Christians, together with the sword of the Infidels, had hurried it down the precipice, he alone despaired not of re-establishing the kingdom of Christ; he stripped himself of all his dignities, sat off, and went to implore in Europe assistance for the holy purpose. He it is who has preached that great crusade, the most numerous, the most brilliant, the East ever yet beheld; his voice has mustered innumerable armies throughout the West, who are now ready to reconquer Judea, and humble the Crescent; his voice has quelled those discords that di-

vided our greatest generals, and the taking of Ptolemais has less been the fruit of their bravery than of his eloquence.—Every day his zeal brings over new children to the Gospel, and his charity supports them!”—

“Such is,” exclaimed the hermit, with transport, “Such is the true descendant of the first evangelists, the perfect model of saints, and the man the Christian world should pride itself most upon.”—“My Father,” replied the virgin, looking on him with admiration, “do you then think that the world has forgotten you?”—“It ought, my daughter, since I have chosen to leave it,” interrupted the hermit, eagerly: “ah! beware ever to compare the Christian, who avoids temptations by flight only, with him who withstands them, and remains in the world to save it! This last, urged by his holy zeal, risks daily his salvation for that of his brethren; the other, filled with fear and mistrust, by thinking of his own only, neglects that of others: the one is ever exposing himself, struggles incessantly, triumphs always, thinks he has never done enough when any thing remains to do, and, by the multiplicity of his good deeds and the ardour of his faith, holds out a living example of edification and sanctity that must bring upon him the blessings and gratitude of the universe: the other, in his solitude, having no opportunity of failing, ought not to arrogate to himself any credit for his wisdom; he feeds on the love of God, but does not act for God; he lives in peace, because he lives alone, and far away from men to whom he is useless; and he ought to be forgotten by this world which he has neglected to serve; therefore, when the great day of judgment arrives, the pious William will be one of the first elect, and God will crown him with double, with threefold, glory, with a glory equal to the number of conversions he will have worked; whilst that of the solitary man, humble, and obscure like him, will rank him in the last place at the table of the just.—“My Father,” said

the Princess, much affected, "you are in the right; it is undoubtedly under the features of the Archbishop of Tyre, that the christian religion shows us the wonder of charity; but permit me to say, that it is under your's that it offers us that of humility."

Meanwhile the evening came on, and, while the Christians found among the ruins of the church a place of rest which their fatigue made them contented with, Matilda asked the hermit to consent to hear her story: "I will, my daughter," said he, and he led her to the entrance of the grotto, whence they discovered a vast prospect of the sea, at that moment still, and shining like a mirror, wherein the stars of the firmament reflected their splendid fires. The Princess on her knees was preparing her mind to devotion; but all around was impressive and spoke to her heart; she saw below her feet another heaven, joining with that which shone above her head in the bluish circle of the distant horizon; she listened to the continual motion of the wave that came, broke, fell back, returned again, and expired to rise anew the next moment; the three great attributes of the supreme intelligence, the immensity of a boundless sea, the eternity of its waves in incessant motion, and the infinity of the wandering luminaries recounting the glory of God, made the Princess feel the effect of these great images, though her mind durst not attempt to elevate itself to them; but the hermit observed the impression they made upon her, and addressing her, said: "Daughter, he who has done all this, is the same who said, 'Verily, verily, if men are silent, the stones would cry out.' Here is power; but he has also said, 'Come to me, all ye who are labouring under the weight of affliction, and I will give you rest.' Here is goodness.—Power and goodness are God's, my daughter.—Far above all in intellectual excellence, he has by love brought himself nearer to a level with us; for, in reflecting on his greatness, we see our nonentity; on his

power, we see our weakness and dependence ; on his justice, we perceive our faults ; but, when we think of his love, my daughter, we are led to think of our own—that only point on which we may, without temerity, rise and unite ourselves with our God : for, in fine, when he judges, we cannot judge him ; when he commands us, we cannot command again ; but when he loves us, O Matilda ! we may return him love for love ! Devote thy love therefore to that only affection, for, as God, almighty as he is, can do nothing more for thy good than to love thee, he likewise can require nothing more worthy of him, nor more perfect than thy love ; love then thy God above all, my daughter, for I tell thee, that *love* is the greatest treasure of the human heart.”

“ Alas ! my father,” replied Matilda with emotion, “ I see by your words that your piercing eye has already discovered in the recesses of my soul the iniquity that weighs heavily on it ? ”—“ Yes, daughter, I know the cause already, but am ignorant of the object. ”—“ Alas ! ” replied the Princess, weeping, “ that name is my greatest crime, and what costs me most to tell you : may at least this confession serve as an expiation ! ”—Then, in the face of heaven, prostrate near the hermit, her eyes fixed on the crucifix which she held in her hand, and encouraged by the evangelical mildness of the saint, she thus revealed the mysteries of her heart.

CHAPTER XXI.

“MY habit must already have informed you, my Father, of the profession I was called to embrace: thrones, human grandeurs, all those titles to which the world attaches splendour and importance, seemed to me vile compared with that glorious one of Bride of the Lord. From my earliest infancy, I courted no other, and it was in order to deserve it better that I wished to join the Christians who were taking the cross in crowds to proceed to the deliverance of the holy city, that I might pay my adorations at the sacred tomb before my last engagements had for ever secluded me from the world. Richard’s pious consort was my faithful partner, and the same ship conveyed us; heaven, without doubt, either for trial or punishment, withdrew its protection from us, and allowed the Infidels to attack, vanquish, and reduce, us to servitude.”—“What! did they, without regard to your rank, dare to lay chains on you?”—“O my Father, how much less unhappy should I have been had I received chains, and lain in a damp and dismal dungeon, with no other food than bread soaked in my tears! but, alas! introduced into a magnificent palace, loaded with honours, surrounded with cares and attentions, treated as a sovereign”—“Well, my daughter, whence can these tears and sobs proceed? Continue your narration, and name that generous victor whose yoke lies so gently on the Christians?”—“My Father, what do you demand of me? That conqueror so great, so formidable, who is deficient in no perfection, except that of faith; that proud hero, who knows equally well how to inspire his foes with fear, love, and admiration; that Prince, the worthy object of the

Prelate's affection, whose image is always present in my thoughts, reigns a sovereign in my soul, and haunts me while at the feet of the God before us! —Often obliged to appear in the presence of Malek Adhel"—"Malek Adhel! didst thou say?" interrupted the hermit, shuddering; "Malek Adhel! Saladin's brother! that tiger of the East, who devours all the Christians!—Malek Adhel! who a hundred times has bathed his impious hands in the blood of thy brethren, and whose dreadful sword has protected the empire of Satan!"—"Ah! my Father, what shall I say to you? I cannot explain what I feel: it is a strange mixture of opposing sensations—a combination of all that hell has most terrific and heaven most sweet! I am dragged away towards that which excites my horror; I see a precipice, and seek to fall in it; I suffer agonizing torture, and delight in my torments. I came hither through all the perils of the Desert to entreat you for support against Malek Adhel, and now I tremble lest you should impart it." "Hold, wretched creature!" exclaimed the hermit.—Alas! the virgin heard him no longer: exhausted by the fatigues of the journey, and still more by the struggle in her bosom between religion and love, her strength forsook her; she fell senseless on the earth; a cold sweat dropped from her forehead; her hands and cheeks were pale and cold;—she breathed no more. The hermit feared her last moments were approaching; and, deeply affected, he ran to the spring, took some water in the palm of his hands, and hastened to sprinkle the face of the Princess. She started, revived, and, opening her eyes, exclaimed, "Where am I? have I left the earth? do I hear the awful trumpet calling me before the throne of God! am I going to be hurried down into the abode of everlasting darkness?"—"Take courage, daughter of Christ," said the compassionate anchorite. "See before thee this God dying on the cross; it is for thy sin that he is stretched on it; it is to wipe off thy stains that he has shed his blood. Let that water, which recalled thee to life, restore it to thee

doubly; let it be a new baptism that shall wipe off all thy sins; and do thou, O God, although that heart be a temple unworthy at present of thy high majesty, since it is filled only with the ruins of passion, deign to return into it; and, returning, repair the havoc done, restore its former magnificence and wonted perfection!—Now, regenerated creature, arise!—for thou art at peace with the Lord thy God, if thou banish from thy thoughts the remembrance of Malek Adhel.—And thou wilt, daughter, if thou entreatest, if thou wishest it, sincerely. When we say that God refuses to assist our weakness and hear our prayers, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; for it is written, “All that we ask of God, having faith, we shall obtain.”

The hermit was going on, when confused and tumultuous cries struck his ear, and arrested the words on his lips. He wondered, listened, and heard the clashing of arms. “O heaven!” cried he, “after so many peaceable days, am I to see the solitude of these shores broken in upon by assassination!”—“What means that terrible clashing, my Father?” exclaimed the Princess, alarmed.—“A horde of homicide Bedouins, without doubt, who, having perceived your little caravan, are come to surprise it unawares. While I run into the combat, to offer up to God the little remains I have of life in assisting the Christians, do you, my daughter, retire into the depth of that cavern, and conceal your heavenly form from lawless banditti who respect nothing.” He was going, when, already at the entrance of the grotto, they perceived several Arabs, half-naked, sword in hand, covered with blood, and casting anxious looks into the interior of the humble cell. There was no gold nor silver to tempt their avarice, but the young maid was a prize much above all treasures. They were preparing to lay hold of her, when the hermit rushed between. With a raging countenance and eyes darting fury, he raised a crucifix over his head, and, filled with a divine spirit, cried out in a thun-

dering voice, "Hold, rash barbarians! for I vow, in the name of the supreme God—of that God here present, that the first of you, whose sacrilegious audacity shall dare to pollute this holy virgin, shall be instantly blasted by lightning!" To that threat, Matilda joined her timid supplications, implored mercy, and defended herself with her prayers and tears. The Bedouins, astonished and confounded, hesitated; their ferocity was softened, and their designs suspended.—The weakest of beings, an old man and a virgin, had vanquished their courage—yes, vanquished—for their weakness was supported by two of the most powerful weapons with which heaven has armed the earth—innocence and religion.

Meanwhile, at the moment when the lawless banditti began to banish compassion and follow their horrid design, a formidable warrior, with glaring eyes, clad in shining armour, and his arm wielding a bloody scimitar, rushed among them. He attacked the Arabs, made a dreadful carnage, and alone dispersed and destroyed the whole band.—Death and victory opened his way to the Princess. Quicker than lightning he seized, snatched her up, bore her off among the ruins and with such rapidity, that the hermit lost sight of him before he had time to form a thought; he perceived only the Arabs flying on all sides, struck with dismay, and making the lonely shore resound with the great name of Malek Adhel!

The hermit shuddered at the fate of the Princess, and lamented that the Desert and the assassins had spared her life. The expiring Arabs and Christians, however, did not stop the impetuous course of the hero; he saw but Matilda, and thought of her perils only. Placing her on a stately courser, he leaped up behind; and, while with one hand he pressed her close, he seized the bridle with the other, and, followed by some Mussulmen soldiers, galloped off from the scene of carnage.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE sun was in the midst of its course when the Prince reached the foot of Mount Colzoum, and stopped to afford Matilda some rest.—No mother could feel a more tender solicitude for her child; he grew uneasy on seeing her exposed to the mid-day heat, and looked around to find among the rocks of Colzoum a cool retreat, where he might shelter her. On the top of some barren rocks, he perceived a clump of sycamores and tamarinds; he then alighted from his horse, and, unwilling to part with his precious load, held it still in his arms, climbed the mountain, reached the shade, put the Princess down, and walked off to some distance.

It was then only that Matilda came to herself, and recollected what had passed; but she could not comprehend by what incredible miracle Malek Adhel had suddenly appeared to save her from the hands of the Arabs;—and the hermit, what had become of him? what must he have thought of that circumstance? but, alas! was he yet alive? had she broken upon his solitude, only to bring him destruction? and her dear, her faithful, English, of whom she saw none around her—had they all perished in the combat, and proved, like the Duke of Gloucester, the victims of their attachment to her service? While, deeply engaged in such thoughts, she saw the Prince returning, his head bare, his face covered with sweat and dust, and bearing in his hands his helmet, full of pure and fresh water, which he presented to her. She looked at him with a mixture of surprise, gratitude, and astonishment. “Holy Virgin!” exclaimed she, “if what I see be not an illusion, if there be reality in the events of this day, how terrible are they, and how much I dread their consequence! What will

be the fate of that venerable man, what will be that of my faithful Christians, and what, O heavenly Parent, will now be my destiny !”

“ Matilda,” replied the Prince, “ drink this water ; it will calm your spirits, and prompt you to lend a more attentive ear to what I am going to relate.” The Princess put the iron cup to her lips, and refreshed her parched mouth. “ Now,” continued Malek Adhel, “ let us wait, before we set out again, till the sea-breeze has somewhat cooled the air. I will avail myself of that time to reproach you with your imprudence. Ah ! Matilda, if it had exposed my own life only, I should not reproach you !” He ceased. She was struck with his profound melancholy. She hid her face with her hands and replied, in a tremulous voice, “ Alas ! I hoped this journey would have proved dangerous to me alone ; that you, particularly, would not have been exposed, and that, when your brother was waiting for aid, no consideration could have detained you.” —“ If such were your hopes, Matilda,” interrupted he, eagerly, “ I have then very ill expressed my love for you, since you think there can be any thing more powerful than you over my soul. Ah ! when I returned to Cairo, and learned your departure ; when I could no longer entertain any doubt but you had directed your march to the Desert, did I think of my brother, of his commands, of battles, or of glory ? No, Matilda, I thought of you alone. I flew after you, heedless of my people’s murmurs, and of the discontents of my army. My brave soldiers tried to detain me ; they mentioned Saladin’s anger ; but what imported his anger, what, if he should demand my life, provided Matilda were saved ! I hoped to have joined you sooner, and to have brought you back, in spite of yourself, before you could have reached your journey’s end ; but in these vast deserts, where no road is marked out, I lost my way. Ah ! Matilda, had we departed together, as I wished, we should ere this have entered the tents of Saladin, and a whole nation would not

have to reproach you with my disobedience." He ceased, unwilling to impart to Matilda all the fears that distracted him; he would not tell her, that, to follow her, he had been forced to employ violence; that his indignant army, opposing his departure, wanted to oblige him to march into Syria; that menacing denunciations had broken out against Matilda; and that, having made choice of his most faithful soldiers and most devoted servants to attend him, he did not possess their full confidence, nor did they respect her whom he loved.

Matilda inquired how, as he had lost his way, he had been able to discover the hermit's grotto. "Having reached the borders of the Red Sea," said he, "at a great distance from the ruined monastery, in order to find it, I coasted along its banks. At last, this morning, on the breaking out of the dawn, I heard the cry of the Bedouins—that exulting cry which is the forerunner of slaughter. I rushed that way, various terrors distracting my breast, and arrived amidst the ruins. Your Christians, surprised in their sleep, were the victims of the Bedouins. The Duke of Gloucester, pierced with a mortal blow, saw me, knew me, and, raising himself, pointed to the grotto. 'Save the Princess!' said he, and he fell lifeless. I bade my soldiers assist your friends; they obeyed and I flew to you. What a dreadful sight! Matilda, the idol of my heart, was on the point of falling into the hands of a band of barbarians! Ah! had I arrived too late, had a single one of those savages laid on you a sacrilegious hand—but, Matilda, thou art revenged. I have slain all those who presumed to look at thee."—"O faithful friend of my brother, noble duke of Gloucester!" exclaimed Matilda, weeping, "have I been the cause of thy death! For me, thou camest to expire obscurely in the Desert; and have all the Christians perished with him too!—I see none here." "I left nearly the

whole of my troop with them," replied the Prince, and should have remained myself as their defender, had not my first solicitude been for you."

Matilda wept the fate of the unfortunate men she had thus exposed to death, and reproached herself with having drawn them into the Desert, to abandon them in their distress.—“ Ah !” said the Prince to her, “ of what service could your presence be to them. Do not weep, Matilda, over the danger I have snatched you from, but weep at that which threatens. I hear the southern wind rising. I see on the south columns of sand and reddening clouds.—I shudder, I tremble. O Matilda, until I knew you, I never trembled.” In hopes of avoiding the hurricane, by proceeding towards the north, Malek Adhel left the mountain, and, with Matilda, joined his soldiers. He found them panic-struck at the sight of the terrific signs rising all around ; their steeds, still more frightened, overcome with fatigue, and scarcely able to breathe, had become absolutely restive. The Prince, confident that every moment’s delay might prove fatal, resolved to proceed with his camels only, but the soldiers refused ; they would not advance on foot ; and in order not to abandon their horses, they proposed to take shelter on the summit of Colzoum. Malek Adhel, however, who had but a score of men with him, and knew that the caverns of that mountain were the dens of ferocious beasts and intrepid banditti, would not expose Matilda to their attacks, and gave the word to march : the band hesitated ; at length, to encourage them, Malek Adhel declared he would walk. This generous example determined his soldiers, and not one ventured to flinch from the fatigues which his master was not afraid to endure.

The caravan began their march, preserving a profound silence. No one ventured to tell the dangers he foresaw, or the fears he experienced. Malek Adhel walked beside the camel that carried Matilda, and was preceded by three other camels, loaded with bladders filled with water, a tent, and

provisions for the journey. The soldiers came after, their looks dejected, their countenance sullen and morose, as if on the point of revolting.

Meanwhile, the day passed without any accident ; the night approached, and the terrors ceased ; but the travellers had just entered the most dangerous part—the vast sandy Desert. If, on the next day, the forerunners of a hurricane should again appear, the peril would then be extreme ; hence every exertion was requisite to reach the other side of that dreadful place. The soldiers asked to march all night. The Prince also wished the same ; but how could he manage without allowing Matilda some moments of rest ? would she have been able to undergo such fatigue ? She was then lying on the camel, pale, nearly motionless, scarcely able to breathe, and ready to expire with lassitude. Notwithstanding the murmurs of his men, Malek Adhel ordered a halt, pitched his tent in the midst of the Desert, spread his cloak on the sand, and entreated Matilda to sleep for a few hours. Forced to suspend their march, the soldiers abandoned themselves to sleep ; the Prince alone, standing outside his tent, watched for fear of a surprise, and gazed with the most painful anxiety on that canvass which contained her he adored, and those burning sands which threatened her life. At that instant all was still and calm ; the moon shone on a barren and dry plain, where the cool night breeze could not find a shrub to agitate, nor a single reed which it could touch, and form a sound. Profound silence reigned in the Desert, interrupted only by the distant roaring of tigers, and the doleful and shrill note of the ostrich, which seemed to portend the day of calamity was at hand, and the misfortunes that had threatened were coming on.

Meanwhile, Matilda did not sleep easy ; her dreams were disturbed by the image of the surrounding perils. Without being able to dissipate her fears, it seemed to her she ought to be secure ; and that the greatest of all injustice was to harbour a sus-

picion against Malek Adhel's honour. But, while she thus accused herself, that name involuntarily escaped her. The Prince turned around, saw Matilda awake, and precipitated himself near her. "My beloved," said he, "is it anxiety disturbs your sleep?"—"Yes," she replied; "but it appears to me now, that I ought no longer to feel disquietude."

Malek Adhel did not understand the meaning of these words; he only thought of the dangers of the Desert; to shelter her from which, he would have freely given his life. "Alas!" said he, "I cannot share your security. To me, how truly frightful and terrible does the danger appear that threatens you! To adore you, to lose you, to feel all my courage useless to save you—this is my situation, these are the torments my love causes me! but, Matilda, you have no compassion on the pangs of my love."

The Princess pressed her hands on her heart, and, raising her eyes to heaven, said, "O God! had I but deserved this reproach, I should not then appear so guilty before thee."—The Prince was going to answer, but she would not suffer it, and quitted the tent abruptly: the soldiers awoke, the men reloaded the camels, and the caravan proceeded in the same order as the day before.

Scarcely did the first rays of the sun break upon the horizon, when they perceived huge columns of sand, occasionally moving with prodigious rapidity, or advancing majestically slow. Soon the sun, on piercing through, gave them the appearance of real columns of fire, and the redness of the sky seemed to portend the arrival of the destructive Sirocco wind. With the alarm of those awful presages, murmurs broke out aloud; several soldiers proposed to throw away the tent and part of the provisions, to fly the more swiftly. Dismayed by fanaticism and terror, the whole band soon declared that so many calamities were sent as a punishment for the extraordinary cares they were forced to bestow on a Christian; they even dared to avow, that if

she remained any longer among them, Mahomet would sacrifice them on the mercilest floating sands. At these insolent speeches, Malek Adhel, transported with fury, drew his sword, and looking at his soldiers with eyes sparkling with fire, "I swear,;" said he, "I will cut off the head of the first who shall dare to utter a single word against the Princess of England's sacred person!"—The Prince's action, his voice, his looks, intimidated all the soldiers: they remained silent, but not without reluctance, for it was less the fear of death than a fanatic superstition that rendered their submission so difficult. The scourges that threatened them seemed like a wholesome warning of the approaching chastisement which they could not hope to escape but with the immolation of some great victim to the wrath of Mahomet.

The next day, about noon, when the sun, surrounded with a red cloud, seemed embracing the whole earth to consume it with its fires, Matilda's camel wounded its leg against one of the rocks in the Desert, and in a few moments the part swelled so prodigiously, that the animal became unable to proceed. The Prince commanded that another should be prepared, upon which all their superstitious discontents again broke out, and with one voice the soldiers declared they would not obey. He shuddered at the idea of the outrages she might suffer; hence, taking his resolution instantly, he fell back a few paces, turned the point of his sword to the breast of his beloved, and exclaimed, "If this virgin must be sacrificed, I alone will strike her; but, on pulling this sword out of her heart, reeking with her blood, I will instantly plunge it into my own, and expire by her side, calling down the vengeance of the Prophet on your guilty heads! and think not, despicable wretches, that he will leave your Prince's death unpunished. No!—on the great day of judgment, you will all appear covered with that blood you have forced me to shed!"—No, no!" interrupted the soldiers, falling at his feet, "we will re-

vere you to our latest breath. We only entreat you will sacrifice the Infidel who makes you forget all your duties; scarcely shall her blood have stained the sands, when our swords shall be laid at your feet, that you may dispose of our lives at your pleasure." "O generous Adhel!" exclaimed Matilda, "do not expose your precious life for an unfortunate, who has but a few moments to live! I feel I am dying;—your courage cannot save me. Ah! I entreat you, plunge your sword into my heart! it is my last prayer." As her pale lips closed, she sank down, unconscious, on the sand. The rebellious band drew nearer, and one among them cried, "Prince, we all swear to die for you: mount that camel, place yourself at our head, and leave the Christian to perish!" Decided by these words, they no longer hesitated on seeing the menacing looks of the Prince, but left him the lame camel, the tent, three bladders full of water, some dried fruit, and departed with the three other camels, thus abandoning the Prince and the virgin in the wilds of the horrid Desert!

Matilda lay motionless on the sand; the Prince saw her; and, while he feared a greater misfortune, with his vigorous arm he raised the tent, formed a shelter, and, placing the Princess under it, employed part of the water left in recalling her to life; but it was not until the cool evening breeze that she revived and opened her languid eyes. Her first cry was for Adhel: "Where is he?" exclaimed she; "is he safe?"—"He is here!" replied he; "he is near thee for ever!"—Matilda raised her head, recalled her ideas, looked around her, saw only the Prince, and added, with an expression of profound sorrow, "Are they gone, and without you!"—"They have left me, Matilda, but I am not dismayed; do not be alarmed, my beloved; all hope is not yet flown. The other half of my soldiers are surely following us, with the few who remain of thy attendants; on these I can safely rely. Let us wait for them here till day-light; lest, du-

ring the darkness of the night, I should miss their track. If, to-morrow, at dawn, they have not arrived, I will carry thee in my arms across the Desert. The camel, though lame, will be able to follow us, and if, before night, we can but reach Mount Kaleil, we are safe. As our little band must pass over it in their way to Cairo, I will wait for them there; since we are sure to find a spring of pure water, dried fruits, and cool grottos, to shelter thee from the mid-day heat."—Leaning against the tent, Matilda dejectedly surveyed the vast extent of the Desert. Without daring to express her fears, or address aloud her prayers to heaven, she fell on her knees, melting into tears. The hero drew near, and took hold of her hand; "Matilda," said he, "hear me! We are alone in the world, together lost in these immense wilds; perhaps to-morrow's sun will bring us death, perhaps we may not behold another day; am I, O my beloved, to quit life without having been united to thee?"

Matilda heard no more: she arose, and the God she had been invoking infused into her whole countenance somewhat of his divine majesty. Standing before the Prince who was prostrate at her feet, she said, "Malek Adhel, I love you!—God has received in the tribunal of penitence this confession of my weakness; this confession, which assuredly should not have passed these lips, did not the near approach of death plead my excuse. Yes, Malek Adhel, I love you! and, were you a Christian, the whole world could offer me nothing in comparison!—Were you a Christian, I would prefer this Desert with you to all the grandeur the kings of the world could lay at my feet. Adhel, thy voice is very powerful over my heart, but that of a God who died for me speaks louder than thine! His orders without doubt have their full right to make me struggle against thy love; this it is that makes my glory, and which, in giving me strength, also gives me security.

As the Princess spoke, her eyes raised to heaven, she seemed to have detached herself from the earth, and her deportment had acquired something so dignified and pure, that she at that moment appeared, in the eyes of Adhel, like the angel of the Desert. He was affected, astonished; his soul was shaken, and he exclaimed, "Thou surely speakest true: God has revealed himself to thee.—It is his inspirations thou breathest: armed with his strength, thou defendest thyself: thou art the living temple wherein he dwells; his truth is on thy lips, make it flow into my heart, imbibe me with his light, and render me worthy of belonging to thee!"—"What do I hear!" exclaimed Matilda, joining her hands with an impassioned ardour, "will thy eyes open? Has God, in his infinite goodness, moved thy great soul! O! that it were true, that it were possible, then shouldst thou become the object of my everlasting love, and I would place my terrestrial happiness on thee!"

Thus broke out the flame the vestal had smothered in her chaste heart. The Prince, at her feet, swore to live or die for her sake, and entreated her to bind herself by the same engagement. She paused awhile, then took hold of his hand, pressed it between her own, and said to him, "Art thou a Christian?" "Ah!" replied he, in a sort of passionate frenzy, "what dost thou ask of me? Art thou not the absolute mistress of my soul and will? Dost thou know what I am, and can I at present think of or wish but to adore thee, and to become thy husband? O! condescend to bestow that sweet name on me!—Name me thy husband then, Matilda, in order that the title may give me more claims to the love of thy God!"

The Princess was suddenly prevailed upon by that idea; she hoped in effect more successfully to open to Malek Adhel the way of salvation by uniting her soul with his, and flattered herself the name of husband would forward his conversion. Before she resolved, however, she invoked the Almighty, im-

plored his assistance, laid her heart open before him—that heart so pure, that it durst not yield to love but when the voice of religion had joined with it, and which was going to pronounce the hymeneal vow only to acquire more means of calling the greatest hero in the world to the blessed light of salvation.—“O thou Omnipotent and Omnipresent!” exclaimed she, in a supplicating voice. It was all she could articulate, for the vivacity of the sentiments that oppressed her exceeded by far the powers of human language. The Prince, prostrate before her, begged of the unknown Deity he saw her imploring, to turn her heart to compassion. During their silent prayers, the moon was reflecting her glimmering light on the wide extent of the Desert; no noise, no sound, interrupted the stillness of the night; it seemed as if, in that calm and solitude, God ought more distinctly to hear the prayers of the soul that implored him, and that soul ought more perfectly to hear its own voice. The Princess fancied she had heard it in her own heart, whispering that God himself commanded her to devote her whole life to the salvation of that hero who twice had offered to sacrifice his own: she dropped her hand into that of the Prince, both raised them to heaven together; and, untying the relic that hung on her bosom, she placed it before the eyes of Malek Adhel, exclaiming, “Here, where all nature is silent, where all living creatures seem to sleep, speak to him at this solitary moment, O my heavenly Father!”

Adhel started: there was something in the look and voice of the virgin that astonished his soul; it was more than love; and it created such emotions as he had never experienced before. Matilda guessed what he felt, and said, “And now that thou art worthy of being my husband, I swear never to have any other than thee! I swear it to that God who now fills, with his immensity and power, this Desert and thy heart.” She ceased. Malek Adhel could not speak, he was so deeply oppressed with a

sensation of inexpressible happiness and unknown sensibility! Matilda was his, Matilda was his wife! But, in calling God into the Desert, in making him the witness of their august union, in placing him between her and Adhel, the virgin had surrounded herself with so much majesty, that, in presence of the veneration she inspired, passion became silent, every image of pleasure and voluptuousness was wholly effaced from the mind of Molek Adhel.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE dawn was breaking over the east, and commencing that day, the end of which, perhaps, Malek Adhel was not to behold; but could he withhold blessing it, when it was hallowed by hearing him call Matilda his wife?—That name, which he pronounced incessantly, did not alarm the virgin's modesty; for he had sworn to shut his eyes against her chaste beauties until the moment when the Archbishop should consecrate their engagements; and she relied in full confidence on the faith of the husband to whom she had promised all, save the sacrifice of her innocence. Full of courage and joy, Malek Adhel prepared for the journey, flattering himself that they should reach Mount Kaleil in the evening, where he proposed to wait quietly for the caravan that followed them; but soon her languor increased, and she knew no longer where she was; she had ceased to perceive the sands that menaced, and the sun that scorched; her struggles, her remorse, her country, her marriage, all were blotted out of her remembrance; her thoughts were lost in a void space; and at last, save the love that animated her, and the husband who pressed her in his arms, the whole world had vanished from her mind.

Meanwhile, after a few hours, she fancied the steps of him who carried her were slackening; a vague apprehension struck at her heart, and tore her away from the state of oblivion wherein she was plunged. She opened her eyes, looked at the Prince, and was frightened at his extreme paleness, which was soon increased on learning that the blood he was covered with proceeded from the rupture of a vessel in his chest. In vain he endeavoured to comfort her with the hope that Mount

Kaleil was not far off, and that he should soon obtain relief. "No!" exclaimed Matilda, "let us die here!" Thus, in seeing the grave ready to ingulph them both, Matilda took pleasure in a situation that allowed her to express, for the last time, all her passion; but the more she enlarged on this theme, the more it increased the desire of Malek Adhel to live. Supported by the Princess, he stood up, and endeavoured to discover the bald and bluish top of Mount Kaleil; he called out, he implored heaven and earth; but nothing appeared; no answer was made; and his cries, lost on the wide waste, were not even regarded by the echo. Discouraged by this silence, and still more by the frightful space that secluded him from the world, he drew nearer to Matilda, sat down by her side, and resigned himself to die; while she, tenderly inclining towards him, with the most sorrowful expression told him, that the hour, when she could dare to love him without fear, would be the sweetest of her life, if he would promise to follow her into eternity. The Prince looked at her, and that look conveyed an assurance that he would not quit her. "If thou wilt consent," added she, "God in a few moments will receive us both into his bosom." Malek Adhel pressed on his lips the relic he had received from Matilda, and answered, "I will follow thee every where; be lost, and perish with thee, rather than ever part with thee!" The virgin raised her eyes up to heaven with gratitude, laid one hand upon her heart, and gave her husband the other, in pronouncing these words, "For ever!" He replied the same; they looked at each other, and smiled again: by degrees their strength failed; their heavy eye-lids opened but with pain; they reclined, and leaned against each other. Darkness began to surround them; the coldness of the night began to chill their blood; another day was not to rise on them, and their last sun was setting in death!

Meanwhile, amidst the awful silence of these extensive wastes, afar, towards the east, a noise was heard. A sudden joy revived in the Prince's soul and he arose; he listened, and the noise increased; he distinguished the feet of camels, the neighing of a horse, and soon the voices of men; he clasped his hands together, and exclaimed, "Heaven's mercy has reached us! I hear the march of a caravan!—We are saved!"—"Ah!" replied the Princess with a feeble sigh, "but a few moments, and I shall have no more misfortunes to apprehend."—"O my beloved, revive! happiness and life will be restored to us." While he advanced some paces towards the caravan, Matilda answered, "Alas! what greater happiness can I expect from the longest life than that of dying with thee?" But the Prince now attended less to what she said than the thought of her safety. In the men who were approaching, Malek Adhel recognised his soldiers. "Brave friends!" said he, pointing to the Princess, save that illustrious unfortunate, who is dying!—assist her—I cannot help you—My strength is exhausted. Were it not for this blessed meeting, I should not have beheld another sun." He said, and his warriors obeyed; some removed Matilda on a camel, and others cooled the heat of the Prince's lungs, by giving him milk. At last they reached Mount Kalleil, where they halted; and, in the hermit's forsaken grotto, Matilda, during the whole night, enjoyed a soft repose. The Prince, too, on seeing her out of danger, ventured, at last, to taste the refreshment of sleep.

The next day they came in sight of the Pyramids, and soon after they distinguished the lofty towers of Cairo. On seeing Malek Adhel enter the city, the people, believing the report of the soldiers who had arrived two days before, and which stated that he had been massacred by the Bedouins manifested their joy by loud and tumultuous acclamations. Soon they heard from the warriors who accompanied the Prince, the vile perfidy of those who

had betrayed him, and instantly hurried in crowds to the respective residence of those traitors, to crush them, and take revenge of the crime with which they were stained. Malek Adhel could not hinder a raging populace from giving him these sanguinary proofs of love; still less could he prevent them from breaking out into loud murmurs against the English Princess. Not one Mussulman but accused her of being the cause of the disasters at Ptolemais, and the inaction wherein the Prince remained. Such reproaches were just, and Malek Adhel felt them. Indeed, what could he hope from Saladin? Saladin, austere, religious, averse to love, would he be moved with his passion, would he listen to his excuses, or consent to give him a christian bride? Thus the hero argued with himself; and, overcome by so many torments and uncertainties, his great soul was discouraged. Broken, indignant against his weakness, which he had not the courage to surmount, he was ready to hate equally his duty that reproached, his glory that summoned, and his love that fettered him!

CHAPTER XXVI.

NOT many days had elapsed since the return from the Desert, when, one morning, a young warrior, covered with a green armour, the visor down, alone, without any squire, and riding a jet black mare, appeared at the doors of the palace: on his arm he wore a buckler, representing a sinople field and a silver zodiac, in the middle of which was a compass, turning to the side of the Virgin, encircled with these words, "I seek her only!" On recognising him to be Montmorency, Matilda foresaw her fate was about to change, and it was less surprise than fear which forced from her a shriek, and tinged her face with a deep blush. Malek Adhel, struck with the same thought, felt his trouble augmented, on perceiving that Montmorency's shield bore a subject and a motto which told him that Matilda was the only object he came to seek at Cairo. After having considered him for some time in the silence of profound admiration, he said, "Conqueror of Ptolemais, whence thy audacity, and what ill genius has conducted thee into walls where thy name alone would be a sentence of death, from which all my authority could not save thee?—" "Therefore it is to thee alone," replied Montmorency, "I entrust my name and intentions. Hear me; the moments are precious, and I cannot hasten too much to tell thee the motive of my visit.

"It was not until Metchoub's arrival at the christian camp that he found he had brought back the Queen of England instead of the Princess; it was too late to detain her, and his fury knew no bounds. He broke out into loud complaints against you, Prince; charged you with perfidy, and asserted

that your conduct was less the effect of your love than of a desire to declare yourself independent of Saladin, and form an alliance with the Christians to mount the throne of Egypt. This opinion obtained credit in the camp, and the Christians rejoiced at it. Richard himself added faith to it, and entertained no doubt but that his sister's hand would be the price at which your arms were to be joined with ours. Still the advantage of such a union could not induce him to behold it with pleasure. Lusignan saw the Princess in the Island of Cyprus, and since that moment he has lost his heart. On the death of Sibylla, he opened his mind to Richard, and Richard, who sees in him a brother in arms and his dearest friend, swore, that, if his sister should ever renounce her profession, and consent to take a husband, he should be the Prince. Philip Augustus, and the other sovereigns among the crusaders, unanimously blamed Richard's obstinacy in favour of Lusignan. They declared, that, far from refusing you the Princess Matilda, they ought to offer her to you as a wife, provided you would adopt our faith, and embrace our cause. Some knights declaimed loudly against such opinions, and maintained that no one had a right to dispose of the heart of the Princess; that she was her own mistress, and that nothing could be decided respecting her fate until she had been consulted. I not only adopted the last opinion, but I also offered, at the head of several warriors, to seek the Princess Matilda wherever you might have concealed her, in order to learn her intentions, and shed our blood to execute them. A thousand warriors immediately entered under my command, and I should have had double that number, had not the general interest opposed it. Philip Augustus demanded that I should be appointed commander of this noble troop, and Richard decorated us with the title of Knights of the Virgin. He commissioned me, my lord, to offer you any price you might require for the ransom of his sister. Moved by the prayers of

the confederate Princes, he added, that, were it true that you would adopt the christian faith, and join our standard, he would obtain from the Pope a dispensation from his oath, which consigned his sister to Lusignan only; and I, madam," continued he, addressing Matilda, "I have seized the joyful opportunity of coming hither only to declare to you, that my thousand warriors and myself will never suffer that any laws should be imposed upon you, under the name of political interests. Signify your will, therefore, madam, for there is not a sovereign but who is ready to offer you a throne, and not a knight," added he, with emotion, "but grieves at having none to offer!"—"Montmorency," interrupted the Prince, abruptly, "perhaps Matilda is no longer the mistress of her choice!"

Josselin started with surprise. The Princess turned her head aside with a blush: but, during this moment of silence, a strange noise, heard in the next room, intimated that slaves were approaching. Uneasy on Montmorency's account, Malek Adhel ran eagerly to meet them. The first object he perceived was a young Arab, named Kaled—Kaled, one of his most devoted servants, and the bravest officer of Saladin's army. Astonished, he inquired why he had left the Sultan. Kaled replied, "As I travelled the city in my way to the palace, I heard it reported that a christian warrior was hidden therein; Lusignan, Richard, and Montmorency, were named: all three, thou knowest, are equally the proscribed objects of thy brother's and the people's hatred; ere an instant, the furious populace threaten to force thy guard, and burst thy gates; nor is their fury the least of the dangers that threaten thee. The Sultan," added he, in a lower voice, "thy brother, has himself proscribed thy head!"—"Of all thou hast told me," replied Malek Adhel, "the last surprises me most, but alarms me least; my brother will know me some day.—Come, Kaled, come," continued he; and he led him towards the apartment of the Princess Matilda, where he intro-

duced him to Josselin.—After some complimentary ceremonies had passed, Malek demanded of Kaled, what cause had so much kindled Saladin's wrath against him, as to make him covet his death!

At these words, the Princess screamed with terror, without giving the Prince time to calm her apprehensions. Kaled replied warmly, "What cause! Contemning thy brother's commands, hast thou not sent back the Queen of England to the christian camp, and kept the sister of Richard near thee? And this at the very time when the Sultan has just forgiven thee the fall of Ptolemais! In short, at this moment, while he is waiting for thee to renew the war, thou art here inactive!" "Has not the Sultan long ago received the explanation of what thou askest?" exclaimed the Prince; "has not the slave I despatched to him on my quitting Damietta, given my letters; and, after having read them, what doubt could he entertain of my fidelity?"—"I know not," replied Kaled; "but I can affirm, that, if he received thy apology, it did not pacify him. Some time ago the daughter of Amaury appeared before him, and related thy perfidies. Saladin refused to believe her: the regard he entertained for thy character silenced his suspicions, and he wanted evidence to change his opinion of thee. But the day when Metchoub appeared in his tent, with gloomy looks, his garments rent, and crying out, in a doleful voice, striking his forehead on the ground, that thou hadst deceived him, that thou wert a traitor! 'Metchoub,' exclaimed he, after a pause, 'away to Cairo! twelve thousand men shall follow thee; with their help thou wilt reduce the subjects whom the traitor Adhel has drawn into his rebellion. Seize the traitor himself, if it be possible! To conquer him, employ all means—all are laudable against traitors. Loaded with chains, thou wilt cause him to be led into the great marketplace at Cairo, and, before thou inflict death on him, abandon, under his own eyes, the Princess of England to the vilest populace.'" "Hold, Kaled,

hold!" exclaimed Malek Adhel with impetuosity: "No! so vile a design cannot have been conceived by Saladin!"—"Since the Sultan sees in thee a traitor," continued Kaled, "he is not the same. Gloomy, suspicious, corroded with cares, he sheds the gall of suspicion on all who surround him, and has ceased to believe in virtue, since he can no longer believe in thine: he makes a delight of thy pain, and affirms that all that thou shalt undergo will not equal the tortures he feels; in short, Metchoub's last orders are, not to appear again before him but with thy head in his hand." "O Saladin!" exclaimed the Prince, "thou must be indeed unhappy, to have become so cruel. But, Kaled, tell me, knowest thou whether Metchoub's army is advancing towards Cairo?"—"He leads his army with such rapidity," replied the Arab, "that I shall hardly have gained two days on him. The instant Saladin had issued his orders, I forgot all thy errors, saw thy perils only, and flew to prevent or share them with thee. On leaving the council of the emirs, I took a horse whose swiftness equals that of the winds, and in less than two days I reached the mountains of Khor; from whose summit I perceived afar in the sandy plains which surround Ramah, the army of Metchoub making prodigious marches. I then redoubled my rapidity: my steed scarcely left the mark of his feet on the sand; but Metchoub is inflamed with such vindictive rancour against thee, that I should not wonder if he followed me close, and the next morning's sun beheld him encamped on the banks of the Nile. Take thy precautions, therefore, O Malek Adhel! for thou seest the Sultan's orders are peremptory, and Metchoub will not soften them."

Sad and pensive, Malek Adhel remained silent, undetermined whether, by parting from Matilda, he could save her. If he had exposed but his own life by keeping her with him, neither Montmorency and his thousand warriors, nor Metchoub and his twelve thousand men, nor Saladin himself with all the for-

ces of his kingdom, could have frightened him from his love ; but his people and his soldiers, ready to shed all their blood in his defence, were also ready to mutiny, if he commanded them to protect Matilda. Drawing therefore near her, he took her hand ; and placing it in Montmorency's, added, with profound emotion, " Conduct her to the Christian camp. It is to your loyalty, your valour, and your honour, Montmorency, that I confide the honour and the life of Malek Adhel's *wife* !" Josselin fell back with astonishment ;—his apprehensions had not gone so far, and he exclaimed, " The sister of Richard, a Christian Princess, the future bride of the Lord, — the wife of Malek Adhel !" He stopped ; the virgin arose ; and, turning on Montmorency her eyes bathed in tears, which so well expressed the grief of her soul, the modesty of her thoughts, and dignity of her rank, she said to him, " Montmorency, I am not the wife of Malek Adhel, for Malek Adhel is not yet a Christian, and none but a Christian can obtain my hand ; but I have sworn to the Prince, and I here renew the oath, never to belong to any other mortal than him !" — " The brother of Saladin can never be a Christian," interrupted Kaled eagerly. " Hear me, Kaled !" replied Malek Adhel : " Thou hast more than once seen with what ardour I have defended the empire of Mahomet against that of Christ ; but I was ignorant then that a virgin of sixteen could rise superior to all seductions, resist even those of her own heart, and fear death less than shame. I knew not," added he, looking at Josselin, " that a mortal filled with profound passion could chain his desires, silence his regrets, and become the defender of his rival—such high virtues belong to Christians only ! The law of Mahomet performs no such prodigies ; they have moved me, I confess ; and, if truth be any where, it must be in that religion that operates them. Meanwhile, though shaken, I am not yet converted, and never will I adopt a faith, the first precept of which would be to make me a traitor to my

brother and my country. My first engagements were to Saladin; and I will keep them to my latest breath. He may proscribe my head, but he shall not prevent me from devoting my life to his service. The torch of Mahomedanism sheds on my soul but a pale and glimmering light—that of Christ sheds none yet; but honour speaks to me like a Deity; let it therefore become my only religion and law. I admire the Christians, and will fight them. I adore Matilda, and submit to part with her; and could I only obtain her hand at the price of a perfidy, I would resign it. Tell me, brave Montmorency, if thou sawest me by thy side, raising the sword on my country, and bathing my hands in my brother's blood, with what an eye wouldst thou behold me? Matilda, you look down; Montmorency, you fear to answer me. Christians as you are, you dare not tell me that your law commands and approves treason. O Matilda, were I to abandon all my duties to follow you, should I be worthy to call you mine? and, were I to break through all my oaths, should I deserve to receive your's? My beloved, in parting with thee, I part with every thing, save the hope of meeting thee again. To attain it, I will not count upon obstacles, but overcome them; for nothing on earth is impossible to Malek, except to become a traitor, or to live without thee! and now receive my parting blessing; for in one hour hence"—

He stopped: his tongue could not finish the sentence, and he turned aside for the second time. He feared, if he once more saw Matilda, he should not have the fortitude to suffer her departure. During that pause, the Princess herself had been doubting whether she could resolve to quit the Prince. She was not deficient in the knowledge of her duty, but the courage to submit; hence, if the Deity did not vouchsafe her his assistance, she must remain with Malek Adhel; for, though reason may point out to us the road of virtue, religion alone can give us the strength to follow it.

In a silent prayer, the Princess implored him who governs all things to save her from weakness of heart. The Saracen, who saw her struggles and hesitation, experienced a sort of frenzy which made him almost confident he could by the prowess of his single arm defend her against all the powers of the earth. Had Matilda uttered but a single word favourable to that hope, he would have embraced it, and perhaps she had not departed. That Power, however, which she had been so earnestly imploring, did not allow of her farther indecision; and now, convinced that it was time to resign the vain expectation of sublunary happiness, she shrouded her face with her veil, and in a feeble voice articulated, "I am ready to depart!" Her consent brought back Malek Adhel to the sight of truth and of his desperate situation. "It is decided then!" exclaimed he, and rushed out precipitately to give orders for the departure of the Princess.

END OF VOLUME I.

