



LIFE OF ST. JOANNA OF TOULOUSE, CARMELITE NUN.

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CHAPTER I.

THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY IN EUROPE AND IN LANGUEDOC. RAYMOND VI.
AND RAYMOND VII., COUNTS OF TOULOUSE.

HE thirteenth century was a century of fearful disasters for Toulouse and Languedoc. Triumphant heresy and Judaism spread death, massacres, conflagrations and revolution all around them.

The Counts of Toulouse, aided and abetted by the kings of Arragon, the counts of Foix, and a great number of the nobility of the Provence, tried to shake off the sweet yoke of the gospel. Their gross impiety was only excelled by their revolting immorality. Controlling the estates and the revenues of the church, they used their power to oppress the clergy. Deaf to the remonstrances of the Popes and the Papal legates, they perjured themselves over and over again, whenever they could gain anything by so doing.

Italy and Germany also suffered severely from the bloody contests, caused by the ever renewed quarrels between the clergy and the rulers.

France, under Philip Augustus, Louis VIII. and St. Louis, enjoyed

comparative peace and order.

Spain continued her crusades against the Moors.

England was recruiting her forces and gathering fresh strength. The crusades had ceased to excite Europe.

The Popes, solicitous as ever for the welfare of Christendom, not being able to send help to the Christians of the Orient, turned their regards upon the south of France, which, from Marseilles to Agen, was abandoned to political and religious anarchy.

Blessed Peter of Castelnau, the Papal legate; Blessed Foulques, bishop of Toulouse; the bishop of Osma; Saint Dominic and his first disciples; all tried in vain to persuade the misguided people to a return to religion and duty.

It became necessary to appeal to arms. The French nobility, so faithful to the interests of the church, became indignant when they found out the sufferings of the church in the Provence and in Toulouse. Barons, knights and common people rose to fight the Albigenses. Indulgences were granted to those who fought under the standard of the cross. Simon of Montfort was proclaimed chief of the holy expedition. Heresy