

## THE CRUSADES.



GOOD history is a treasure. It seems so difficult to find a man uniting in his person those qualities of head and heart—science and impartiality—so essential to the truthful statement of historical facts. The two extremes, distorting facts on the one hand, and on the other, keeping them in the background, seem to be the Scylla and Charybdis of modern historians. Be they Protestants, they seem to take special delight in blackening the Catholic Church, its men and measures; be they Catholics, they try to overset the misstatements of the former and dreading lest the knowledge of certain facts would prove pernicious to the cause of their religion, they minimize or conceal altogether many historical facts. Inexcusable, however, as are both of these parties, suffice it for the present purpose to refer to the second alone. It is to these would-be apologists, that our Holy Father Leo XIII. addresses the following words of fatherly advice, found in that passage of his recent letter to the clergy of France, where speaking of the study of Church History, he says: "Because the Church which is the continuation among men of the life of the Incarnate Word, is composed of a divine and a human element, this latter must be expounded by the professors and studied by the pupils with great probity. As it is said in the Book of Job, 'God does not need our lies.' The more loyal the historian of the Church will have been in dissimulating none of the trials, that the evil deeds of her children, and sometimes even of her ministers, have caused this spouse of Christ in the course of ages, the more clearly will he be able to show her divine origin, superior to every consideration of a purely earthly and material order. Studied in this manner the bare history of the Church constitutes a magnificent and conclusive demonstration of the divinity and truth of the Christian Religion."

And of this, the Crusades is a question at point. Catholic historians in fact have no reason to avoid discussing this question, for the stability and divinity of the Catholic Church in nowise depend on the issue. For, indeed, the failure of the Crusades—supposing for the moment that such failure can be proved—is not,