

did guard, Saladin advanced, borne on his jet-black steed. His kingly eye swept for a moment the crouching throng of fugitives, then, turning to Melek, he said :

"Brother, you have performed your alms ; now let me bestow mine." And waving his hand, he ordered the gate to be flung wide, bidding the crowd pass through.

"Placing a guard in the mosques and palaces, Saladin, in a few days, left the city, knowing his possession of the city would be contested. Meanwhile the Christians were not idle. A large body of Templars had moved across the desert, under their indomitable leader, Reginald de St. Aldemar, and leaving a few of their number to defend Jerusalem, had rapidly crossed the plains of the Jordan. While Saladin had drawn towards the mountains, the bravest of his Emirs, Mustapha, Achmet, with ten thousand Kurds and Saracens, hastened to intercept their path.

The plains around the city were crowded with Christian fugitives, when, like a black cloud, the Moslems swooped upon them. Rapidly the Saracens swept down from the surrounding hills, until the plain was white with the flashing turbans, their dark, swarthy brows and jewelled vestment moving strangely among the motley crowd of Jews and Christians. Suddenly on the heights which skirted the Lebanon Range the tall forms and mail-clad horses of the Templars appeared like a serried phalanx.

The terrified women and children saw their danger, and clung to one another in despair. The Templars saw it, too, and instantly staying charge, pressed back their horses until they reared.

It was a goodly sight to see them rank on rank, the noble soldiery in Christendom, their long lances held in rest, and their noble countenances seen through the raised visor. The glittering cross of the order flashed in the beams of the morning, as it towered over the crested helmets below.

For a moment all seemed uncertain.

The crowd of helpless beings, at the mercy of the foe, blanched the brow of those who would have faced a thousand infidels.

A moment only intervened, and Mustapha, whose cruelty equalled his renown, ordered the helpless band to be massacred. As the death-shriek arose, the trumpets of the knights sounded. A shout arose that shook the rocks around.

"For the Temple ! for the Temple ! Ha, Beausant !" and in thundering charge they swept upon the heat-litten host.

Back and forward surged the tide of battle—swords met and mail rang on mail. The countless throngs of Saracens, borne back by the irresistible charge of the knights, again and again rallied, and hung like dark masses of clouds on the horizon.

Apart from the main tide of battle, one knight had long contended with unequal odds. Many a swarthy foe had fallen before his arm. As he turned to rejoin the ranks a cry of pain met his ear, and pausing near the spot, the tones of a female voice were distinctly audible. Advancing in the direction whence it proceeded, he beheld a being of singular beauty kneeling in the tangled shade of the forest. Her face, of exquisite beauty, was clouded by pain and fear, and the heavy masses of her hair, which veiled her slight figure were wet with blood.

Eustice de Vincent gazed for a moment on the sufferer, and then, to a few entreating words in Norman-French, promised the protection sought. Binding up, with the skill taught by the rules of his order, the arm of the maiden, he consigned her to the guard of his squires, with orders to convey her from the field, and remounting, galloped back to the host.

The day pressed hard upon the Templars, out-numbered six to one. They fought long and well, but as their war-cry grew fainter, the horde of Saracens yelled louder and louder. In vain they charged with sweeping blows the scattered front of the foe. In vain they thronged to fill the places of the fallen. Fresh