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TEN GREAT EVENTS IN HISTORY

COMPILED AND ARRANGED

BY JAMES JOHONNOT

1887

[Illustration: ANCIENT GREECE (Map)]

[Illustration: MAYFLOWER, 1620]

PREFACE.

Patriotism, or love of country, is one of the tests of nobility of character. No great man ever lived that was not a patriot in the highest and truest sense. From the earliest times, the sentiment of patriotism has been aroused in the hearts of men by the narrative of heroic deeds inspired by love of country and love of liberty. This truth furnishes the key to the arrangement and method of the present work. The ten epochs treated are those that have been potential in shaping subsequent events; and when men have struck blows for human liberty against odds and regardless of personal consequences. The simple narrative carries its own morals, and the most profitable work for the teacher will be to merely supplement the narrative so that the picture presented shall be all the more vivid. Moral reflections are wearisome and superfluous.

CONTENTS.

TEN GREAT EVENTS IN HISTORY.

CHAPTER I.

DEFENSE OF FREEDOM BY GREEK VALOR.

1. The great events in history are those where, upon special occasions, a man or a people have made a stand against tyranny, and have preserved or advanced freedom for the people. Sometimes tyranny has taken the form of the oppression of the many by the few in the same nation, and sometimes it has been the oppression of a weak nation by a stronger one. The successful revolt against tyranny, the terrible conflict resulting in the emancipation of a people, has always been the favorite theme of the historian, marking as it does a step in the progress of mankind from a savage to a civilized state.

2. One of the earliest as well as most notable of these conflicts of which we have an authentic account took place in Greece twenty-four hundred years ago, or five hundred years before the Christian era. At that time nearly all of Europe was inhabited by rude barbarous tribes. In all that broad land the arts and sciences which denote civilization had made their appearance only in the small and apparently insignificant peninsula of Greece, lying on the extreme southeast border adjoining Asia.

3. At a period before authentic history begins, it is probable that roving tribes of shepherds from the north took possession of the hills and valleys of Greece. Shut off on the north by mountain ranges, and on all other sides surrounded by the sea, these tribes were able to maintain a sturdy independence for many hundred years. The numerous harbors and bays which subdivide Greece invited to a maritime life, and at a very early time, the descendants of the original shepherds became skillful navigators and courageous adventurers.

4. The voyages of Aeneas and Ulysses in the siege of Troy, and those of Jason in search of the golden fleece, and of Perseus to the court of King Minos, are the mythological accounts, embellished by imagination and distorted by time, of what were real voyages. Crossing the Mediterranean, Grecian adventurers became acquainted with the Egyptians, then the most civilized people of the world; and from Egypt they took back to their native country the germs of the arts and sciences which afterward made Greece so famous.

5. Thence improvements went forward with rapid strides. Hints received from Egypt were reproduced in higher forms. Massive temples became light and airy, rude sculpture became beautiful by conforming to natural forms, and hieroglyphics developed into the letters which Cadmus invented or improved. Schools were established, athletic sports were encouraged, aesthetic taste was developed, until in the arts, in philosophy, in science, and in literature the Greeks took the lead of all peoples.

6. As population increased, colonies went out, settling upon the adjacent coasts of Asia and upon the islands farther west. In Asia the Greek colonists were subject to the Persian Empire, which then extended its rule over all Western Asia, and claimed dominion over Africa and Eastern Europe. The Greeks, fresh from the freedom of their native land, could not patiently endure the extortions of the Persian government, to which their own people

submitted without question; hence conflicts arose which finally culminated in Persia taking complete possession of the Asiatic Greek cities.

7. But the ties of kinship were strong, and the people of Greece keenly resented the tyranny which had been exercised over their countrymen, and an irrepressible conflict arose between the two nations. The Persian king, Darius, determined to put an end to all annoyance by invading and subjugating Greece. Before the final march of his army, Darius sent heralds throughout Greece demanding soil and water as an acknowledgment of the supremacy of Persia, but Herodotus says that at Sparta, when this impudent demand was made, the heralds were thrown into wells and told to help themselves to all the earth and water they liked.

8. After a long preparation, in 490 B.C., an army of one hundred thousand men or more, under the command of Artaphernes, convoyed by a formidable fleet, invaded Greece. For a long time it met with little opposition, and city after city submitted to the overwhelming hosts of the Persian king. The approach to Athens was regarded as the final turning point of the war.

9. Artaphernes selected the Plains of Marathon, twenty-two miles to the northeast of Athens, as the place of his final landing. His forces, by the lowest estimate, consisted of one hundred and fifty thousand men, of which ten thousand were cavalry. To these were opposed the army of Athens and its allies, consisting in all of ten thousand men. The battle-ground forms an irregular crescent, six miles long and two broad in its widest part. It is bounded on one side by the sea, and on the other by a rampart of mountains. At the time of the battle the extremities of the plain were flanked by swamps, diminishing the extent of the front, and hampering the operations of the larger army. The command of the Greek army had been intrusted to ten generals, who ruled successively one day each. Themistocles, one of these generals, resigned his day in favor of Miltiades, and all the others followed his example. And so the battle was set, ten thousand Greeks, under Miltiades, against the overwhelming hosts of the enemy.

10. The Persians, confident in their numbers, erected no intrenchments. They did not dream of an attack from the little band of Greeks. There is evidence to believe that they were dissatisfied with the nature of the battle-field they had chosen, and were upon the point of embarking to land at some point nearer the city. If this was the case, they were very rudely awakened from their dream of security by the movement of the Greeks.

11. On the morning of the tenth day after leaving Athens, Miltiades drew up his army in order of battle. He was obliged to perilously weaken his center in order to confront the whole of the Persian army, so as to avoid the danger of being outflanked and surrounded. The Greeks began the battle by a furious attack along the whole line, endeavoring to close in a hand-to-hand conflict as soon as possible, so as to avoid the deadly arrows of the Persians, and to take the advantage of their heavier arms. The Persians were greatly astonished when they saw this little band rushing against them with such a headlong dash, and thought that the Greeks must have been seized with madness. The Persian general had concentrated his forces at the center, and at this part of the battle-field the fiery onset of Greeks was checked by mere weight of numbers. But at length the mighty Persian force moved irresistibly forward, forcing the Greeks slowly backward, fighting, dying, but never yielding. Soon the Greek army were cut in two, and the Persians marched proudly onward to assured victory.

12. But the battle was not yet over. The genius of Miltiades had anticipated this result. The wings of the Greek army, strengthened at the expense of the center, fell upon the weakened wings of the Persians with irresistable onset. The invaders were forced back step by step, the retreat soon changing into a wild and promiscuous rout, and two thirds of the Persian army ceased to exist as a fighting force. The victorious Greeks now turned their attention to the Persian center, falling upon its flanks with incredible fury. Surrounded on all sides, for a time the

Persians maintained their old reputation as valiant soldiers, but nothing could withstand the impetuosity of the Greeks, and soon the whole of the invading hosts were in tumultuous retreat.

13. The victorious Greeks pressed rapidly forward to prevent the foe from embarking, and, if possible, to capture some of the ships. But the Persian archers held the victors in check until the flying soldiery were embarked, and the Greeks obtained possession of only seven vessels. But they were left in undisputed possession of the field of battle, the camp of the enemy, and an immense amount of treasure which had been abandoned in the precipitate flight. Six thousand four hundred Persian dead remained on the plain, while the Greek loss was one hundred and ninety-two.

14. All Athens hastened to welcome the brave soldiery. A Spartan force, on its way to join the Athenians, arrived too late to take part in the battle, and they quietly returned home. As the news spread, loud and frantic rejoicings were heard throughout Greece, and the name of Persia, so long a dread and a menace, lost much of its terrors.

[Illustration: *Acropolis at Athens*]

15. But the battle of Marathon, and the victory of Miltiades, had a wider significance than could enter into the imaginations of then living man. It was a conflict between the barbarism of Asia and the dawning civilization of Europe, between Oriental despotism and human liberty. The victory rendered normal human growth possible, and, to use the expressive phrase of the modern poet—

"Henceforth to the sunset, unchecked on its way,
Shall liberty follow the march of the day."

It was not for the Greeks alone, but for all ages and all peoples; and in this Western World, when we celebrate the birth of our own country, we should ever keep in mind the desperate struggle at Marathon, and the valor of Miltiades and his Greek soldiery.

16. But the war was not yet over. A single defeat did not extinguish the hopes of the Persian monarch, nor exhaust the resources of his empire. Herodotus says: "Now Darius was very bitter against the Athenians, and when he heard the tale of the battle of Marathon he was much more wroth, and desired much more eagerly to march against Hellas. Straightway he sent heralds to all the cities, and bade them make ready an army, and to furnish much more than they had done before, both ships, and horses, and corn; and while the heralds were going round, all Asia was shaken for three years; but in the fourth year the Egyptians, who had been made slaves by Cambyses, rebelled against the Persians, and then the king sought only the more vehemently to go both against the Egyptians and against the Greeks. So he named Xerxes, his son, to be king over the Persians after himself, and made ready to march. But in the year after the revolt of Egypt, Darius himself died; nor was he suffered to punish the Athenians or the Egyptians who had rebelled against him."

17. The death of Darius gave Greece a respite, but the final conflict was only postponed. Xerxes was weak, obstinate, and vain-glorious, but he inherited all his father's hatred of the Greeks, and he resolved upon one supreme effort to reduce them to subjection. For seven years more the whole vast Persian empire resounded with the notes of preparation. In 480 B.C., ten years after the battle of Marathon, everything was in readiness. A formidable fleet had been built and equipped, corn and military stores had been collected to a vast amount, and an army had gathered which, including camp followers, was variously estimated at from three to five millions. A bridge of boats was built across the Hellespont, and the Oriental horde was prepared to ravage the Grecian

valleys like a swarm of devouring locusts. A great storm arose and destroyed the bridge, and the Persian despot ordered the Hellespont scourged with whips in token of his displeasure. When the bridge was rebuilt, Xerxes, from a throne erected upon the shore, for seven days and nights, watched his mighty host pass over from Asia into Europe.

18. In the mean time the Greeks were preparing for the onset. Sparta, true to her military organization, did little but to bring her army to the perfection of discipline, and many of the weaker cities resolved to quietly submit to the invaders. The Athenians alone seemed to have fully understood the gravity of the situation. To them the rage of the Persian king was particularly directed, for the crushing defeat at Marathon, and Athens was more exposed than any other of the Greek cities. During the ten years Athens raised and equipped as large an army as her population would warrant. Every able-bodied man was enrolled in the ranks. Food and military stores were collected, but the chief means of defense was a novel one, and showed the desperate nature of the conflict in which they were about to engage. Under the wise direction of Themistocles they built a formidable fleet, so large that in case of emergency the whole population of the city could embark, and either remain afloat or take refuge on the neighboring islands.

19. A congress of the cities had determined to oppose the approach of Xerxes at some favorable place by a combined army. At the head of the Maliac gulf there was a narrow pass, through which the Persians had to go, the road running between a mountain and a swamp which stretched to the sea; and at one place the swamp came so near the mountain that there was hardly room for the road to run between. This is the famous pass of Thermopylæ; and here it was that a small army might block the way against any number of the enemy. Across this pass a wall was built, and behind it was posted the Greek army under the command of Leonidas, the Spartan king. His forces consisted of three hundred Spartans, seven hundred Thespians, and about four thousand more from the various Grecian cities. The Persians approached, and for four days waited, expecting to see the Greek army disperse at the very sight of their formidable numbers. But as they were apparently not frightened, on the fifth day the Persians made an attack. For two days the battle continued, inflicting great losses upon the Persians, while the little army of Leonidas, behind their fortifications, was scarcely injured.

20. On the third morning a renegade Greek showed Xerxes a path across the mountains where he could completely turn the Greek position. The Persians were not slow to avail themselves of this intelligence, and toward the close of the third day Leonidas saw the enemy descending the mountain, ready to surround him and cut off his retreat. Acting promptly, he ordered his allies to leave the field before it was too late, but he, with his devoted band of three hundred, were to remain, in accordance of a Spartan law which forbade a Spartan soldier ever to retreat from the presence of an enemy. The seven hundred Thespians remained with him, and the whole band was cut down, but not without inflicting fearful loss upon the enemy.

[Illustration: THERMOPYLAE (Map)]

21. While the passage of Thermopylæ was disputed, he Greek fleet advanced and took position in the strait of Artemisium, to prevent the Persian fleet from advancing farther into Greek waters. During the battle the fleets were also engaged in an indecisive conflict. A storm, however, arose and destroyed two hundred of the Persian ships. When Thermopylæ fell there was no longer reason for defending Artemisium, and the Greek fleet returned to defend the approach to Athens at the strait of Salamis.

22. Athens was now at the mercy of the conqueror. The Spartan army moved off to defend their own city. It was now that the wisdom of Themistocles showed itself. "The Athenians had no hope of being able to defend Athens, and resolved to abandon the town, and to remove their wives and children out of Attica to a place of

safety. The whole population, men, women, and children, sorrowfully left their homes, and streamed down to the sea-shore, carrying what they could with them." The fleet took them over to Salamis and adjacent islands; and when Xerxes reached Athens he found it silent and deserted. A few poor or desperate men alone refused to depart, and had posted themselves behind a wooden fortification on the top of the Acropolis, the fortress and sanctuary of Athens. The Persians fired the fortifications, stormed the Acropolis, slaughtered its defenders, and burned every holy place to the ground. Athens and its citadel were in the hands of the barbarians; its inhabitants were scattered, its holy places destroyed. One hope alone remained to the Athenians—the ships which Themistocles had persuaded them to build.

23. The fleet was anchored in the strait of Salamis, and beside the two hundred ships of Athens, it consisted of a large number from other ports of Greece. Among the Greeks there were divided counsels; some were for giving immediate battle, and some were for flying from the thousand Persian ships now advancing upon them. Themistocles saw that to retreat would be ruin, and he by stratagem kept every ship in its place. He sent secret word to the Persians that the Greek fleet would soon be in full retreat, and the Persian admiral sent two hundred vessels to blockade the farther extremity of the strait, so that flight was impossible.

[Illustration: BATTLE OF SALAMIS (Map)]

24. When everything was in readiness, Xerxes, from a throne built for him on the shore so that he might be a spectator of the fight, gave the signal to advance. At once all the long banks of oars in the thousand ships flashed in the light and dipped in the water. But here, as at Marathon, the way was narrow, and there was no chance for the display of the full power of the Persian fleet. In a hand-to-hand conflict they stood no chance with the Greeks, and Xerxes, with despair in his heart, saw two hundred of his best ships sunk or captured and many more seriously disabled, while the Greeks had suffered little loss.

25. Themistocles remained all night at his anchorage, ready to renew the conflict on the morrow, but Xerxes, fearful for the fate of his bridge across the Hellespont, ordered the eight hundred remaining ships to sail for its protection, while he and his whole army marched as rapidly as possible for the same point. The number assembled to pass back into Asia was greatly diminished from the hosts which a few months before had so proudly marched to assured victory. Besides those lost in battle, thousands had perished through disease and famine. But the hope of final success was not entirely abandoned, and the Persian general, Mardonius, with three hundred thousand of the best soldiers of the invading army, were left to complete the conquest.

26. With the retreat of Xerxes, the Athenians returned to their city, finding their temples destroyed, and their homes desolated, but they immediately commenced the work of rebuilding, and, amid rejoicings and renewed hopes, the city arose from its ashes. The clash of arms gave place to the din of industry, and the fighting soldier was replaced by the peaceable citizen.

27. In the mean time, Mardonius went into winter quarters in the northern provinces, and during the winter he endeavored to effect by negotiation and bribery what he had failed to accomplish by arms. He succeeded in exciting the jealousy of several of the cities toward each other, so that it was difficult to bring about concert of action, and he succeeded in detaching Thebes entirely from the confederacy, and arraying it against Athens. The Theban force which joined his army became one of the most formidable foes which the allied Greek had to meet.

28. The negotiations continued through the spring, but as summer approached the army of Mardonius was on the move. Sparta was not ready to meet the invader, and the Athenians once more took refuge on their ships, ten months after their return. Mardonius took possession of the city, and this time effectually destroyed it; but as

nothing was to be gained by a further stay, he marched his army to Thebes, which became his headquarters. The Spartans were at length ready to march. They saw their city menaced, and their own safety demanded that the forces of Mardonius should be broken.

29. With the aid of their allies they put into the field an army, the largest that the Greeks ever mustered, variously reported as numbering one hundred thousand to one hundred and ten thousand men. These were under the command of the Spartan king, Pausanias. In September they set out for Thebes, and in a few days came up to the Persian army, which was stationed at Plataea, a short distance from Thebes. Here Mardonius had established a fortified camp to which he might retreat if defeated on the field. For eleven days the two armies confronted each other, neither anxious to strike the first blow. Then the supply of water for the Greek camp gave out, and Pausanias fell back to a better position.

30. This movement threw the Greek army into disorder, and the three main divisions became separated from one another. Perceiving this the next morning, Mardonius hastened with his Persians toward the higher ground, where the Spartan troops might be seen winding along under the hillside, for from the river-banks he could not catch sight of the Athenians, who were hidden among the low hills which rose from the level plain.

31. The last momentous strife had now begun. It was the custom of the Spartans before beginning a battle to offer sacrifice, and to wait for an omen or sign from heaven on the offering. Even now, when the Persians had advanced to within bow-shot and were pouring flights of arrows upon the Spartans, Pausanias offered sacrifice. But the omens were bad, and forbade any action except in self-defence. The Spartans knelt behind their shields, but the arrows pierced them, and the bravest men died sorrowfully, lamenting not for death, but because they died without striking a blow for Sparta. In his distress Pausanias called upon the goddess Hera, and the omens suddenly became favorable, and the Spartans with their Tegean allies threw themselves upon the enemy.

32. But the disparity of forces rendered the attack desperate. Fifty-three thousand Greeks in all were opposed to the overwhelming numbers of Mardonius. The Athenians were engaged elsewhere and could afford no assistance. The Persians had made a palisade of their wicker shields, behind which they could securely and effectually use their bows and arrows. By the first fierce onset of the Greeks this palisade went down, but the Asiatics, laying aside their bows, fought desperately with javelins and daggers. But they had no metal armor to defend them; and the Spartans, with their lances fixed and their shields touching each other, bore down everything before them.

33. The Persians fought with almost Hellenic heroism. Coming to close quarters, they seized the spears of their enemies and broke off their heads. Rushing forward singly or in small groups, they were borne down in the crush and killed; still they were not dismayed; and the battle raged more fiercely on the spot where Mardonius, on his white horse, fought with the flower of his troops. At length Mardonius was slain, and when his chosen guards had fallen around him, the remainder of the Persians made their way to their fortified camp, and took refuge behind its wooden walls.

34. In the mean time the Athenian army had been confronted by the Persian-Theban allies. Here it was not a conflict between disciplined valor and barbaric hordes, but between Greek and Greek. The battle was long and bloody, but in the end the defenders of Greek liberty were victorious over those who would destroy it. The Theban force was not only defeated but annihilated, and then the Athenians hastened to the support of Pansanias. While the Spartans were the best-drilled soldiery in Greece for the field, they had little skill in siege operations, and the wooden walls of the Persian camp opposed to them an effective barrier.

35. While the Spartan force was engaged in abortive attempts, the Athenians and their allies came up fresh from their victory over the Thebans. Headed by the Tegeans, they burst like a deluge into the encampment, and the Persians, losing all heart, sought wildly to hide themselves like deer flying from lions. Then followed a carnage so fearful that out of two hundred and sixty thousand men not three thousand, it is said, remained alive.

36. Thus ended this formidable invasion, which threatened the very existence of Greece. The great wave of Oriental despotism had spent its force without submerging freedom. Thenceforth the wonderful Greek energy and creative power might be turned away from matters military and expended upon the arts of peace.

37. The Athenians returned to their city and found everything in ruins. Fire and hate had destroyed home and temple alike. All the accumulated wealth of generations was gone. Nothing was left but the indomitable energy which had been tested on so many trying emergencies, and the wonderful skill of eye and hand which came of inherited aptitude and long personal experience. Upon the old site a new city grew in a single generation, marvelous in its splendor of temple and palace, so light and airy, yet so strong and enduring, that after the lapse of twenty-five centuries the marble skeletons, though in ruins, stand, the admiration of all men and of all ages.

CHAPTER II.

CRUSADES AND THE CRUSADERS.

1. After the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, in the year 70 of the Christian era, Palestine continued for upward of two centuries in the condition of a Roman province, inhabited by a mixed population of pagans, Jews, and Christians. In Jerusalem, temples of Venus and Jupiter were erected on the most sacred spots of Christian history; and heathenism triumphed in the possession of the Holy City of two religions. On the establishment of Christianity in the Roman Empire by Constantine, in the year 321, this state of things was changed; Palestine and Jerusalem became objects of interest to all Christians, and crowds of pilgrims visited the localities celebrated by the evangelists. Splendid churches were erected on the ruins of pagan temples, and every spot pointed out as the scene of the memorable events in the life of Christ and his apostles was marked by a chapel or house of prayer. Jerusalem and the Holy Land became the resort of numerous bodies of clergy, who resided in the churches and monasteries which the piety of the wealthy had founded for them.

2. At the end of the fourth century, the gigantic Roman Empire was broken up into two, the Eastern, the capital of which was Constantinople, and the Western, the capital of which was Rome. It was to the former of these that Syria and Palestine were attached. Before the end of the fifth century the Western Empire had been destroyed by the eruption of the German races, and the beginnings of a new European civilization were rising from its ruins. Meanwhile, the Eastern remained entire, till about the year 630, when the Arabs, burning with the spirit of conquest infused into them by the religion of Mohammed, poured into its provinces. Egypt, Syria, and Palestine were annexed as dependencies to the great Arabic Empire of the caliphs. The religion of Mohammed became dominant in the Holy Land, the temples and chapels were converted into mosques.

3. Numbers of pilgrims still continued each year to visit Palestine. In return for a certain tribute, the earlier caliphs

permitted the Christians of Jerusalem to have a patriarch, and to carry on their own form of worship. Of all the caliphs, the celebrated Haroun al-Rashid, best known to us in the stories of the "Arabian Nights," was the most tolerant, and under him the Christians enjoyed perfect peace.

4. Great cruelties were practised by the Fatimite caliphs, who conquered Syria about the year 980. The pilgrims were robbed, beaten, and sometimes slain on their journey, the Christian residents oppressed by heavy impositions, and their feelings outraged by insults against their religion. These sufferings were slight, however, compared with those which they endured after the invasion and conquest of Palestine by the Turkish hordes in 1065. But recently converted to Moslemism, and therefore more rude and fanatical than the other Mohammedans, these Turks wreaked their vengeance on all alike—Christians, Jews, and even the native Mohammedans.

5. The news of the atrocities perpetrated by the Turks produced a deep sensation over the whole of Christendom, as well among the Latin Christians as among the Greek Christians, the name given to the population of what remained of the old Byzantine Empire. The latter had reason to dread that, if the Turks were not checked, Constantinople, their capital, would soon share the same fate as Jerusalem. Accordingly, about the year 1073, the Greek Emperor, Manuel VII, sent to supplicate the assistance of the great Pope Gregory VII against the Turks. Till now there had prevailed a spirit of antagonism between the Greek and Latin churches, the former refusing to yield obedience to the pope of the West as the universal head of the Church. Gregory, therefore, eagerly received the application of the Greek Emperor, seeing the promise of the final subjection of the Greek to the Latin Church. He resolved to give the enterprise his countenance, and to march himself at the head of an army to rescue the Holy Sepulchre.

6. Gregory was prevented from ever carrying out his design, and the idea of a crusade gradually died away. Meanwhile, the Turks extended their victories at the expense of the Greek Empire. Before the accession of the celebrated Alexius Comnenus to the throne in 1081, the whole of Asia Minor was in the possession of the Turks, and broken up into a number of kingdoms, the sultans of which soon began to quarrel among themselves. The disturbed state of Asia Minor greatly increased the sufferings of the pilgrims; not one out of three returned to recount the story of his hardships.

7. Among those who undertook the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, when the dangers attending it were the greatest, was a native of Amiens in France, named Peter, who had become a monk and an ascetic, being called from his solitary manner of life, Peter the Hermit. He arrived safely at Jerusalem, and visited all the scenes sacred to a Christian's eyes. As he walked along the streets, looking at this and that holy spot, insolent and contemptuous Turks looked on and mocked him, and his spirit grew bitter within him, and his hand clutched itself convulsively as if longing for a sword.

8. Burning with a sense of injuries sustained by the Christians, and the desecration of the sacred places, he sought the counsel of Simeon, the Greek patriarch of Jerusalem. In reply to Peter's questions, he explained that nothing was to be expected from the Greek Empire in behalf of the Holy Land, the court of Constantinople was so dissolute and corrupt, and that the only hope was that the Latin princes might be persuaded to form a league for the grand purpose entertained by Gregory VII. "Write," Peter said to the patriarch, "to the pope and to all Latin Christians, and seal your letters with the signet of your office as patriarch of Jerusalem. As a penance for my sins, I will travel over Europe, I will describe everywhere the desolate condition of the Holy City, and exhort princes and people to wrest it from the profane hands of the infidels."

[Illustration: *Mosque of Achmet, Constantinople*]

9. The letters were accordingly written, and the hermit set sail with them from Joppa. Arriving in Italy he presented the documents to the pope, Urban II, a pupil and *protégé* of Gregory VII, urging his holiness to use his authority, as the head of Christendom, to set in motion a scheme for regaining the birthplace of Christ. Enthusiasm is contagious, and the pope appears to have caught it instantly from one whose zeal was so unbounded. Giving the Hermit full powers, he sent him abroad to preach the holy war. Peter departed, going from town to town, and from village to village, and, in the language of the chroniclers, "traversing the whole of Europe in less than a year's time." His strange and wild aspect, his glittering eye, his shrill and unearthly eloquence, the grandeur of his theme, his pathetic descriptions of Jerusalem and the Christians there, produced everywhere the most extraordinary sensations. "He set out," says a contemporary historian, "from whence I know not, nor with what purpose; but we saw him passing through the towns and villages, everywhere preaching, and the people flocking round him, loading him with gifts, and praising his sanctity with such eulogiums, that I never remember having seen so great honors paid to any other man. The people reverenced him so that they plucked the hairs from the mane of his mule, and kept them afterward as relics. Out of doors he generally wore a woolen tunic, with a brown mantle, which descended to his heels. His arms and feet were bare, he ate little or no bread, but lived on fish and wine."

10. Such being the success of the Hermit's mission, the pope showed his approbation of the project by summoning in the year 1095 two councils. The first of these was held at Placentia in March; ambassadors from the Greek Emperor appeared to petition for aid against the Turks, and the members of the council were unanimous in their support of the crusade. The second, the famous Council of Clermont, was held at the town of that name in Auvergne in the month of November. It was in the midst of an extremely cold winter, and the ground was covered with snow. During seven days the council sat with closed doors, while immense crowds from all parts of France flocked into the town, in the expectation that the pope himself would address the people.

11. All the neighborhood presented the appearance of a vast camp. Issuing from the church in his full canonicals, surrounded by his cardinals and bishops in all the splendor of ecclesiastical costume, the pope stood before the populace on a high scaffolding, erected for the occasion, and covered with scarlet cloth. A brilliant array of bishops and cardinals surrounded him, and among them, humbler in rank but more important in the world's eye, the Hermit Peter, dressed in his simple woolen gown. The pope's eloquent words touched every heart. He was interrupted by the united voice of the people shouting "God wills it! God wills it!" Hushing the joyous tumult with a wave of his hand, the pontiff continued "Be they then your war-cry in the combat, for those words came from God. Let the army of the Lord, when it rushes upon its enemies, shout but that one cry, 'God wills it! God wills it!' Let whoever is inclined to devote himself to this holy cause wear on his breast or back the sign of the holy cross." From this time the red cross was the sacred emblem of the crusaders.

THE FIRST CRUSADE.

12. Following the Council of Clermont, preparations for invading the Holy Land began in almost every country of Europe. The clanging of the smith's hammer, making or repairing armor, was heard in every village. All who had property of any description rushed to the mart to change it for hard cash. The nobles mortgaged their estates, the farmer endeavored to sell his plow, and the artisan his tools to purchase a sword for the deliverance of Jerusalem. Women disposed of their trinkets for the same purpose. During the spring and summer of 1096 the roads teemed with crusaders, all hastening to the towns and villages appointed as the rendevous of the district. Very few knew where Jerusalem was. Some thought it fifty thousand miles away, and others imagined it but a month's journey; while at the sight of every tower or castle the children exclaimed "Is that Jerusalem?" Little attempt at any organization was made, though the multitude had three leaders. It is said that the first band,

consisting of twenty thousand foot, with only eight horsemen, were led by a Burgundian gentleman, called Walter the Penniless. They were followed by a rabble of forty thousand men, women, and children, led by Peter the Hermit, a medley of all nations and languages. Next followed a band of fifteen thousand men, mostly Germans, under a priest named Gottschalk. These three multitudes led the way in the crusades, pursuing the same route, that, namely, which leads through Hungary and Bulgaria toward Asia Minor.

13. Like their nominal leader, each of the followers of Walter the Penniless was poor to penury, and trusted for subsistence to the chances of the road. In Hungary they met with loud resistance from the people, whose houses they attacked and plundered, but in Bulgaria the natives declared war against the hungry horde; they were dispersed and almost exterminated. Some of the survivors retraced their steps; the rest, among whom was Walter, reached Constantinople, where they awaited the arrival of Peter and his companions. The Hermit, who had the same difficulties to contend with in marching through Hungary and Bulgaria, reached Constantinople with his army greatly reduced, and in a most deplorable condition. Here he and Walter joined forces, the Hermit assuming the superior command. They were hospitably received by the emperor, but their riotous conduct soon wearied out his patience, and he was glad to listen to a proposal of the Hermit to furnish them with the means of passing at once into Asia. The rabble accordingly crossed the Bosphorus, and took up their quarters in Bethynia. Here they became perfectly ungovernable, ravaging the country around, and committing incredible excesses; at length Peter, utterly disgusted and despairing, left them to their own guidance and returned to Constantinople. The bravest of them were annihilated in a battle fought near Nice, Walter the Penniless falling with seven mortal wounds. Between two and three thousand alone escaped, brought back to Constantinople by the troops of Alexius, who rescued them from the Turks. The emperor dismissed them, with orders to return home, and thus ended the disastrous expedition of Walter the Penniless and Peter the Hermit.

14. The fifteen thousand Germans led by Gottschalk never reached Constantinople, being slaughtered or dispersed during their passage through Hungary. Hungary was also fatal to another army of crusaders, the fourth in order, but greatly exceeding in numbers the other three put together. This terrible horde, consisting of about two hundred thousand, swept through Germany committing horrible outrages, especially against the Jews, whom they murdered without mercy. They were preceded by a goose and a goat, to which they attributed divine powers. As the rabble advanced, the Hungarians gave themselves up for lost, the king and nobles were preparing to flee, when the mass fell asunder of its own accord. Many were slain by the enraged Hungarians. Some escaped to the north, a few ultimately joined the succeeding bands of crusaders, but the majority perished. Thus, within a few months, upward of a quarter of a million of human beings were swept out of existence. And they had spent their lives, without one important result having been accomplished, without one glorious feat having been achieved.

15. This was the worst paroxysm of the madness of Europe, and this passed, her chivalry stepped upon the scene. Men of cool heads, mature plans, and invincible courage stood forward, to lead and direct not more fanatical masses, but the gentry, yeomanry, and serfs of feudal Europe. These were the true crusaders. Altogether they formed six armies, marching separately, and at considerable intervals of time. First carne the army of Godfrey of Bouillon, Duke of Lorraine, the pride of his age for all noble and knightly virtues, immortalized by the poet Tasso. He had risen from a sick-bed to join the crusade, and sold his lordship to raise the necessary money; around his standard assembled many of the best knights of the age. In the month of August, 1096, they commenced their march, through Hungary and Bulgaria.

16. Four other chiefs of the royal blood of Europe also assumed the cross, and led each his army to the Holy Land; Hugh, Count of Vermandois, brother of the king of France; Robert, Duke of Normandy, the elder brother

of William Rufus; Robert, Count of Flanders, and Bohemond, Prince of Tarentum, eldest son of the celebrated Robert Guiscard. With Bohemond, and second in command in the army, came Tancred, the favorite hero of all the historians of the crusade, so young, so valiant, so enthusiastic. There was not among them all, says Tasso, a greater warrior, nor any one of more courteous behavior, of fairer countenance, or of loftier and more intrepid heart. The last army was led by the haughty and resolute Count Raimond of Toulouse.

17. To detail the progress of the various armies is unnecessary. Upward of six hundred thousand warriors of the West, beside a multitude of priests, women, and children, were at last actually encamped on Asiatic soil. It was literally a moving nation, in which all languages were spoken, all costumes worn. There was the fair-haired son of the north, with broad, open forehead, mild blue eyes, sanguine complexion, and large frame; there the dark visaged southron, with his flashing glance and fiery soul; there was the knight in his armor, the priest in his robes, the foot-soldier in his tough jerkin, the unkempt serf with his belt of rope. There were pawing horses, swearing grooms, carts full of provisions, sacks, groups of gossiping women, crowds of merry children. Under the bright sun of Asia, all was gaudy and brilliant. Spearpoints glittered, breast-plates and helmets gleamed, thousands of targets displayed their painted glories, pennons of blue, purple, and white streamed from every tent, while heavier flags flapped their sullen folds; and everywhere, on shield, flag, helmet, tunic, and coat of mail, was seen blazoned the holy sign of the red cross. Walking through all these, heedless of the looks cast upon him, and hearing not the oft-repeated bugle-blasts from all parts of the camp, might be seen a man of small stature, thin and poorly clad, with down-cast face, wild, unsettled eye, and timid, nervous gait. It was the man who had created it all—Peter the Hermit. He had crossed from Constantinople with Godfrey of Bouillon. His revenge was near! On, on, then, to the Holy City!

18. Alas, the Holy City was yet far distant! Not much more than half their journey in point of space had been accomplished, and in point of difficulty and peril their march had little more than begun, for they had just entered the countries of the infidels. Months had to roll on, and many battles to be fought, ere the pinnacles of the Holy City should greet their longing eyes.

19. The route of the crusading armies lay in a southeasterly direction, through Asia Minor, and then southward to Jerusalem, along the shores of the Levant. Their march along this route, counting from the time of their crossing into Asia Minor, May, 1097, to the time when they came in sight of Jerusalem and laid siege to it, June, 1099, occupied upward of two years. Countless were the dangers to which the crusaders were subject in this trial. Of the many sieges two are especially memorable, that of Nice and that of Antioch.

20. The siege of Nice was the first exploit in which the crusading armies were engaged. During these six weeks the slaughter of the Christians, by the arrows of the Turkish garrison, and by the bolts and large stones which they discharged from mangonels and catapults, was immense. The city surrendered at last, not, however, to the Latin chiefs, but to an envoy of the Greek Emperor Alexius, who contrived to enter into communication with the besieged and induced them to capitulate. Angry and dissatisfied, the crusaders left their encampment and resumed their march, not in one mass, but in several bodies. At length the scattered armies reunited for the siege of Antioch toward the end of October, 1097. All the known means of attack were put in operation; movable towers were constructed from which to discharge missiles into the city. The walls were battered, and the sallies of the besieged bravely met, still without any effective result. At the end of ten days famine stared them in the face, so extravagant were they in the use of their stores. Pestilence joined its ravages, and instead of the brave army of chivalry which had sat down before Antioch, was to be seen a crowd of gaunt and famishing creatures, with scarcely a thought but that of procuring food. Multitudes died, desertions became numerous.

21. The chiefs began to weary of the expedition, and, most disgraceful of all, Peter the Hermit turned his back on the enterprise, and had actually fled several miles on his way home, when he was brought back by the soldiers of Tancred and forced to undergo a public reprimand. At length, after infinite sufferings on the part of the Christians, Antioch was taken on the 3d of June, 1098, by means of the treachery of an Armenian captain, whom the Turks had intrusted with the command of one of the towers, and who admitted a number of the crusaders during a dark and stormy night.

22. Imagination can not conceive a scene more dreadful than that presented by the devoted city of Antioch on that night of horror. The crusaders fought with a blind fury which fanaticism and suffering alike incited. No quarter was shown. At daylight the massacre ceased, and the crusaders gave themselves up to plunder. They found gold, jewels, and rich fabrics in abundance, but of provisions little of any kind. Suddenly they were roused from their sloth and pleasure by the appearance before Antioch of an immense army, which the Persian caliph had dispatched to sweep the Christian locusts from the face of the earth. Great was the alarm of the Christians when they saw this splendid host of more than two hundred thousand men encamped around the hills of Antioch. The corn and wine found in the city were soon exhausted; all the horrors of a second famine began.

23. Many deserted and escaped over the walls, carrying the news of the sad condition of the Christians back toward Europe. The worst consequence of these desertions was, that the Greek Emperor Alexius, who, hearing of the successes of the Latins, was on his march to assist the crusaders, was deterred from advancing, and returned to Constantinople. With increasing famine came a pestilence, so that in a short time but sixty thousand remained of the three hundred thousand that had invested Antioch. But this bitter extremity knit the leaders more firmly together, and Bohemond, Godfrey, and Tancred swore never to desert the cause while life lasted.

24. It is said that belief in the remarkable fulfillment of a dream brought hope once more to the disheartened crusaders. Peter Barthelmy, a priest of Provence, dreamed, he said, that Saint Andrew appeared to him in the night, and informed him that underneath a certain spot in the floor of the church of Saint Peter was buried the identical lance with which the Roman soldiers pierced the side of Christ as he hung on the cross. This relic, said the apparition, was to be the guarantee of God's presence and their guide to victory. Twelve persons were chosen to conduct the search. A whole day was spent in vain, the workmen were tired out, and still no lance was found. At last Peter descended into the pit and began to dig the loose earth. Suddenly a cry of joy was heard, and stretching himself to his full height, Peter handed up into the eager fingers of those above an actual rusty lance-head. In an instant it was noised abroad that the holy relic had been found. What remained now but to issue forth and discomfit the infidel host.

25. The infidel host was discomfited. On the 28th of June, 1098, two hundred thousand Turks, in the full flush of health and strength, were routed, outside the walls of Antioch, by a half-famished Christian army. Antioch was bestowed upon Bohemond, and it was resolved that the army should remain there to recruit before advancing toward Jerusalem. The tragical fate of Peter Barthelmy must be mentioned. Many of the crusaders had begun to question the genuineness of the relic he had found. He was prevailed upon to submit to the ordeal of fire, and perished in the flames. From that moment the story of the relic lost credit.

26. It was on a lovely morning in the summer of 1099 that the forty thousand crusaders, who were all that remained of the vast army which had two years ago laid seige to Nice, were recompensed for all their toils by a sight of the Holy City, bathed in the splendor of eastern sunshine. The name "Jerusalem" escaped from every lip; some leaped and shouted, some kneeled and prayed, some wept, some threw themselves prostrate and kissed the earth, some gazed and trembled. "All had much ado," says the quaint Fuller, "to manage so much gladness."

27. Preparations for a siege were soon under way. The besiegers, who had gained skill by their former attempts, employed all the methods of attack that experience could suggest or courage execute, while the garrison of forty thousand Turks, who maintained the city for their master, the caliph of Egypt, resisted with determined obstinacy. At length, after a confession of sins by the whole army, and a penitential procession around the walls, a simultaneous attack was made with battering-rains, mangonels, and all manner of besieging engines. At one quarter a huge wooden tower was wheeled close to the walls, a movable bridge was let down, and, bounding across it, a soldier named Lutold was the first man to stand upon the battlements. Godfrey of Bouillon and a number of knights sprang after him, and the Christians were within Jerusalem. Meanwhile, at another part of the wall, Tancred and Robert of Normandy had shattered open a gate, and rushed in with their men; while at a third part of the city, Raimond of Toulouse effected an entrance for himself and his followers by the help of scaling-ladders. In an instant after, the banner of the cross floated upon the walls of Jerusalem. The crusaders, raising once more their redoubtable war-cry, rushed on from every side, and the city was taken. The battle raged for several hours, and the Christians gave no quarter. Peter the Hermit, who had remained so long under the veil of neglect, was repaid that day for all his zeal and all his suffering. He was once more the idol of the army, but history is silent concerning the remainder of his life.

28. Eight days after the capture of the city, the Latin chiefs unanimously elected Godfrey of Bouillon king of Jerusalem. A new Christian state was thus founded in Syria, consisting at first of little more than the mere city of Jerusalem, but extending by subsequent battles and conquests until it included the whole of Palestine. A language resembling Norman-French was established in this kingdom, and a code of feudal laws drawn up for its government. The clergy also obtained their share of the conquest, Jerusalem was created into a patriarchate, and Bethlehem into a bishopric. The foundation of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem in July, 1099, was the consummation of the first crusade.

29. A period of fifty years succeeded, during which time many battles were fought with the Saracens of Syria and Egypt, the result of which was to strengthen the Latin state. No fewer than five hundred thousand persons set out from Europe for Syria, incited by the news of the success of the first crusade. The three centers from which the Christian power sought to spread itself through the Mussulman possessions were Jerusalem, Antioch, and Edessa.

30. The very spirit of the crusade seemed to have died out. The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem had become, like any other kingdom of the period, a country in which men built houses, plowed land, made bargains, gave feasts, etc., drank, laughed, talked, quarreled, and went to law. The fall of Edessa, the first conspicuous success of the Turks, came like a surprise upon the Latin population of Syria. An attempt was made by the Christians to recover the city, but it failed, and the frontier of Syria was open to invasion from the East.

THE SECOND CRUSADE.

31. The fall of Edessa, and the petitions of the people of Palestine for aid, produced a sensation throughout Europe, and especially in France. Nor was an apostle wanting worthy to fill the place of Peter, and to summon the chivalry of Europe to a second crusade. Commissioned by Pope Eugenius for that purpose, the famous Saint Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux in Champagne, traveled through France and Germany, exerting the power of his marvelous eloquence in recruiting the armies of the cross. The chiefs of the second crusade were two of the most powerful princes of Europe, Louis VII, King of France, and Conrad III, Emperor of Germany. Under their command upward of one million two hundred thousand men, collected from all parts of Europe, marched toward Palestine in two great armies, early in 1147.

32. Notwithstanding the vastness of the preparations, the expedition was a total failure. The events of the last fifty years had rendered the policy of the Greek princes hostile to the crusades. Manuel Comnenus, the grandson of Alexius, who now occupied the throne, suffered both armies to pass into Asia Minor, where, misled by Greek scouts, the army of Conrad was all but destroyed by the Turks, near Iconium, while the army of Louis, after undergoing infinite hardships, was wrecked in the defiles of the Pisidian mountains. The fragments of the two armies uniting made their way to Syria, where they co-operated with forces of the princes of Jerusalem and Antioch, in laying seige to Damascus, but without effect. In 1149 Conrad and Louis returned to Europe, and the second crusade was at an end, having attained nothing but the expenditure of more than a million of lives.

THE THIRD CRUSADE.

33. A period of forty years elapsed before Europe fitted out another crusade. Meanwhile the struggle between the Christian and the Turks in Syria was carried on without intermission. Noureddin, the son of the conqueror of Edessa, displayed a genius which astonished both Christians and Turks. Keeping possession of Edessa, he aimed at extending his conquest at the expense of the Christians still further. For some time he was kept in check by the abilities of Baldwin III, King of Jerusalem. On his death, in 1162, his brother Amalric, far inferior to Baldwin in ability, succeeded to the throne.

34. At this crisis, while Noureddin, the Sultan of Aleppo, and Amalric, the Christian King of Jerusalem, were the rival powers in Syria, occurred a circumstance which exercised considerable influence on the subsequent course of events, and which makes necessary a retrospective glance.

35. At the time of the first crusade Palestine was the scene of a violent contest between the Turks, who had poured down from the North, conquering as they went, and the Fatimites of Egypt, who had possessed Syria for nearly a century. The Turks had at first been irresistible. The Fatimites, however, had been able to recover Jerusalem from the hands of their enemies, and held it when besieged by the Christians. Interrupted in their conflict with each other for the sovereignty of Palestine, the Fatimites and Turks turned their arms with one accord against the invader. In the person of Noureddin the Turkish power was now increasing. The Fatimite dynasty of Egypt, meanwhile, had long been showing signs of decay, the caliphs having become mere tools in the hands of their viziers. In 1163 one of these viziers, Shawer, finding himself expelled from his post by a rival, sought refuge at the court of Aleppo, and applied to the sultan for assistance. Noureddin eagerly embraced an opportunity for obtaining a footing in Egypt, and sent two persons, Chyrkouh and his nephew Saladin, to displace the usurping vizier and re-establish Shawer. They, however, usurped the government, and Shawer applied to the King of Jerusalem, Amalric, for assistance. Amalric in turn attempted usurpation, and again the officers of Noureddin came to the aid of Shawer. The vizier paid the penalty of his fickleness by losing his head, and his post was occupied by Chyrkouh, who, while ruling Egypt as a vizier of the Fatimite caliph, was in reality the lieutenant of Noureddin.

36. On the death of Chyrkouh, Saladin was appointed to the viziership. The caliph fancied that he would now regain the control of his own dominions, but he little knew the character of his new vizier. Saladin soon effected a revolution in Egypt, declared the Fatimite dynasty to be at an end, and subjected the country once more to the nominal authority of the Bagdad caliphs, whom Noureddin professed to reverence as the supreme heads of the Mohammedan Empire. Nor did he stop here. He soon showed a disposition to shake off the supremacy of Noureddin, and the sultan of Aleppo was marching into Egypt to vindicate his authority, when he suddenly died in the year 1171.

37. Saladin now saw the great obstacle to his ambition removed, and began to aim at realizing those schemes of sovereignty which Noureddin had projected. The state of the Christian kingdom during the ten or twelve years which followed directly favored his plans. Civil dissensions arose which the keen eye of Saladin discovered, and, already master of all Syria, he resolved to complete his greatness by the conquest of Palestine. Accordingly, when in the year 1157 it was known that he was on his march against Jerusalem, the Christian crusaders saw the necessity of abandoning their dissensions and uniting cordially against the invader. Town after town surrendered to the victorious Saracen, and, in October, 1187, Jerusalem itself, after fourteen days' defense, was obliged to submit to his mercy. The conduct of Saladin on this occasion was more generous than might have been expected. A moderate ransom was fixed for every individual, on the payment of which he was at liberty to remove with his goods to whatever place he chose. To the Christian ladies, Saladin's conduct was courteous in the extreme, so that it became a remark among the Latins of Palestine that Saladin was a barbarian only in name.

38. Thus, after ninety years, was the Holy City again inhabited by the infidel, and all the fruits of the first crusade lost, as it seemed to the world. Saladin now possessed the whole of Palestine, with the single exception of the city of Tyre, which was gallantly defended by Conrad, Marquis of Montferrat.

39. The epidemic frenzy which had been gradually cooling was now extinct, or nearly so, and the nations of Europe looked with cold indifference upon the armaments of their princes. But chivalry was now in all its glory, and it continued to supply armies for the Holy Land. Poetry more than religion inspired the Third Crusade. The knights and their retainers listened with delight to the martial and amatory strains of the ministrels, minnesingers, and troubadors. Men fought not so much for the holy sepulchre as to gain glory for themselves in the best and only field where glory could be obtained. They fought not as zealots, but as soldiers, not for religion, but for honor.

40. The first to take the field was the illustrious German emperor, Frederick Barbarossa. Marching from Ratisbon at the bead of a magnificent army in 1189, he fought his way through the Greek dominions, advanced through Asia Minor, conquering as he went, and was already on the borders of Palestine, when, imprudently bathing, he was cut off in the seventieth year of his age. His army suffered greatly from the difficulties of their march and the attacks of the Saracens. The wrecks of it under Frederick's son, the Duke of Swabia, proved a most valuable reinforcement to the Christians in Syria, who had by this time rallied and combined against the domination of Saladin, laying siege to the city of Acre on the sea-coast, a town of so much importance that the possession of it was considered almost equivalent to being master of the whole country.

41. Upon this siege, commenced in August, 1189, was concentrated all the force at the command of the Christians in Palestine, the remnants of the two great military orders the Knights Templars and the Knights Hospitallers, the survivors of Frederick's army, together with such bodies of crusaders as were continually arriving from Europe by sea. Guy de Lusignan was the commander of the besieging forces, and so skillfully was his army fortified that Saladin was unable to dislodge him. For two-and-twenty months the siege continued, and many engagements had taken place between the Christian army and that of Saladin, which occupied the mountains to the south, but without visible advantage on either side.

42. Such was the position of affairs when, early in the summer of 1191, Philip, of France, and Richard Coeur de Lion, of England, arrived with their fleets. The struggle was soon over, and on the 12th of July, 1191, Acre surrendered to the Christians. Had the crusaders been united among themselves, the fall of this city might have been but preliminary to the recovery of the whole country. The rivalry of the kings of France and England, however, prevented their cordial co-operation, and, not long after the capture of Acre, Philip ruined the cause of