

## THREE EPOCHS OF WAR.

*(Concluded from our last.)*

It was not long before the assembling armies of the Crusade heard in Europe of the bold attempt at Acre, and with added zeal and fire they pressed on their preparations and their march to aid in its conquest and participate in the glory and the spoil which would arise to its captors.

From the ultimate lands of Norway and Sweden warriors started on their march; from the nearer shores of the Mediterranean's northern limits, vessels laden with troops for Palestine were under weigh.

Frederick of Barbarossa was on the march by way of Constantinople and the Hellespont; Phillip of France and Richard of England, who had at once dispatched a vanguard of the chosen warriors of their realms to aid Guy, were mustering their main armies at Genoa and Marseilles to embark for the Holy Land.

Acre, by the bold attempt of the ex-king of Jerusalem, had become the primary objective point of the Crusade, and Guy found troops and munitions of war fast assembling before the walls of the devoted city.

Saladin, meanwhile, was not idle. He assembled a vast army at Damascus, and marched it through the passes of Gallilee, from whose rich territory he unobstructedly drew bountiful supplies for his forces, and encamped his hosts on the seaward slopes of the mountains around Acre, filling up and guarding every pass by which the Crusaders might pass out of the plain or gather in provisions from the interior. The beleaguering army thus became the beleaguered; the blockaders, the blockaded.

But a brief interval between the arrival of the Moslem army, and a desperate attack on the entrenched camps of the Christians ensued. No great advantage was gained, although much slaughter was experienced on both sides. Saladin, however, found means during the battle to communicate personally with the garrison of Acre, and to throw into it a chosen reinforcement, under the command of his bravest emirs. He arranged for supplies being forwarded to the city by sea from Egypt, and formed a code of signals for communication between his army on the mountains and the blockaded garrison.

In response to the attack on their camp, the Crusaders determined on a grand attack on Saladin's army. This attack they delivered with such force and success that they actually put to flight the main body of the Moslems, and, entering their camp, had commenced pillage, when Saladin, gathering together an enormous body of horsemen, dashed into the army, whom victory had disorganized, and drove them before him, with immense loss, to their entrenchments.

This battle lasted from daylight until dark, and the spectacle of twenty thousand slain on the field of battle was the sole result: the losses were about equal.

Fresh troops came pouring in to the Christians: fresh levies augmented Saladin's army. Winter and the rainy season were now setting in, and Saladin returned to the recesses of the mountains with his army, and the Crusaders encamped themselves on the rising ground of the plains.

The Italians and Knights Hospitallers formed the right attack; the French and English (these were those of the vanguards that had been dispatched), with the Flemings and Guy-de-Suisignan, took the centre; the Knights Templar were encamped next them, and the Germans and other northern nations formed their lines to the south of the Belus, to protect the reinforcement and supplies as they were disembarked.

Winter passed away with much suffering and distress to the Crusaders. Famine and disease pressed hardly on them; but the returning spring, with reinforcements and supplies flowing in, revived their spirits, and a determined assault by land and sea on Acre was resolved on. Let us look at the weapons of assault and defence.

The Knights claim precedence. Mounted on strong chargers, defended by mail, they themselves accoutred in armour from head to foot, they were armed with lance and battle-axe, sword and dagger. The footmen were pikemen, bowmen and slingers. The engines of attack on the walls were ballista and catapulta, which then served the place of ordnance, and by a simple application of spring and leverage power, hurled huge masses of rocks, and beams of wood against the ramparts they assaulted. There was the "ram," a contrivance which, moving under a protecting shield of wood and metal framework, approached the walls and battered their foundations. There were towers which, moving on rollers or floating on rafts constructed for the purpose, overtopped the ramparts, and by means of drawbridges with which they were crowned, which were let down at the proper moment on the ramparts, gave access to the summit of the walls to the soldiers who were in the towers.

The Musselman defenders were well provided with repelling missiles, their great strength lying in skilled archers, and whilst they had contrivances for raining huge stones, boiling oil and molten metal on the warriors at the foot of their walls, they were also in possession of the art of making and discharging on their attackers and the engines they employed the far-famed Greek fire, which entered every joint of the armour, and destroyed the shields of the rams and the structures of the moving towers, and was inextinguishable by water.

Saladin's army was great in the composition of its archers and slingers, but was stronger in its magnificent and enormous bodies of horsemen, who then, as their descendants up to the present day, may be considered as the finest light cavalry in the world. On their Arab steeds, skilled in the use of the scimitar, the Mamelukes rarely

found a match for their impetuous charge or swift skirmishing.

The contemplated assault of the second campaign was made,—the ballista and catapulta were plied, the rams battered and the towers attacked; but all in vain: Acre was not yet to fall. Driven back by the showers of projectiles which the besieged poured from their walls, the soldiery had to relinquish the assault. Devoured by Greek fire, the towers of assault were destroyed, and, to crown the disaster, Saladin, swiftly dashing forward, broke into the Crusaders' camp, from which he was not driven without heavy loss.

Again reinforcements and supplies came in, and again an attack was made, this time on Saladin. Again a bloody day was terminated without decisive advantage, the only feature of moment this time being that it was the besieged who made a sally and wasted the Christian camp.

Time, on which I am already trespassing too much, will not allow a detailed description of the almost daily skirmishes which took place between the continually arriving forces of the Crusaders and the as constantly reinforced garrison of the city, and the army of Saladin. Was an assault delivered on the walls of Acre: so certainly was an attack made on the entrenched camp of the Christians. If a battle was in progress on the plains between the contending hosts, that was the time chosen by the garrison to sally against the lines of the Crusaders. Occasionally a sea-fight took place, with varied success, between the Saracen and Christian fleets, which, with reinforcements and supplies, were continually arriving and departing.

So the year wore on until the rainy season again brought added havoc from famine and disease to the Crusaders. Their misery and distress were beyond description.—Three hundred a day was the computed loss of life in the Christian camp. The horses and beasts of burden perished from scarcity of food, and their dead bodies strewed the plain and banks of the river for miles.

In the spring, however, the depressing effect of two years' unsuccessful siege were greatly dissipated by the arrival of Phillip of France with an immense army and enormous stores. Boldly pitching his camp almost within bowshot of the city, Phillip and the Crusaders but awaited the arrival of Richard to make a final assault on the walls of Acre.

Richard of England, however, had dallied on the way. He had sent on, it is true, many a band of brave knights and soldiery; but his main army was delayed by him for the purpose of adjusting some private difficulties with some Mediterranean potentates. First, at Sicily, he wintered, and obtained reparation from Tancred, ruler of that kingdom. Proceeding on, a wrecked ship and a fancied or real insult induced Richard to pause at Cyprus, then under the rule of the Emperor Isaac Comnenus. Cyprus he at-