

HOME AND SCHOOL

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The Crusaders.

BY THE EDITOR.

A GREAT and permanent impetus was given to civilization by that vast movement of the Middle Ages, whereby, in the words of the Byzantine Princess, Anna Comnena, all Europe was precipitated on Asia. These religious wars united the nations of the West in a grand political league long before any similar union could otherwise have taken place. They also greatly improved, or, indeed, almost created, the military organization of Europe, and inspired and fostered the spirit of chivalry in her populations. They led to the abolition of serfdom by the substitution of martial service instead of the abject vassalage to which the masses had been accustomed. By enforcing the so-called Truce of God they prevented the pernicious practice of private warfare, and turned the arms of Christendom against its common foe. Vast multitudes were led to visit Italy, Constantinople, and the East—the seats of ancient learning, and the scenes of splendid opulence.

Extended travel enlarged their knowledge of the geography, literature, natural history, and productions of foreign lands. In the East still lingered the remains of the science of the palmy days of the Caliphate. The rustic manners of the Crusaders became polished by contact with the more refined oriental races. To the British or German knight, who had never stirred farther from his ancestral castle than a boar hunt or a stag chase led him, what a wonder-land must Italy and the East have been, with their great cities, their marble palaces, porphyry pillars, and jasper domes! The Crusaders, becoming acquainted with the luxuries of the Orient, discovered new wants, felt new desires, and brought home a knowledge of arts and elegances before unknown.



THE CRUSADERS.

The result was seen in the greater splendour of the Western courts, in their more gorgeous pomp and ceremonial, and in the more refined taste in pleasure, dress and ornaments. The miracles and treasures of ancient art and architecture in Greece and Italy, far more numerous than now, did much to create and develop a taste for the beautiful, and to enlarge the sphere of human enjoyment. The refining influence of the East and South have

left their mark in every corner of Europe, from Gibraltar to Norway, from Ireland to Hungary, from the crosses on the doors to the arabesque traceries in cathedrals and castles.

It is not wonderful that these great and stirring events, with their combined religious enthusiasm and military splendour, awoke the imaginations of the poets. They gave a new impulse to thought, and a greater depth and strength to feeling. They inspired the

musical genius of Tasso and many a lesser bard, and supplied the theme of the great Christian epic, *Jerusalem Liberata*.

The Crusaders, moreover, made several commercial settlements in the East, the trade of which survived their military occupation by the Latins. Thus a valuable commerce sprang up, which contributed greatly to enrich the resources, ameliorate the manners, and increase the comforts of the West.

But there were grave and serious evils resulting from the Crusades, which went far to counterbalance all these advantages. The lives and labours of millions were lost to Europe, and buried beneath the sands of Syria. Many noble families became extinguished by the fortunes of war, or impoverished by the sale or mortgaging of their estates to furnish the means for military equipment. The influence of the Pope, as the organizer of the Crusades and common father of Christendom, was greatly augmented. The opulence and corruption of the religious orders was increased by the reversion to their possession of many estates whose heirs had perished in the field. Vast numbers of Oriental relics, many of them spurious and absurd, became objects of idolatrous worship. Many corruptions of the Greek Church were imitated, many Syrian and Greek saints introduced into the calendar, and many Eastern legends and superstitions acquired

currency.

DR. ADAM CLARKE, the celebrated commentator, said: "Strong drink is not only the devil's way into a man, but man's way to the devil."

DR. DAY, of Boston, who has treated over seven thousand cases of inebriety, says that one-fifth of them are the traceable result of wine and beer drinking.