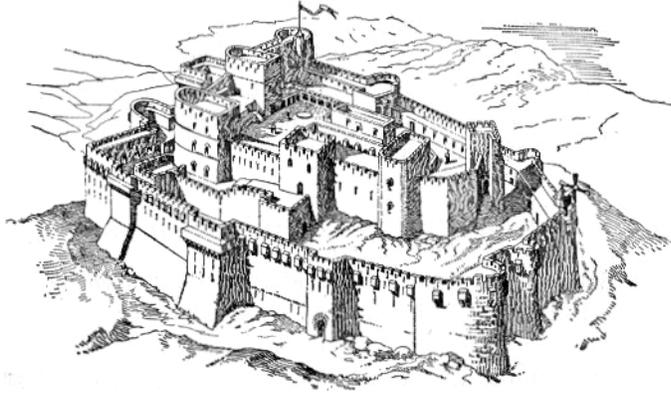


Christ conquers!” so dashed on the enemy as to win a glorious victory. But only a few days following, as he was bathing in a cold, swift river, a chill struck him, and he sank into the rapid current. He was seventy years old when he was thus lost, in the year 1190.



Crusader Castle in Syria.

His body was found and buried at Antioch, and the Germans could scarce believe that their kaiser was really dead.

A legend soon arose that in a cave in Thuringia, Frederick Barbarossa sat with all his brave knights around a stone table, as his once-red beard, now white,

grew through the stone. He was said to be waiting till the ravens ceased flying round the mountain, and Germany’s greatest need be upon her, when he will waken and break forth, and deliver her.

Frederick’s second son and namesake fought bravely, but soon caught the plague, and died when only twenty years of age. Frederick’s great army was thus nearly exterminated, so that only a small band of Germans were left to meet the Christian host at Acre.



lxxxvii. Richard and the Saracens.

THE siege at Acre lasted two years, and during that time many quarrels arose among the crusaders, who were very jealous of one another. Although the city was very strongly fortified, Richard made such daring attacks upon it that the inhabitants finally promised to surrender in forty days and to give back the true cross to the Christians. But, hearing that their famous chief Saladin had come with an army, and that he had hemmed in the Christians around the city, the people of Acre did not keep their word. When the forty days were over, and Richard saw that they had deceived him, he ordered the heads of three thousand Saracen prisoners to be struck off in the presence of their friends on the city walls.

When Saladin heard this, he had as many Christian captives slain, and the war was renewed more furiously than ever. Richard was very brave, but he was neither humane nor gentle, and he soon quarreled with the king of France and the duke of Austria. Although they remained with him, these two princes secretly hated him, and tried to hinder him in every way.

For months the fighting went on, and as Richard was always in the thickest of the fray, his name became the terror of the country. Saracen mothers used to threaten naughty children by saying, "Look out, King Richard will catch you;" and when a horse shied, the Saracen warrior would cry, "Dost thou think King Richard is behind yon bush?"

The Saracens, however, were worthy foes for the Christian knights; and their leader Saladin was just as brave, just as generous, and just as cruel, at times, as the famous Richard himself. We are told that these two leaders once had an interview, in which each showed his skill in handling the sword. While Richard cut a huge bar of iron in two with one mighty stroke, Saladin deftly divided a down and silk pillow and a floating veil of gauzy tissue, which were equally difficult feats.

Once, during the war, Richard fell seriously ill with fever. When Saladin heard that his enemy was sick, he made a truce; and as long as the disease lasted, he daily sent Richard fresh fruit, and ice and snow which were brought down from the top of Mount Leb´a-non.

The Christians, however, were in the meantime sorely afraid of the Saracens, for the latter had the aid of the chief of the As-sas´sin tribe, called the Old Man of the Mountain. The subjects of this chief were so devoted to him that they would obey him blindly, and he trained a number of the youngest and strongest of them to go among the Christians and suddenly stab them with poisoned daggers. Because these Assassins never appeared among the Christians except to commit murder, their name has become a common term for one who treacherously kills a fellow being.

Acre was finally taken by the Christians, who now began to quarrel among themselves about the naming of a king for Jerusalem, which they hoped soon to win also. Richard sided with one party, the French king and the Austrian duke with another. The man chosen by the latter party was murdered by one of the Assassins, but they accused Richard of having had a share in the crime.

Philip Augustus, angry and jealous because Richard was reaping all the honors, prepared to return home. Before he left the crusaders, he solemnly promised not to make any attempt to take Richard's lands or to do him any harm during his absence. But as soon as he arrived in Rome, he began to complain about Richard to the pope. The pope, however, would not listen to any of Philip's accusations, for he knew that without Richard the crusaders would soon have to give up all hope of taking Jerusalem.

Richard, in the meantime, had won a brilliant victory over the Saracens at Ar-suf', where many of the forty thousand slain fell by his powerful hand. He next wished to march on to Jerusalem; but his soldiers were weary of fighting, and refused to go farther.

Richard therefore retreated to As'ca-lon, where he helped the Christians rebuild their fortifications, carrying stone and mortar with his own hands. This conduct was viewed with scorn by the duke of Austria, who insolently remarked that *his* father had not been a bricklayer. Some historians say that it was this remark which caused a final breach between the leaders, and report that Richard resented it by kicking the lazy and impudent duke. Others say that it was a dispute about a flag that caused the division. However this may be, Leopold of Austria left the army soon after this, and went home, vowing that he would be revenged some day.



lxxxviii. The Faithful Minstrel.

RICHARD was confident to remain in the Holy Land, believing that Philip Augustus would keep the solemn promise that he had made. But while the king was busy fighting in Palestine, things were going on very badly at home. The offices, which he had sold to the highest bidders, were filled by men who thought only of growing rich, so law and order were very poorly maintained. Prince John, Richard's brother, who was surnamed Lackland because his father had left him no territory, was a very mean man, and he helped to make matters worse.

When Philip Augustus reached France, he became friendly with John, and proposed that they should invade Normandy together and take possession of King Richard's