

supplant the worship of Christ beneath cathedral dome? Should the son of Abdallah or the Son of Mary receive the homage of the West? Should we to-day—for the destinies of the New as well as of the Old World were involved—be wearing the fez or turban and praying toward Mecca, or be Christian freemen? These were some of the questions depending apparently upon the issues of the hour.

The Moors meanwhile press on. They overspread the plains of Burgundy and Aquitaine, and pitch their tents on the banks of the Loire. They are already half-way from Gibraltar to the North of Scotland, to the Baltic, and to the confines of Russia. But the fiat had gone forth from the Supreme Arbiter of the destinies of the universe: Hitherto shalt thou come and no farther! Then, broken like the waters and scattered like the spray, that wave of invasion recoiled from the shock of the Christian chivalry, and ebbed away forever. Europe was safe! Charles Martel and the peers and paladins of France smote the infidels as with a hammer of destruction.

In France the Carlovingian dynasty reached its noblest development in Charlemagne, and in England the blameless king, "Alfred, the truth-teller," laid the foundations of the most stable monarchy of Europe. Then follows a thoughtful study of the development of the feudal system and its conflict with the nascent principles of civil liberty everywhere struggling into life.

In a series of graphic chapters Dr. Ridpath gives a vivid picture of that strange 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 the 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 their contact with the more refined oriental races. To the British or German knight, who had