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## THE CRUSADES: HOW MEDIÆVAL EUROPE EXPANDED.

**I**F the venerable cathedrals of Europe are the highest expression of the domestic or internal life of mediæval Catholicism, the Crusades are its principal public and political enterprise. By the Crusades we understand great armed expeditions of Christian Europe, undertaken at the command or suggestion of the Pope, with the purpose of rescuing the Holy Land from the control of the Mussulmans. They were originally meant as pious and religious works. Whoever joined them wore upon his breast a cross of cloth, and took a vow to fight for the Sepulchre of Jesus Christ and never to return to Europe before he had prayed within its holy precincts. They cover a period of two hundred years—the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries, during which time all Europe resounded to the tread of martial men, and the sublime cry of "God wills it, God wills it" was heard from Sicily to Norway. In this period the whole cycle of human passions was aroused, every human interest found a voice, and every human activity a channel or outlet.

In these two hundred years took place the transition of the European man from youth to manhood. He enters upon the twelfth century a creature of the heart, of sentiment and emotion, ignorant of the great world beyond his little hamlet or castle. He emerges from the thirteenth century, both layman and ecclesiastic, with world-wide experience, a clearer view of the relations of society

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to history and geography, and with new qualities of mind and heart. The Crusades were often very human enterprises, and more than once degenerated from their sacred character, to become instruments of injustice and political folly. They have their dark and regrettable phases, and perhaps their influence has been, on given occasions and in given circumstances, detrimental. This is no more than can be said of many great historical movements, laudable in their spirit and original intention, only to degenerate with time and the irresistible force of circumstances or environment. Taken as a whole, they are the most important collective enterprise in the history of European mankind. They were an official work of Catholicism, as represented by its Supreme Head, the Bishop of Rome. He first instigated them; he roused the timid, hesitating kings and nobles; his letters awakened the Catholic multitudes in every land; his spiritual favors attracted them about the banners of their kings and princes; his legates marched at the head of every expedition. When all others grew weary and faint-hearted, he maintained courage and resolution. When cupidity and self-interest supplanted the original motives of faith and devotion to the Holy Land, he constantly recalled the true significance of these warlike expeditions. Whether the Crusades were the beginning of his great power in the Middle Ages, or the first step to the shipwreck of it, he was always their central figure. The public life of these two centuries really revolved about two poles—Rome and Jerusalem.

The peoples of mediæval Europe, like all simple peoples with their life-experience before them, were genuine hero-worshippers. They were feudal and military in their organization, very ardent, sympathetic and mobile. Religion was intelligible, tangible, in their saints and martyrs, just as the state secured their loyalty in and through the persons of their leaders, their counts, dukes, princes and kings. Loyalty was primarily to fixed persons in whom ideals and institutions were incarnate: to be a "masterless man" was equivalent to outlawry. Devotion and self-sacrifice were for persons and places—they had not yet learned to divide the abstract idea from its concrete expression.

Now, from their conversion to Catholicism, these peoples had cherished an intense devotion to the Person of Jesus Christ. He is their King who makes war against Satan, and the Apostles are his thanes, his generals, his counts and barons. His benign figure looks down from every altar, is enthroned in every apse, is sculptured on the walls, and uplifted over the doorway of every church. The first document of romantic theology is the well-known prologue to the Salic Law of the Franks. Since then all royal documents begin in His Name, all wills and testaments confess Him in

their opening paragraph. He is the beloved ideal of every heart, the burden of every discourse, the key-note of every original singer, and the inspiration of every immortal hymn. The first monument of mediæval Teutonic literature is the noble gospel-paraphrase of the ninth century known as the "Heliand"—in it Jesus Christ is the heavenly war-lord, worthy of all "Treue," symbol and fountain of all "Ehre." We shall never understand the Crusades, unless we grasp firmly the fact that the Middle Ages were a period of most universal and sincere devotion to the Person of Jesus Christ.

In such a world it was only natural that the severe penances needed to rouse a sense of sin in these rude and course natures should often take the form of a pilgrimage to the Holy Land where Jesus was born, lived and died. As the Middle Ages wore away, these pilgrimages grew in size and frequency. With the new religious spirit that created so many splendid churches in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries coincided some other things. The Popes had taken the popular side in their long struggle with the German Emperors, and had won the immediate victory. The great abbots of Cluny had aroused a new life all over Europe by their piety and that of the hundreds of monasteries which acknowledged their rule of life. After a long period of political inferiority and internal anarchy, the States of the West, disorganized since the death of Charlemagne, began to realize their strength. Vaguely it was felt that some common enterprise was needed to gather up all these new forces and currents.

In the great soul of Gregory VII., the man who more thoroughly than any other resumed the traditions and temper of the best Catholicism that preceded him, while he gave the watchwords for the centuries to come, this common enterprise was already clearly outlined, as early as the last quarter of the eleventh century. He saw that it would be better to consume the ardor and energy of men like the young and violent Henry VI. of Germany in efforts against a public, common, and threatening enemy, than to go on indefinitely in domestic broils and dissensions, Christian fighting against Christian, while all around the Mediterranean the Moslem was gradually spreading his power, and already threatened from very near that city of Constantinople which had so long been the bulwark of all the Christian population of the West. Indeed, the action of Sylvester II., the famous Gerbert (999-1003), would lead us to suspect that since the days of Gregory II., the "nec dicendi Hagareni" of the *Liber Pontificalis* had found in the papacy their native enemy. Islam was above all a religion, a warlike one in its essence and all its history, whose prosperity could only be gained at the expense of Christendom.

The time of Gregory VII. seemed also a favorable moment for the reunion of the Western and Eastern Churches. Scarce two hundred years had passed since the death of Photius, the scholarly but infamous man who had caused the breach that still lies open, and withdrawn the Christian peoples of the East from their union with the Head of the Christian religion, the successor of St. Peter. Constantinople was now in sore need of help against the warlike Seljuk Turks, who had been encroaching very deeply on Asia Minor, and now held all the overland roads to Syria and Palestine. This great city, the London of the Middle Ages, had exhausted its means and its armies. On nearly every side the world of Islam was surrounding it like a moving bog, slowly but surely. Four centuries of superhuman efforts, of wonderful ingenuity, of diplomacy, had not availed to stave off the day of reckoning that began when Mohammed haughtily ordered the Roman Emperor of his own day to do him homage. As a matter of fact it took four more centuries to reduce the Royal City beneath the Crescent—but the tide was already turning that way, and at Constantinople people, patriarchs and emperors recognized too well the painful fact, though they could never fully reconcile themselves to it, nor adopt the proper measures of reconciliation with the West. Is not the secret of it all in those terrible pages of Liudprand of Cremona? In them there breathe yet the racial contempt of the Greek for the Frank, the hoarded hope of vengeance, the senseless pride of origin, the bitter resentment of the transfer of loyalty by the Roman See, the angry despair at the sight of a free and vigorous West.

## II.

If Rome and Jerusalem were the poles around which revolves the history of the Crusades, the city of Constantinople is the key to their failure. In these two centuries many thousands of armed knights on horseback gave up their lives to the Crusades. Countless thousands of foot-soldiers and camp-followers, pilgrims and the like, perished in the attempt to free the Holy Places. There were two ways to reach Jerusalem, one by land down the Danube and through Thrace to Constantinople, thence over Asia Minor into Syria; the other by sea from Venice to Genoa, which cities alone had fleets of transport galleys in those days. For the first century the Crusaders went by land. Arrived at Constantinople, they abandoned themselves, too often, to excess, after the fatigues and privations of the long journey. The roads were poor and they were ignorant of the local topography. The populations they passed through were also ignorant, and often hostile. This was especially

the case as they left behind them the uncertain boundaries of the West and approached the territory of Constantinople, and the sphere of its influence. The semi-barbarian world of Hungary, Bulgaria and the Balkans was deeply troubled at their coming. Indeed, they were rightly troubled, for the military chiefs of the Crusaders too often had views differing from those of the pious clergy and people. Not always were their ambitions bounded by that

Sepulchre in stubborn Jewry  
Of the world's ransom, blessed Mary's Son.

They were mostly men of Norman blood or descent, state-destroyers and state-makers by profession. Many dreamed of new and rich feudal principalities, of independent sovereignties, of a golden life in the dreamy Orient. The law or custom of primogeniture, the feudal customs in favor of the eldest son, threw regularly a multitude of young ambitious men upon the theatre of European affairs, brothers of Kings, nephews of Queens, a mob of landless, disinherited men, and women, too, for whom fortune lay in the future and far away. They were the Conquistadori of the Middle Ages; to their ambitious, unholy, and evil counsels and purposes, is owing largely the failure of the religious scope of the Crusades. Between them on the one side, and the churchmen on the other, there was endless friction that often led to the gravest disasters.

It was in the time of the Crusades as in all other periods of human history—the genuine praiseworthy aims of religion were often perverted by the human instruments which acted in her name. The noble and useful ideals set forth at Rome and preached by a Saint Bernard, the high political advantages of the same, were perverted in the execution. Jerusalem was lost because a Bohemond or a Tancred set more store by a little feudal estate on the coast of Syria than by the real object of his vow. The Moslem's hour of division and weakness was allowed to go by, because Venice was jealous of the commercial superiority of Constantinople and plundered pitilessly, first the Crusaders themselves, and then her ancient suzerain, the great Royal City that, after all, had enabled Venice to rise by restraining the naval ambition of the Moslems, and preventing the Mediterranean from becoming the great lake of Islam, its easy high-way into all Europe.

The Crusaders themselves, too often, listened to very earthly and low passions, and dissipated their numbers and strength before they came within sight of the Holy City. They carried along with them old burdens of jealousy, hatred, revenge, from their French or German homes. Upon the soil of Syria they cherished their traditional European policies and combinations. Their counsels were usually divided—those highly personal men who never recognized any

superior law at home, except through fear, were unlikely to bear the yoke of subordination abroad. Could Homer have arisen, he would have seen before Jerusalem or St. Jean d'Acre as before Ilium, no fewer armies than there were kings and princes, as many independent divisions as there were banners of great knights, as many sulking chiefs as there were disappointed ambitions. Many of them had never seen a great city. At that time all the cities of Europe were not worth, in wealth or luxury, the single city of Constantinople. Its brilliant civilization had never known interruption from the day of its foundation. As in modern London, the fattening currents of commerce had been flowing into it from the East and the West for seven hundred years and more. Its hundreds of splendid churches were almost equaled by the splendid civic buildings. The masterpieces of antiquity, the rich literature of ancient Greece, the traditions of all the arts, the high aristocratic sense of superiority, seemed to justify the proud attitude of the citizens towards these uneducated and coarse multitudes from the West. A profound bitterness, an almost inexplicable hatred of the Bishop of Rome, has always characterized the Greek clergy of Constantinople. Their claim was always that the clergy of the New Rome was the equal in authority and the superior in learning and refinement of the clergy of Old Rome. Here, by the Golden Horn, the traditions of the ancient imperial government were never broken, never forgotten. Each Christian Emperor felt that he was the genuine successor of Julius Cæsar and Augustus. The Western nations—England, France, Germany, Italy—were to him revolted provinces, that some mysterious design of God tolerated. No Emperor of Constantinople ever willingly addressed the German successors of Charlemagne as Emperor, only as King. In theory, the Greek Emperor was himself the Master of the civilized universe. This, too, although century by century his civil power waned. North, South, East, and West, the limits of empire were pared away. But the Romaic Cæsar at Constantinople only gathered with more dignity the folds of his purple robes, and prepared to perish with more fortitude amid the rising tides of modern barbarism. There is nothing more pathetic in history than this survival of ancient ideals and habits of political life. The aristocracy of Constantinople was politically rotten to the core, yet it remained stoically contemptuous of its Latin conquerors, from the impregnable strongholds of its own mind and heart. The mediæval knight might have saved Constantinople, if the classic soul of Old Rome, proud and exclusive, had not been so deeply infused into the organism of her prouder daughter, the New Rome. It was in the time of the Crusades, as it is to-day with the Greek clergy of that city—better a hundred times the rule

of the Crescent than any subjection to the Pope, better the sour bread of slavery and oppression than any recognition of the descendants of the Goths and Vandals.

In the beginning there was almost no order or harmony among the chiefs of the Crusades, and when they reached the Imperial City, their own greedy passions and its great weakness conspired to make them common pillagers, thieves and oppressors. To get rid of them the wily Greeks induced them to cross the Bosphorus, led them against the hordes of Turks, then betrayed and abandoned them. These new protectors of the Greeks were worse than their old enemies. So the bones of entire armies soon whitened the plains of Asia Minor. By thousands the simple-hearted but ignorant knights of France, England and Germany paid with their lives for their turbulent career in Constantinople, for their impolitic insults to the Greek who did not acknowledge the Bishop of Rome as head of the Christian religion, for their innocent trust in the leadership of some Byzantine general.

In the second century of the Crusades they usually take the fleets of Venice or Genoa to cross the Mediterranean—but at an enormous expense. Once, indeed, Venice tempted them to overthrow the Christian Empire at Constantinople, which was now her commercial rival. In spite of the Pope this act of folly and injustice was accomplished, and the city of Constantinople saw its remaining provinces divided between Frenchmen and Venetians. This was in 1204, and was only the prelude to a series of disastrous expeditions, each one more fatal than the other, until at last in 1270, St. Louis, King of France, the leader of the eighth great Crusade, died of the pest at Tunis in Africa, whither his brother, Charles of Anjou, had drawn him, against the King's own judgment, in order to collect some bad debts that were owing to French and Italian traders.

As a matter of fact, the First Crusade, under the brave knight, Godfrey of Bouillon, did capture Jerusalem in 1098. For a century the Holy City was Christian. It was lost at the end of the twelfth century, and though for a short while again in Christian hands, from 1229 to 1245, it then definitely passed away from the control of Christian Europe into the hands of the oppressive and cruel Turk. Its possession had fired the heart of Christian Europe for three generations. But this fated city was too great a political prize for Islam to lose. Gradually the Moslems healed their divisions. The Turkish sultans, men of great military genius, broke down the hundred little emirs, and lifted the Leather Apron of their mining Turanian ancestors over one fortress after another from the confines of Persia to the waters of the Mediterranean. Here along the coast of Syria, the Crusaders had built up several little states, organized with all

the ingenuity of feudal lawyers, in such a way that the superior lord should have all the pomp and titles of authority and the most inferior vassal be left to his own sweet will and temper. The innermost of these states, Edessa, faced the Euphrates and long bore the brunt of the Moslem Orient. It was the first to fall. Before the end of the thirteenth century they had all disappeared, and only the picturesque ruins of their fortified hill-tops remain to show what were once the hopes of a great Christian state in the Orient.

### III.

The popular enthusiasm for the Crusades was originally universal. Kings, even Emperors of the West, led their armies in person and underwent great hardships. A German Emperor, Frederick Barbarossa, was drowned on the way across Asia Minor. St. Louis of France, as we have seen, died of the plague at Tunis. Noble princesses and high born ladies, too, accompanied these expeditions. But few of the great military chiefs stayed in the East. Most of the knights who remained were French, and it is to that period that goes back the use of the French language in the East, as well as the political prestige that France long enjoyed throughout the Mediterranean world.

In time experience taught these Crusaders who stayed in the Orient that the heavily armed knight of Europe, with his great battle horse, his huge lance and heavy sword, was ill fitted to carry on a guerilla warfare for the Holy Land. Three military orders arose, with reformed methods of warfare, that contributed much to the safety of pilgrims, the protection of Jerusalem, and of the fortified castles of Syria and Palestine. They were the Knights Hospitaller of St. John, the Knights of the Temple, and the Teutonic Knights. Originally established for the service of the sick, they became an organized feudal army of volunteers. Their castles arose all over the Holy Land, their bravery and adventures were in the mouth of every pilgrim. In them the romance and the poetry of the Crusades reached its height. All Europe looked on them as the true, the permanent Crusaders, and staked its hopes of recovery of the Holy Land on their skill and endurance. Thousands of estates were bestowed on them in the thirteenth century—their farms and castles stretched continuously from the Mediterranean to the Baltic and from the Atlantic to the Black Sea. It is in the vicissitudes of their history that we ought to look for the true ideal of the Crusades, and the measure of its realization.

The richest of them, the Templars, became the chief banking-house of Europe. In the fierce struggle between the Kings of



France and the Pope of Rome, the Knights of the Temple went down most tragically—the justice of their condemnation is yet, and perhaps always will be, an open question. The Teutonic Knights, after the loss of the Holy Land, turned their faces homeward to Germany. The soil of Prussia, then the home of barbarian pagan peoples, and of Northeastern Germany, was turned over to them, as a missionary brotherhood of laymen, with the purpose of overthrowing paganism and of establishing Christianity, incidentally of creating new marches for the Empire. Soon they were known as the *Schwertbrüder*, the Brothers of the Sword—a term that sufficiently well indicates the manner, if not the spirit, in which they propagated the gospel. Their splendid mediæval fortress still stands along the Baltic, the great pile of Marienburg, whence Pomerania, Lithuania, Esthonia, and all the border lands of Prussia and Russia received the Christian faith.

The Hospitallers, or Knights of St. John, after their expulsion from the Holy Land, clung still to the control of the port of Smyrna, and their fidelity has even yet its reward, for Smyrna is now to France what Shanghai is to England. Eventually they were established on the Island of Rhodes, where they remained until nearly four centuries ago (1520), when they were driven out by the Turk, after one of the most memorable sieges of history. Their last foothold on the Mediterranean was on the Island of Malta. In the latter half of the eighteenth century, they lost even this remnant of their old power, and with them the last glamor of the Crusades disappeared. There is yet an Order of the Knights of Malta, and the Pope still appoints a Grand Commander—but it is a mere ceremony. The old religious military orders, with their three vows of celibacy, poverty and obedience, have disappeared. Cardinal Lavigerie tried to establish one for the suppression of the slave-trade in the heart of Africa, but with indifferent success. Such institutions only flourish on the soil of simple and childlike faith; agnosticism and commercialism are too cold a soil for them.

In the Crusades took place the first great expansion of Europe. From the year 500 to the year 1100—for six hundred years—the peoples who now make up the great states of France, Germany, England, and Spain, were growing from infancy to mature youth, in a civic sense. All the rawness, weakness, waywardness, all the folly and strong violent passion of youth are upon them. They are in the hands of a gentle but firm nurse, the Catholic Church; but every now and then, they break away from school and there is pandemonium. The sea breaks out in the heart of the Anglo-Saxon, and the marsh in the heart of the Frank, the dark deep forest calls out in the soul of the German, and the Northman is again upon his

piratical galley. The early Middle Ages are apparently a perfect welter of disorder and anarchy. But somehow in the eleventh century, there is a beginning of better things. A King of France arises out of the wreckage of the French successors of Charlemagne's children. An Emperor grows strong, not only in name but in fact, among the Germans. He is in theory the Roman Emperor in the West, and though outside of Germany, his real power is small, this very theory of a one invisible Empire of Rome, that had never been destroyed, but only held in abeyance, as a trust, by the Bishop of Rome, gave once more a sacred, venerable character to the supreme civil authority. Then, too, the Roman Law was there as a significant commentary on what might be made out of the imperial name. The Church had saved it, assimilated it, christianized it, and in time the Emperors would use it as a leverage for far-reaching ambitions.

The old Gallo-Roman civilization had never utterly died out in France—the ancient Gaul, and now the traditions of old Rome in government and administration were handed down to the German Emperor by the clergy of Old Rome herself. In the traditions of architecture, in the use of the Latin classics, in legal procedure, in the continuous use of Latin as the tongue of religion, diplomacy and scholarship, the Roman Church had kept alive no little of the sober and practical Latin spirit—enough at least to act as a leaven for the new society that was to issue from the laboring womb of Europe. Thus, the modern world of Europe and America has become the daughter of the civilization of Rome and Greece, and not the theatre of Moslem propaganda.

It is true that the actual territory conquered from the Turks and held by the Christians of Europe, was never very great—the City of Jerusalem, some strongholds in Palestine, some ports in Syria. On the compact masses of Islam in Persia, Egypt and Northern Africa, they made little or no impression. In the Mediterranean the islands of Cyprus and Crete passed gradually into the possession of Venice. A corner of ancient Armenia remained some centuries semi-independent of Greek and Turk, under feudal influences of France. French families held on to feudal office and rights in Greece and the Archipelago. These were about all the positive gains and they have long since melted away. But the political results of the Crusades were very important in a negative and prohibitive way. Internally, the European States of Germany, France, England and Spain were very weak at the beginning of the Crusades. Feudalism had reached the point of utter disintegration. The royal authority, the concept of the State, all centralizing influences, were everywhere at their lowest ebb. Social anarchy was lifting threateningly its specter-like head. Shattering conflicts be-

tween the Church and immoral, arbitrary rulers were multiplying. Schisms in the Church, revolts and rebellions in the civil order, were growing. The warlike Turks, to whom had fallen the real power and wealth of the Caliphs at Bagdad and Cairo, were on the eve of capturing Constantinople. In great flotillas the equally warlike barbarians of the new states in Russia were coming down yearly by the Don and the Dnieper, and crossing the Black Sea with the same intention. The Arab kingdoms in Spain were at the height of their development. Had the Moslem Orient been left unmolested, free to carry on the Holy War according to the law of Mohammed, it would have found everywhere in Europe the Christians divided, ignorant of the great principles of the art of war, children in navigation, unable to carry on or resist sieges, half-barbarian and helpless in their diplomacy, the veriest lot of political infants one could imagine. From the summits of the Pyrenees, from the coasts of Sicily and Syria and Asia Minor, from the endless steppes of Russia, from the deepest Orient, would have come down again on the rich and tempting lands of Southern Europe hordes far worse than five or six centuries before had destroyed the Roman State. There is an organic law of preservation for states and civilizations that works like an instinct, and for Europe, since the days of Alaric and Attila, that instinct was incarnate in the Bishops of Rome. In spite of its unspeakable misfortunes, the Eternal City still held on to some of the large political traditions of antiquity. The very soil and the monuments kept them alive, as did the old laws of Rome and her spiritual authority that was recognized from the Mediterranean to the Baltic.

#### IV.

It was well for the world that at this time the West hurled itself upon the East and thereby arrested the political consolidation and growth of the latter. It did so at a propitious moment, when Islam was passing from the control of Arabs to that of Turks, and everywhere existed a feudal disorder not unlike that of the West. It accomplished the impossible in finding a splendid and inspiring symbol, the cross of Christ, for a dozen discordant nationalities. It seized on a psychological moment to weld into a common, conscious organic unity of Catholicism, all the nations of Europe that had hitherto been in communion, indeed, with Rome, but had not yet come into daily and vivifying contact with one another. In these long wars, the Moslem was made to fight for his existence; he was pushed finally out of the magnificent island of Sicily; he was driven from his perches in the Maritime Alps; he was hunted from his scattered, but ancient, strongholds in Southern Italy and Southern

France, whence he had for centuries been contemplating their conquest. A thousand Christian galleys on the Mediterranean and the Adriatic drove the corsairs of Africa to their distant lairs, and relieved the Christian people of the seaboard from the daily fear of slavery, their women from outrage, their children from ransom. This nameless horror of Moslem piracy, that has not yet finally disappeared, had paralyzed the Italian and French merchant, had suspended the natural free movement of peoples across the Mediterranean, was debasing the political sense of all the Christians of Southern Europe. In Visigothic Spain, the descendants of the Cid Campeador took heart once more. The good knight Roland had again arisen and from his last rock of defense had blown a strong blast that reëchoed over Europe. The Christian States of the Balkans (for if there is a Balkan question, it is owing to the failure of the Crusades), though ignorant and blind as to their welfare, got a long respite through the Crusades. Indeed, they put off entirely, if not political humiliation, at least any such complete assimilation into Islam as has fallen upon the Coptic race in Egypt. It is owing to the Crusades that the profound eternal antithesis and antipathy of the political ideals of East and West were brought out, precisely when the final adjustment of territorial limits was taking place. The great wars of Spain in the fifteenth century, that ended in the fall of Grenada, the great wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries between Hungary and Austria on the one side, and the Sultans at Constantinople on the other, are really Crusades. Thus, at the very threshold of modern times these wars were the last death struggle between Islam and Christianity over two great natural bulwarks of Europe the Pyrenees and the Danube. There is the most intimate relationship of cause and effect between the siege of Jerusalem and its capture, that ended the first Crusade, and the siege of Vienna, that six hundred years later immortalized John Sobieski and broke triumphantly the last effort of Islam to extend its propaganda over Europe. What will you have, O Christians! the immoral reign of fatalism with the hopeless human degradation of the Orient, or the uplifting reign of freedom with the general human progress and exaltation of the Occident? Our fathers before us, walking in a dimmer light, chose decisively and made the history that I have been outlining. If the citizens of the Pacific coast gaze out to-day, as the masters of the future over an illimitable Orient; if the evil genius that some grave historians consider the real Antichrist, enthroned by the Golden Horn, is now threatened from the depths of the Orient itself; if the latest phase of this eternal warfare between the ideals of the oldest strata of humanity and those of the youngest, opens with universal victory written on our banners, we may know

that the temper, the spirit, the weapons, the persistency that have uplifted us, were not created in a day, any more than the conditions of the Orient are the result of yesterday.

Never did the great French Catholic statesman, Montalembert, utter a truer word than when, fifty years ago, he cried out in the French Chamber of Deputies: "We are the sons of the Crusaders." Freeman has said that all history is only the politics of the past, the sure and real interests of mankind which have gotten crystallized by the shaping activity of the present that strikes, stamps, and returns no more. History is not always mere writing or telling—very often it is the real conditions, the institutions, the social framework and circumstance of our lives, the actual dwelling that our ancestors have made for us. The Crusades were the great political school of the people of Europe, as they passed from their crude ebullient youth to the maturity of man's estate.<sup>1</sup> It is not without design that Shakespeare, dealing in Richard the Second with the most profound problems of the English Constitution, sets down among the public merits of a great English noble his devotion to the political ideals of Christendom:

Many a time hath banish'd Norfolk fought  
For Jesu Christ in glorious Christian field  
Streaming the ensign of the Christian Cross  
Against black pagans, Turks, and Saracens.

The Crusades developed in a humane sense the art of war. Captives were habitually ransomed for money that was gravely needed by both sides, as the real sinews of war; thus the wholesale slaughter of more barbarous times was avoided. The men of the West learned the light Parthian tactics of the Orient, also the daily exercises with bow and lance and sword, the details of commissariat and transportation, the cost and difficulties and consequences of a great war.

<sup>1</sup> The Crusades are not, in my mind, either the popular delusions that our cheap literature has determined them to be, nor papal conspiracies against kings and peoples, as they appear to the Protestant controversialists; nor the savage outbreak of expiring barbarism, thirsting for blood and plunder, nor volcanic explosions of religious intolerance. I believe them to have been in their deep sources, and in the minds of their best champions, and in the main tendency of their results, capable of ample justification. They were the first great effort of mediæval life to go beyond the pursuit of selfish and isolated ambitions; they were the trial-feat of the young world, essaying to use, to the glory of God and the benefit of man, the arms of its new knighthood. That they failed in their direct object is only what may be alleged against almost every great design which the great disposer of events has moulded to help the world's progress; for the world has grown wise from the experience of failure, rather than by the winning of high aims. That the good they did was largely leavened with evil may be said of every war that had ever been waged; that bad men rose by them while good men fell, is, and must be true, wherever and whenever the race is to the swift and the battle to the strong. But that in the end they were a benefit to the world no one who reads can doubt; and that in their course they brought out a love for all that is heroic in human nature, the love of freedom, the honor of prowess, sympathy with sorrow, perseverance to the last, the chronicles of the age abundantly prove; proving, moreover, that it was by the experience of these times that the forms of those virtues were realized and presented to posterity.—Bishop Stubbs, "Seventeen Lectures on Mediæval and Modern History," p. 180.

Their weapons grew lighter, and their armor and horses more manageable. The ecclesiastic military orders, and the many European ladies of rank who followed their lords to the Sepulchre of Christ, introduced milder manners, and a humanity unknown to their earlier times. The sorrows and defeats of the Crusades, their humiliations and losses, were very often borne in a spirit of Christian faith, as a rebuke from God for their own wrong-doings and evil lives. The natural virtues of Islam, the courtesy and chivalry of its warriors, were not without their effect on the Christian knight. The legends of the Crusades are filled with figures of Moslems renowned for bravery and hospitality, gentleness and courtesy. A Richard Lion-Heart finds a Saladin his peer in many things.

The art of navigation profited very much by the Crusades—the vessels were made larger for the growing multitudes of pilgrims and warriors, for the transportation of horses and provisions. The masts and the sails were enlarged and were multiplied. The art of sailing by the wind was learned. Every such progress was a step towards the discovery of the new world. The skill of a Christopher Columbus was an inherited thing, acquired through the experience of several long generations of his ancestors in the service of Genoa.

We owe to the Crusades the use of the drum, the trumpet, the light and slender lance. The science of heraldry dates from that period, the Crusades, and though it may not contribute much to the comfort of humanity, it plays a prominent rôle in the development of the fine arts and of the social life of Europe in the last few centuries. Many fruit trees now common in the West were then introduced into Europe from Asia Minor, or the lowlands of Mesopotamia, their natural home. The apricot, the pear, the peach, the plum, trees and shrubs and flowers of uncommon beauty and elegance, made their way in this manner into the States of Europe. Some curious things found a new home for themselves; thus, the windmills that are so common yet in Holland and Brandenburg were imported from the Orient. Until the Crusades, no respectable man in Europe wore a beard—since then the observance of this civilized remnant of ancient society has been abandoned to the clergy. Healing recipes and plants of the Orient became the common property of the West. Medical theory and practice gained much by the study of Arabic writings that bore along the learning and experience of Greece. The hospital service at Jerusalem and elsewhere opened a new era in the history of Christian charity.

The cause of human freedom was greatly benefited by the Crusades. Knight and peasant fought side by side for many years, rendered mutual service, shared the same hardships, and learned to esteem one another. Thus, the theory of Christian equality was

daily reduced to reality. Then again, the knight needed ready money for his equipment, to pay off his creditors before departing, to provide for his family. He got it from his vassals, but before they paid it over, he was bound to secure them certain rights and privileges in solemn forms of writing. So arose on every estate of France and Germany free towns and cities, legally recognized by their former lords as independent and self-governing. Local and private feuds ceased to a great extent during the Crusades; there was a certain halo about the homes of those who were supposed to be bent on freeing the common home of all Christians. The national unities of France, England and Germany had then a chance to grow, unmolested by the earlier anarchy of primitive feudalism. The numerous serfs on the knights' estates became free peasants in time by service in the wars, or by purchase; at the other end of the state, the King entered at last upon the authority necessary to keep order and develop the common weal.

The mystery of the Orient, the long absences of the knights and their squires, the new strange romance of their lives, without parallel in the experience of the West, the curiosities of art and commerce that soon multiplied, gave a great impetus to the literatures of Europe—notably to poetry and song. The courtly troubadours and the gay Minnesinger are the creatures of the Crusades. The tournaments, the Courts of Love, the moderation and refining of personal manners, popular habits and institutions, all date from these great wars that furnished an infinity of data to the busy brain and the wagging tongue of many a strolling poet or musician from Otranto to Drontheim.

## V.

Italy took little part, as a militant element, in the Crusades, partly because of its thorough disunion—partly because of its superior culture. The Italians soon saw that there was greater profit for them in the transportation of their Christian brethren, the care of the commissariat, and the establishment of commerce. After all, these were necessary things, and the great cities of Venice and Genoa were admirably located for the work as was also their rival Pisa. They enabled the Crusaders to cross the ocean quickly and successfully; they brought with them men skilled in the art of sieges; they were the secretaries and couriers of the French and German knights—supple, cautious, wiry, alert, very Christian indeed, but with a sharp eye for the goods of this world. They took out their pay in commercial privileges and are the genuine forerunners of all modern commerce. Along the coast of Syria and of Asia Minor,

from Smyrna to Beyrouth, there was in every port an Italian quarter. In the roadstead lay their galleys, high, broad, elegant for that day. In their special reservation were always a church, a bath, a bakery, wharves, stores, a market place, a bank and office of exchange. The Italian tongue was the tongue of Oriental commerce. Bookkeeping and the use of Arabic numerals, the system of drafts and bills of exchange, letters of credit and the like, sprang up on these foreign shores—the departing Templar or Hospitaller sold out his estate in Syria and received his money, his gold Bezants or Angels, over the counters of correspondents in Paris, London or Rome. The flag of Venice or Genoa or Pisa floated always over these little strongholds of commerce, that were long an abomination to the “malignant and turbaned Turk.” From the remoter Orient came through the hands of the Italian merchant the silks of China, the spices of Borneo, the fruits of Asia Minor, the ivory and pearls of India. His correspondents were at Naples and Milan and Florence, at Marseilles and Bordeaux, at London and Paris, at Kieff and Novgorod. Oranges and figs, sugar and wine and oil, brocades and muslins, fine tapestries and costly rugs, colored glass of Tyre and steel blades of Damascus—a thousand articles of use and ornament, could be met with upon his manifests. And so the city life of Europe took on a charm, an elegance, a variety that it had never known before. The middle classes date from those days—the opulent tradesman and the cultured merchant, the skilled laborer and the substantial banker. The turbulent republics of Italy, the first great temple of democracy since the overthrow of Athens and Sparta, arose on this trade, and by their wealth defied emperor and baron, by their wealth permitted themselves the expensive luxury of yearly constitutions, wholesale proscriptions, political experiments without number. The common man had now a hundred avenues of opportunity open to him, of escape from a hemming and stifling feudalism, of elevation into a higher and more independent sphere of energy. The monotonous life of the remote castle took on color and variety. Everywhere the vivifying current of commerce cut a channel for itself. European mankind had burst the bonds of its swaddling clothes, saw and measured with eagerness the great world, and recognized the fulness and glory of its new opportunities.

The first progress of mediæval medicine and constitutional law is closely related to these great movements of mankind to the East. Out of them came the first conscious lay attempts at a civil government based on written law—the feudal states of Syria. Almost the first written codes of mediæval law are the Assizes of Jerusalem, a formally excogitated and guaranteed legislation for all classes. Commercial law that had made little progress since the code of Amalfi,



was reduced to writing and to a system. Maritime and military law, the old imperial traditions and the valuable experience of Constantinople, asserted themselves—in a word, the Crusades were the first great school of general and common civilized life for all the nations of Europe.<sup>2</sup>

Not only did they increase the knowledge of the world and widen the horizon of learning—they brought out very high qualities of moral life. Personality asserted itself very strongly, given the weakness of authority and the countless new perils of these enterprises. If monk and priest were zealous and eloquent, the baron and his men were heroic and enduring. A new public consciousness was aroused, and there dawned on the humblest mind the possibility of what a united Christendom could do. Nations were drawn together very closely, in their own ranks first, and then between one another. Europe had never before been solidary in any enterprise. The wealth and elegance of Moslem society impressed the Crusaders, as also did the polish and culture of Constantinople and its Greek society. One was infidel and the other schismatic, yet daily contact with both begot more liberal and tolerant relations. The elements of common humanity asserted themselves in diplomacy and hospitality, in ransom and truce and single combat; the courteous and enlightened toleration of modern society is all in germ in the mediæval Crusades. Men hate one another, says Silvio Pellico, only because they do not know one another.

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<sup>2</sup> It used to be the fashion to regard the Crusades as mere fantastic exhibitions of a temporary turbulent religious fanaticism, aiming at ends wholly visionary, and missing them, wasting the best life of Europe in colossal and bloody undertakings, and leaving effects only of evil for the time which came after. More reasonable views now prevail; and while the impulse in which the vast movement took its rise is recognized as passionate and semi-barbaric, it is seen that many effects followed which were beneficent rather than harmful, which could not perhaps have been at the time in other ways realized. As I have already suggested, properties were to an important extent redistributed in Europe, and the constitution of states was favorably effected. Lands were sold at low prices by those who were going on the distant expeditions, very probably, as they knew, never to return; and horses and armor, with all martial equipments, were bought at high prices by those who were to need them on the march and in battle. Even the Jews who could not hold land, and the history of whom throughout the Middle Ages is commonly to be traced in fearful lines of blood and fire, increased immeasurably their movable wealth through these transfers of property. Communes bought liberties by large contributions to the needs of their lord; and their liberties once secured, were naturally confirmed and augmented, as the years went on. The smaller tended to be absorbed in the larger; the larger often to come more strictly under royal control, thus increasing the power of the sovereign—which meant at the time, general laws, instead of local, a less minutely oppressive administration, the furtherance of the movement toward national unity. It is a noticeable fact that Italy took but a small part, comparatively, in the Crusades; and the long postponement of organic unions between different parts of the magnificent peninsula is not without relation to this. The influence which operated elsewhere in Europe to efface distinctions of custom and language in separate communities, to override and extinguish local animosities, to make scattered peoples conscious of kinship, did not operate there; and the persistent severance of sections from each other, favored of course by the run of the rivers and the vast separating walls of the Apennines, was the natural consequence of the want of this powerful unifying force.—Storrs, "Bernard of Clairvaux," New York (Scribner's), 1897, pp. 544-45.

In these two centuries, therefore, the world of Europe expanded mightily and organically. The once barbarian Germanic people, educated in their infancy by the Catholic Church, broke the bonds of serf-like dependency, cast aside their primitive narrow feudalism and could in time become the great states of Europe. They went forth, sword in hand, across land and sea, in pursuit of a high spiritual ideal, and while they did not realize it, nevertheless it drew them like a star, to great heights of personal endeavor and social achievement. Fine qualities of mind and heart were developed in these enterprises that partook at once of the conquests of an Alexander and the results of Colonization. The cycle of social life was immeasurably enlarged. Politeness established its reign with the elevation of woman, that came through the church, and the institutions of chivalry. The arts and sciences of the Greek Orient and the Moslem world, were made known to Europe. Literature found new models, new ideals and aspirations; the singers of the people new notes, new themes, new passions. Industry and commerce were admitted as factors in the new States of Europe and the Orient. All the factors that were to bring about the creation of modern society, with the exception of the latest inventions, were then planted on the soil of Europe. Unity, assimilation, progress, go back to these great displacements of European humanity. No doubt there was much injustice, much crime and human folly—but wars have their civilizing and humanizing functions, as well as peace. They are often unavoidable and they have their allotted place in the divine plan that surely governs the world of men and things. Though we may never again see a United Christendom, it will always be a consolation to every adorer of Jesus Christ that for one brief hour in the history of Western humanity His Cross dominated all social life, drew to it every class of men, shone resplendent and humanizing in the zenith of public life, affected all legislation and human development, impressed its spiritual meaning on millions of hearts, and seemed like the holy aurora of the long sighed for millenium.

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