

The Talisman



Walter Scott

Walter Scott

The Talisman

PUBLISHER NOTES:

Take our Free
Quick Quiz and Find Out Which
Best Side Hustle is ✓ **Best for You.**

✓ **VISIT OUR WEBSITE:**

→ **LYFREEDOM.COM** ← ← **CLICK HERE** ←

INTRODUCTION TO THE TALISMAN.

The “Betrothed” did not greatly please one or two friends, who thought that it did not well correspond to the general title of “The Crusaders.” They urged, therefore, that, without direct allusion to the manners of the Eastern tribes, and to the romantic conflicts of the period, the title of a “Tale of the Crusaders” would resemble the playbill, which is said to have announced the tragedy of Hamlet, the character of the Prince of Denmark being left out. On the other hand, I felt the difficulty of giving a vivid picture of a part of the world with which I was almost totally unacquainted, unless by early recollections of the Arabian Nights' Entertainments; and not only did I labour under the incapacity of ignorance—in which, as far as regards Eastern manners, I was as thickly wrapped as an Egyptian in his fog—but my contemporaries were, many of them, as much enlightened upon the subject as if they had been inhabitants of the favoured land of Goshen. The love of travelling had pervaded all ranks, and carried the subjects of Britain into all quarters of the world. Greece, so attractive by its remains of art, by its struggles for freedom against a Mohammedan tyrant, by its very name, where every fountain had its classical legend—Palestine, endeared to the imagination by yet more sacred remembrances—had been of late surveyed by British eyes, and described by recent travellers. Had I, therefore, attempted the difficult task of substituting manners of my own invention, instead of the genuine costume of the East, almost every traveller I met who had extended his route beyond what was anciently called “The Grand Tour,” had acquired a right, by ocular inspection, to chastise me for my presumption. Every member of the Travellers' Club who could pretend to have thrown his shoe over Edom was, by having done so, constituted my lawful critic and corrector. It occurred, therefore, that where the author of Anastasius, as well as he of Hadji Baba, had described the manners and vices of the Eastern nations, not only with fidelity, but with the humour of Le Sage and the ludicrous power of Fielding himself, one who was a perfect stranger to the subject must necessarily produce an unfavourable contrast. The Poet Laureate also, in the charming tale of “Thalaba,” had shown how extensive might be the researches of a person of acquirements and talent, by dint of investigation alone, into the ancient doctrines, history, and manners of the Eastern countries, in which we are probably to look for the cradle of mankind; Moore, in his “Lalla Rookh,” had successfully trod the same path; in which, too, Byron, joining ocular experience to extensive reading, had written some of his most attractive poems. In a word, the Eastern themes had been already so successfully handled by those who

were acknowledged to be masters of their craft, that I was diffident of making the attempt.

These were powerful objections; nor did they lose force when they became the subject of anxious reflection, although they did not finally prevail. The arguments on the other side were, that though I had no hope of rivalling the contemporaries whom I have mentioned, yet it occurred to me as possible to acquit myself of the task I was engaged in without entering into competition with them.

The period relating more immediately to the Crusades which I at last fixed upon was that at which the warlike character of Richard I., wild and generous, a pattern of chivalry, with all its extravagant virtues, and its no less absurd errors, was opposed to that of Saladin, in which the Christian and English monarch showed all the cruelty and violence of an Eastern sultan, and Saladin, on the other hand, displayed the deep policy and prudence of a European sovereign, whilst each contended which should excel the other in the knightly qualities of bravery and generosity. This singular contrast afforded, as the author conceived, materials for a work of fiction possessing peculiar interest. One of the inferior characters introduced was a supposed relation of Richard Coeur de Lion—a violation of the truth of history which gave offence to Mr. Mills, the author of the “History of Chivalry and the Crusades,” who was not, it may be presumed, aware that romantic fiction naturally includes the power of such invention, which is indeed one of the requisites of the art.

Prince David of Scotland, who was actually in the host, and was the hero of some very romantic adventures on his way home, was also pressed into my service, and constitutes one of my DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

It is true I had already brought upon the field him of the lion heart. But it was in a more private capacity than he was here to be exhibited in the Talisman—then as a disguised knight, now in the avowed character of a conquering monarch; so that I doubted not a name so dear to Englishmen as that of King Richard I. might contribute to their amusement for more than once.

I had access to all which antiquity believed, whether of reality or fable, on the subject of that magnificent warrior, who was the proudest boast of Europe and their chivalry, and with whose dreadful name the Saracens, according to a historian of their own country, were wont to rebuke their startled horses. “Do you think,” said they, “that King Richard is on the track, that you stray so wildly from it?” The most curious register of the history of King Richard is an ancient romance, translated originally from the Norman; and at first certainly having a pretence to be termed a work of chivalry, but latterly becoming stuffed with the most astonishing and monstrous fables. There is perhaps no metrical romance upon record where, along with curious and genuine

history, are mingled more absurd and exaggerated incidents. We have placed in the Appendix to this Introduction the passage of the romance in which Richard figures as an ogre, or literal cannibal.

A principal incident in the story is that from which the title is derived. Of all people who ever lived, the Persians were perhaps most remarkable for their unshaken credulity in amulets, spells, periapts, and similar charms, framed, it was said, under the influence of particular planets, and bestowing high medical powers, as well as the means of advancing men's fortunes in various manners. A story of this kind, relating to a Crusader of eminence, is often told in the west of Scotland, and the relic alluded to is still in existence, and even yet held in veneration.

Sir Simon Lockhart of Lee and Gartland made a considerable figure in the reigns of Robert the Bruce and of his son David. He was one of the chief of that band of Scottish chivalry who accompanied James, the Good Lord Douglas, on his expedition to the Holy Land with the heart of King Robert Bruce. Douglas, impatient to get at the Saracens, entered into war with those of Spain, and was killed there. Lockhart proceeded to the Holy Land with such Scottish knights as had escaped the fate of their leader and assisted for some time in the wars against the Saracens.

The following adventure is said by tradition to have befallen him:—

He made prisoner in battle an Emir of considerable wealth and consequence. The aged mother of the captive came to the Christian camp, to redeem her son from his state of captivity. Lockhart is said to have fixed the price at which his prisoner should ransom himself; and the lady, pulling out a large embroidered purse, proceeded to tell down the ransom, like a mother who pays little respect to gold in comparison of her son's liberty. In this operation, a pebble inserted in a coin, some say of the Lower Empire, fell out of the purse, and the Saracen matron testified so much haste to recover it as gave the Scottish knight a high idea of its value, when compared with gold or silver. "I will not consent," he said, "to grant your son's liberty, unless that amulet be added to his ransom." The lady not only consented to this, but explained to Sir Simon Lockhart the mode in which the talisman was to be used, and the uses to which it might be put. The water in which it was dipped operated as a styptic, as a febrifuge, and possessed other properties as a medical talisman.

Sir Simon Lockhart, after much experience of the wonders which it wrought, brought it to his own country, and left it to his heirs, by whom, and by Clydesdale in general, it was, and is still, distinguished by the name of the Lee-penny, from the name of his native seat of Lee.

The most remarkable part of its history, perhaps, was that it so especially escaped condemnation when the Church of Scotland chose to impeach many other cures which savoured of the miraculous, as occasioned by sorcery, and censured the appeal to them, "excepting only that to the amulet, called the Lee-penny, to which it had pleased

God to annex certain healing virtues which the Church did not presume to condemn." It still, as has been said, exists, and its powers are sometimes resorted to. Of late, they have been chiefly restricted to the cure of persons bitten by mad dogs; and as the illness in such cases frequently arises from imagination, there can be no reason for doubting that water which has been poured on the Lee-penny furnishes a congenial cure.

Such is the tradition concerning the talisman, which the author has taken the liberty to vary in applying it to his own purposes.

Considerable liberties have also been taken with the truth of history, both with respect to Conrade of Montserrat's life, as well as his death. That Conrade, however, was reckoned the enemy of Richard is agreed both in history and romance. The general opinion of the terms upon which they stood may be guessed from the proposal of the Saracens that the Marquis of Montserrat should be invested with certain parts of Syria, which they were to yield to the Christians. Richard, according to the romance which bears his name, "could no longer repress his fury. The Marquis he said, was a traitor, who had robbed the Knights Hospitallers of sixty thousand pounds, the present of his father Henry; that he was a renegade, whose treachery had occasioned the loss of Acre; and he concluded by a solemn oath, that he would cause him to be drawn to pieces by wild horses, if he should ever venture to pollute the Christian camp by his presence. Philip attempted to intercede in favour of the Marquis, and throwing down his glove, offered to become a pledge for his fidelity to the Christians; but his offer was rejected, and he was obliged to give way to Richard's impetuosity."—HISTORY OF CHIVALRY.

Conrade of Montserrat makes a considerable figure in those wars, and was at length put to death by one of the followers of the Scheik, or Old Man of the Mountain; nor did Richard remain free of the suspicion of having instigated his death.

It may be said, in general, that most of the incidents introduced in the following tale are fictitious, and that reality, where it exists, is only retained in the characters of the piece.

ABBOTSFORD, 1st July, 1832

APPENDIX TO INTRODUCTION.

**While warring in the Holy Land, Richard was seized with an
ague.**

The best leeches of the camp were unable to effect the cure of the King's disease; but the prayers of the army were more successful. He became convalescent, and the first symptom of his recovery was a violent longing for pork. But pork was not likely to be plentiful in a country whose inhabitants had an abhorrence for swine's flesh; and

"Though his men should be hanged,
They ne might, in that countrey,
For gold, ne silver, ne no money,
No pork find, take, ne get,
That King Richard might aught of eat.
An old knight with Richard biding,
When he heard of that tiding,
That the king's wants were swyche,
To the steward he spake privyliche—
"Our lord the king sore is sick, I wis,
After porck he alonged is;
Ye may none find to selle;
No man be hardy him so to telle!
If he did he might die.
Now behoves to done as I shall say,
Tho' he wete nought of that.
Take a Saracen, young and fat;
In haste let the thief be slain,
Opened, and his skin off flayn;
And sodden full hastily,
With powder and with spicery,
And with saffron of good colour.
When the king feels thereof savour,
Out of ague if he be went,
He shall have thereto good talent.
When he has a good taste,
And eaten well a good repast,
And supped of the BREWIS [Broth] a sup,
Slept after and swet a drop,
Through Goddis help and my counsail,
Soon he shall be fresh and hail.'
The sooth to say, at wordes few,
Slain and sodden was the heathen shrew.

Before the king it was forth brought:
Quod his men, 'Lord, we have pork sought;
Eates and sups of the brewis S00TE, [Sweet]
Thorough grace of God it shall be your boot.'
Before King Richard carff a knight,
He ate faster than he carve might.
The king ate the flesh and GNEW [Gnawed] the bones,
And drank well after for the nonce.
And when he had eaten enough,
His folk hem turned away, and LOUGH. [Laughed]
He lay still and drew in his arm;
His chamberlain him wrapped warm.
He lay and slept, and swet a stound,
And became whole and sound.
King Richard clad him and arose,
And walked abouten in the close."

An attack of the Saracens was repelled by Richard in person, the consequence of which is told in the following lines:—

"When King Richard had rested a whyle,
A knight his arms 'gan unlace,
Him to comfort and solace.
Him was brought a sop in wine.
'The head of that ilke swine,
That I of ate!' (the cook he bade,)
'For feeble I am, and faint and mad.
Of mine evil now I am fear;
Serve me therewith at my soupere!'
Quod the cook, 'That head I ne have.'
Then said the king, 'So God me save,
But I see the head of that swine,
For sooth, thou shalt lesen thine!'
The cook saw none other might be;
He fet the head and let him see.
He fell on knees, and made a cry—
'Lo, here the head! my Lord, mercy!'"

The cook had certainly some reason to fear that his master would be struck with horror at the recollection of the dreadful banquet to which he owed his recovery; but his fears were soon dissipated.

"The swarte vis [Black face] when the king seeth,
His black beard and white teeth,
How his lippes grinned wide,
'What devil is this?' the king cried,
And 'gan to laugh as he were wode.
'What! is Saracen's flesh thus good?
That never erst I nought wist!

By God's death and his uprist,
Shall we never die for default,
While we may in any assault,
Slee Saracens, the flesh may take,
And seethen and roasten and do hem bake,
[And] Gnawen her flesh to the bones!
Now I have it proved once,
For hunger ere I be wo,
I and my folk shall eat mo!"'

The besieged now offered to surrender, upon conditions of safety to the inhabitants; while all the public treasure, military machines, and arms were delivered to the victors, together with the further ransom of one hundred thousand bezants. After this capitulation, the following extraordinary scene took place. We shall give it in the words of the humorous and amiable George Ellis, the collector and the editor of these Romances:—

“Though the garrison had faithfully performed the other articles of their contract, they were unable to restore the cross, which was not in their possession, and were therefore treated by the Christians with great cruelty. Daily reports of their sufferings were carried to Saladin; and as many of them were persons of the highest distinction, that monarch, at the solicitation of their friends, dispatched an embassy to King Richard with magnificent presents, which he offered for the ransom of the captives. The ambassadors were persons the most respectable from their age, their rank, and their eloquence. They delivered their message in terms of the utmost humility; and without arraigning the justice of the conqueror in his severe treatment of their countrymen, only solicited a period to that severity, laying at his feet the treasures with which they were entrusted, and pledging themselves and their master for the payment of any further sums which he might demand as the price of mercy.

“King Richard spake with wordes mild.

'The gold to take, God me shield!
Among you partes [Divide] every charge.
I brought in shippes and in barge,
More gold and silver with me,
Than has your lord, and swilke three.
To his treasure have I no need!
But for my love I you bid,
To meat with me that ye dwell;
And afterward I shall you tell.
Thorough counsel I shall you answer,
What BODE [Message] ye shall to your lord bear.

“The invitation was gratefully accepted. Richard, in the meantime, gave secret orders to his marshal that he should repair to the prison,

select a certain number of the most distinguished captives, and, after carefully noting their names on a roll of parchment, cause their heads to be instantly struck off; that these heads should be delivered to the cook, with instructions to clear away the hair, and, after boiling them in a cauldron, to distribute them on several platters, one to each guest, observing to fasten on the forehead of each the piece of parchment expressing the name and family of the victim.

"'An hot head bring me beforne,
As I were well apayed withall,
Eat thereof fast I shall;
As it were a tender chick,
To see how the others will like.'

"This horrible order was punctually executed. At noon the guests were summoned to wash by the music of the waits. The king took his seat attended by the principal officers of his court, at the high table, and the rest of the company were marshalled at a long table below him. On the cloth were placed portions of salt at the usual distances, but neither bread, wine, nor water. The ambassadors, rather surprised at this omission, but still free from apprehension, awaited in silence the arrival of the dinner, which was announced by the sound of pipes, trumpets, and tabours; and beheld, with horror and dismay, the unnatural banquet introduced by the steward and his officers. Yet their sentiments of disgust and abhorrence, and even their fears, were for a time suspended by their curiosity. Their eyes were fixed on the king, who, without the slightest change of countenance, swallowed the morsels as fast as they could be supplied by the knight who carved them.

"Every man then poked other;
They said, 'This is the devil's brother,
That slays our men, and thus hem eats!'

"Their attention was then involuntarily fixed on the smoking heads before them. They traced in the swollen and distorted features the resemblance of a friend or near relation, and received from the fatal scroll which accompanied each dish the sad assurance that this resemblance was not imaginary. They sat in torpid silence, anticipating their own fate in that of their countrymen; while their ferocious entertainer, with fury in his eyes, but with courtesy on his lips, insulted them by frequent invitations to merriment. At length this first course was removed, and its place supplied by venison, cranes, and other dainties, accompanied by the richest wines. The king then apologized to them for what had passed, which he attributed to his ignorance of their taste; and assured them of his religious respect for their characters as ambassadors, and of his readiness to grant them a safe-conduct for their return. This boon was all that they now wished to claim; and

"King Richard spake to an old man,
'Wendes home to your Soudan!

His melancholy that ye abate;
 And sayes that ye came too late.
 Too slowly was your time y-guessed;
 Ere ye came, the flesh was dressed,
 That men shoulde serve with me,
 Thus at noon, and my meynie.
 Say him, it shall him nought avail,
 Though he for-bar us our vitail,
 Bread, wine, fish, flesh, salmon, and conger;
 Of us none shall die with hunger,
 While we may wenden to fight,
 And slay the Saracens downright,
 Wash the flesh, and roast the head.
 With 0 [One] Saracen I may well feed
 Well a nine or a ten
 Of my good Christian men.
 King Richard shall warrant,
 There is no flesh so nourissant
 Unto an English man,
 Partridge, plover, heron, ne swan,
 Cow ne ox, sheep ne swine,
 As the head of a Sarazyn.
 There he is fat, and thereto tender,
 And my men be lean and slender.
 While any Saracen quick be,
 Livand now in this Syrie,
 For meat will we nothing care.
 Abouten fast we shall rare,
 And every day we shall eat
 All as many as we may get.
 To England will we nought gon,
 Till they be eaten every one.'”

ELLIS'S SPECIMENS OF EARLY ENGLISH METRIC ROMANCES.

The reader may be curious to know owing to what circumstances so extraordinary an invention as that which imputed cannibalism to the King of England should have found its way into his history. Mr. James, to whom we owe so much that is curious, seems to have traced the origin of this extraordinary rumour.

“With the army of the cross also was a multitude of men,” the same author declares, “who made it a profession to be without money. They walked barefoot, carried no arms, and even preceded the beasts of burden in their march, living upon roots and herbs, and presenting a spectacle both disgusting and pitiable.

“A Norman, who, according to all accounts, was of noble birth, but who, having lost his horse, continued to follow as a foot soldier, took the

strange resolution of putting himself at the head of this race of vagabonds, who willingly received him as their king. Amongst the Saracens these men became well known under the name of THAFURS (which Guibert translates TRUDENTES), and were beheld with great horror from the general persuasion that they fed on the dead bodies of their enemies; a report which was occasionally justified, and which the king of the Thafurs took care to encourage. This respectable monarch was frequently in the habit of stopping his followers, one by one, in a narrow defile, and of causing them to be searched carefully, lest the possession of the least sum of money should render them unworthy of the name of his subjects. If even two sous were found upon any one, he was instantly expelled the society of his tribe, the king bidding him contemptuously buy arms and fight.

“This troop, so far from being cumbersome to the army, was infinitely serviceable, carrying burdens, bringing in forage, provisions, and tribute; working the machines in the sieges; and, above all, spreading consternation among the Turks, who feared death from the lances of the knights less than that further consummation they heard of under the teeth of the Thafurs.” [James's “History of Chivalry.”]

It is easy to conceive that an ignorant minstrel, finding the taste and ferocity of the Thafurs commemorated in the historical accounts of the Holy Wars, has ascribed their practices and propensities to the Monarch of England, whose ferocity was considered as an object of exaggeration as legitimate as his valour.

ABBOTSFORD, 1st July, 1832.

**TALES OF THE CRUSADERS. TALE II.—THE
TALISMAN.**

CHAPTER I.

They, too, retired

To the wilderness, but 'twas with arms.

PARADISE REGAINED.

The burning sun of Syria had not yet attained its highest point in the horizon, when a knight of the Red Cross, who had left his distant northern home and joined the host of the Crusaders in Palestine, was pacing slowly along the sandy deserts which lie in the vicinity of the Dead Sea, or, as it is called, the Lake Asphaltites, where the waves of the Jordan pour themselves into an inland sea, from which there is no discharge of waters.

The warlike pilgrim had toiled among cliffs and precipices during the earlier part of the morning. More lately, issuing from those rocky and dangerous defiles, he had entered upon that great plain, where the accursed cities provoked, in ancient days, the direct and dreadful vengeance of the Omnipotent.

The toil, the thirst, the dangers of the way, were forgotten, as the traveller recalled the fearful catastrophe which had converted into an arid and dismal wilderness the fair and fertile valley of Siddim, once well watered, even as the Garden of the Lord, now a parched and blighted waste, condemned to eternal sterility.

Crossing himself, as he viewed the dark mass of rolling waters, in colour as in duality unlike those of any other lake, the traveller shuddered as he remembered that beneath these sluggish waves lay the once proud cities of the plain, whose grave was dug by the thunder of the heavens, or the eruption of subterraneous fire, and whose remains were hid, even by that sea which holds no living fish in its bosom, bears no skiff on its surface, and, as if its own dreadful bed were the only fit receptacle for its sullen waters, sends not, like other lakes, a tribute to the ocean. The whole land around, as in the days of Moses, was "brimstone and salt; it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth thereon." The land as well as the lake might be termed dead, as producing nothing having resemblance to vegetation, and even the very air was entirely devoid of its ordinary winged inhabitants, deterred probably by the odour of bitumen and sulphur which the burning sun exhaled from the waters of the lake in steaming clouds, frequently assuming the appearance of waterspouts. Masses of the slimy and sulphureous substance called naphtha, which floated idly on the sluggish and sullen waves, supplied those rolling clouds with new vapours, and afforded awful testimony to the truth of the Mosaic history.

Upon this scene of desolation the sun shone with almost intolerable splendour, and all living nature seemed to have hidden itself from the rays, excepting the solitary figure which moved through the flitting sand at a foot's pace, and appeared the sole breathing thing on the wide surface of the plain. The dress of the rider and the accoutrements of his horse were peculiarly unfit for the traveller in such a country. A coat of linked mail, with long sleeves, plated gauntlets, and a steel breastplate, had not been esteemed a sufficient weight of armour; there were also his triangular shield suspended round his neck, and his barred helmet of steel, over which he had a hood and collar of mail, which was drawn around the warrior's shoulders and throat, and filled up the vacancy between the hauberk and the headpiece. His lower limbs were sheathed, like his body, in flexible mail, securing the legs and thighs, while the feet rested in plated shoes, which corresponded with the gauntlets. A long, broad, straight-shaped, double-edged falchion, with a handle formed like a cross, corresponded with a stout poniard on the other side. The knight also bore, secured to his saddle, with one end resting on his stirrup, the long steel-headed lance, his own proper weapon, which, as he rode, projected backwards, and displayed its little pennoncelle, to dally with the faint breeze, or drop in the dead calm. To this cumbrous equipment must be added a surcoat of embroidered cloth, much frayed and worn, which was thus far useful that it excluded the burning rays of the sun from the armour, which they would otherwise have rendered intolerable to the wearer. The surcoat bore, in several places, the arms of the owner, although much defaced. These seemed to be a couchant leopard, with the motto, "I sleep; wake me not." An outline of the same device might be traced on his shield, though many a blow had almost effaced the painting. The flat top of his cumbrous cylindrical helmet was unadorned with any crest. In retaining their own unwieldy defensive armour, the Northern Crusaders seemed to set at defiance the nature of the climate and country to which they had come to war.

The accoutrements of the horse were scarcely less massive and unwieldy than those of the rider. The animal had a heavy saddle plated with steel, uniting in front with a species of breastplate, and behind with defensive armour made to cover the loins. Then there was a steel axe, or hammer, called a mace-of-arms, and which hung to the saddle-bow. The reins were secured by chain-work, and the front-stall of the bridle was a steel plate, with apertures for the eyes and nostrils, having in the midst a short, sharp pike, projecting from the forehead of the horse like the horn of the fabulous unicorn.

But habit had made the endurance of this load of panoply a second nature, both to the knight and his gallant charger. Numbers, indeed, of the Western warriors who hurried to Palestine died ere they became inured to the burning climate; but there were others to whom that climate became innocent and even friendly, and among this fortunate

number was the solitary horseman who now traversed the border of the Dead Sea.

Nature, which cast his limbs in a mould of uncommon strength, fitted to wear his linked hauberk with as much ease as if the meshes had been formed of cobwebs, had endowed him with a constitution as strong as his limbs, and which bade defiance to almost all changes of climate, as well as to fatigue and privations of every kind. His disposition seemed, in some degree, to partake of the qualities of his bodily frame; and as the one possessed great strength and endurance, united with the power of violent exertion, the other, under a calm and undisturbed semblance, had much of the fiery and enthusiastic love of glory which constituted the principal attribute of the renowned Norman line, and had rendered them sovereigns in every corner of Europe where they had drawn their adventurous swords.

It was not, however, to all the race that fortune proposed such tempting rewards; and those obtained by the solitary knight during two years' campaign in Palestine had been only temporal fame, and, as he was taught to believe, spiritual privileges. Meantime, his slender stock of money had melted away, the rather that he did not pursue any of the ordinary modes by which the followers of the Crusade condescended to recruit their diminished resources at the expense of the people of Palestine—he exacted no gifts from the wretched natives for sparing their possessions when engaged in warfare with the Saracens, and he had not availed himself of any opportunity of enriching himself by the ransom of prisoners of consequence. The small train which had followed him from his native country had been gradually diminished, as the means of maintaining them disappeared, and his only remaining squire was at present on a sick-bed, and unable to attend his master, who travelled, as we have seen, singly and alone. This was of little consequence to the Crusader, who was accustomed to consider his good sword as his safest escort, and devout thoughts as his best companion.

Nature had, however, her demands for refreshment and repose even on the iron frame and patient disposition of the Knight of the Sleeping Leopard; and at noon, when the Dead Sea lay at some distance on his right, he joyfully hailed the sight of two or three palm-trees, which arose beside the well which was assigned for his mid-day station. His good horse, too, which had plodded forward with the steady endurance of his master, now lifted his head, expanded his nostrils, and quickened his pace, as if he snuffed afar off the living waters which marked the place of repose and refreshment. But labour and danger were doomed to intervene ere the horse or horseman reached the desired spot.

As the Knight of the Couchant Leopard continued to fix his eyes attentively on the yet distant cluster of palm-trees, it seemed to him as if some object was moving among them. The distant form separated itself from the trees, which partly hid its motions, and advanced

towards the knight with a speed which soon showed a mounted horseman, whom his turban, long spear, and green caftan floating in the wind, on his nearer approach showed to be a Saracen cavalier. "In the desert," saith an Eastern proverb, "no man meets a friend." The Crusader was totally indifferent whether the infidel, who now approached on his gallant barb as if borne on the wings of an eagle, came as friend or foe—perhaps, as a vowed champion of the Cross, he might rather have preferred the latter. He disengaged his lance from his saddle, seized it with the right hand, placed it in rest with its point half elevated, gathered up the reins in the left, waked his horse's mettle with the spur, and prepared to encounter the stranger with the calm self-confidence belonging to the victor in many contests.

The Saracen came on at the speedy gallop of an Arab horseman, managing his steed more by his limbs and the inflection of his body than by any use of the reins, which hung loose in his left hand; so that he was enabled to wield the light, round buckler of the skin of the rhinoceros, ornamented with silver loops, which he wore on his arm, swinging it as if he meant to oppose its slender circle to the formidable thrust of the Western lance. His own long spear was not couched or levelled like that of his antagonist, but grasped by the middle with his right hand, and brandished at arm's-length above his head. As the cavalier approached his enemy at full career, he seemed to expect that the Knight of the Leopard should put his horse to the gallop to encounter him. But the Christian knight, well acquainted with the customs of Eastern warriors, did not mean to exhaust his good horse by any unnecessary exertion; and, on the contrary, made a dead halt, confident that if the enemy advanced to the actual shock, his own weight, and that of his powerful charger, would give him sufficient advantage, without the additional momentum of rapid motion. Equally sensible and apprehensive of such a probable result, the Saracen cavalier, when he had approached towards the Christian within twice the length of his lance, wheeled his steed to the left with inimitable dexterity, and rode twice around his antagonist, who, turning without quitting his ground, and presenting his front constantly to his enemy, frustrated his attempts to attack him on an unguarded point; so that the Saracen, wheeling his horse, was fain to retreat to the distance of a hundred yards. A second time, like a hawk attacking a heron, the heathen renewed the charge, and a second time was fain to retreat without coming to a close struggle. A third time he approached in the same manner, when the Christian knight, desirous to terminate this illusory warfare, in which he might at length have been worn out by the activity of his foeman, suddenly seized the mace which hung at his saddle-bow, and, with a strong hand and unerring aim, hurled it against the head of the Emir, for such and not less his enemy appeared. The Saracen was just aware of the formidable missile in time to interpose his light buckler betwixt the mace and his head; but the

violence of the blow forced the buckler down on his turban, and though that defence also contributed to deaden its violence, the Saracen was beaten from his horse. Ere the Christian could avail himself of this mishap, his nimble foeman sprung from the ground, and, calling on his steed, which instantly returned to his side, he leaped into his seat without touching the stirrup, and regained all the advantage of which the Knight of the Leopard hoped to deprive him. But the latter had in the meanwhile recovered his mace, and the Eastern cavalier, who remembered the strength and dexterity with which his antagonist had aimed it, seemed to keep cautiously out of reach of that weapon of which he had so lately felt the force, while he showed his purpose of waging a distant warfare with missile weapons of his own. Planting his long spear in the sand at a distance from the scene of combat, he strung, with great address, a short bow, which he carried at his back; and putting his horse to the gallop, once more described two or three circles of a wider extent than formerly, in the course of which he discharged six arrows at the Christian with such unerring skill that the goodness of his harness alone saved him from being wounded in as many places. The seventh shaft apparently found a less perfect part of the armour, and the Christian dropped heavily from his horse. But what was the surprise of the Saracen, when, dismounting to examine the condition of his prostrate enemy, he found himself suddenly within the grasp of the European, who had had recourse to this artifice to bring his enemy within his reach! Even in this deadly grapple the Saracen was saved by his agility and presence of mind. He unloosed the sword-belt, in which the Knight of the Leopard had fixed his hold, and, thus eluding his fatal grasp, mounted his horse, which seemed to watch his motions with the intelligence of a human being, and again rode off. But in the last encounter the Saracen had lost his sword and his quiver of arrows, both of which were attached to the girdle which he was obliged to abandon. He had also lost his turban in the struggle.

These disadvantages seemed to incline the Moslem to a truce. He approached the Christian with his right hand extended, but no longer in a menacing attitude.

"There is truce betwixt our nations," he said, in the *lingua franca* commonly used for the purpose of communication with the Crusaders; "wherefore should there be war betwixt thee and me? Let there be peace betwixt us."

"I am well contented," answered he of the Couchant Leopard; "but what security dost thou offer that thou wilt observe the truce?"

"The word of a follower of the Prophet was never broken," answered the Emir. "It is thou, brave Nazarene, from whom I should demand security, did I not know that treason seldom dwells with courage."

The Crusader felt that the confidence of the Moslem made him ashamed of his own doubts.

“By the cross of my sword,” he said, laying his hand on the weapon as he spoke, “I will be true companion to thee, Saracen, while our fortune wills that we remain in company together.”

“By Mohammed, Prophet of God, and by Allah, God of the Prophet,” replied his late foeman, “there is not treachery in my heart towards thee. And now wend we to yonder fountain, for the hour of rest is at hand, and the stream had hardly touched my lip when I was called to battle by thy approach.”

The Knight of the Couchant Leopard yielded a ready and courteous assent; and the late foes, without an angry look or gesture of doubt, rode side by side to the little cluster of palm-trees.

CHAPTER II.

Times of danger have always, and in a peculiar degree, their seasons of good-will and security; and this was particularly so in the ancient feudal ages, in which, as the manners of the period had assigned war to be the chief and most worthy occupation of mankind, the intervals of peace, or rather of truce, were highly relished by those warriors to whom they were seldom granted, and endeared by the very circumstances which rendered them transitory. It is not worth while preserving any permanent enmity against a foe whom a champion has fought with to-day, and may again stand in bloody opposition to on the next morning. The time and situation afforded so much room for the ebullition of violent passions, that men, unless when peculiarly opposed to each other, or provoked by the recollection of private and individual wrongs, cheerfully enjoyed in each other's society the brief intervals of pacific intercourse which a warlike life admitted.

The distinction of religions, nay, the fanatical zeal which animated the followers of the Cross and of the Crescent against each other, was much softened by a feeling so natural to generous combatants, and especially cherished by the spirit of chivalry. This last strong impulse had extended itself gradually from the Christians to their mortal enemies the Saracens, both of Spain and of Palestine. The latter were, indeed, no longer the fanatical savages who had burst from the centre of Arabian deserts, with the sabre in one hand and the Koran in the other, to inflict death or the faith of Mohammed, or, at the best, slavery and tribute, upon all who dared to oppose the belief of the prophet of Mecca. These alternatives indeed had been offered to the unwarlike Greeks and Syrians; but in contending with the Western Christians, animated by a zeal as fiery as their own, and possessed of as unconquerable courage, address, and success in arms, the Saracens gradually caught a part of their manners, and especially of those chivalrous observances which were so well calculated to charm the minds of a proud and conquering people. They had their tournaments and games of chivalry; they had even their knights, or some rank analogous; and above all, the Saracens observed their plighted faith with an accuracy which might sometimes put to shame those who owned a better religion. Their truces, whether national or betwixt individuals, were faithfully observed; and thus it was that war, in itself perhaps the greatest of evils, yet gave occasion for display of good faith, generosity, clemency, and even kindly affections, which less frequently occur in more tranquil periods, where the passions of men, experiencing wrongs or entertaining quarrels which cannot be brought to instant decision, are apt to smoulder for a length of time in the bosoms of those who are so unhappy as to be their prey.

It was under the influence of these milder feelings which soften the horrors of warfare that the Christian and Saracen, who had so lately done their best for each other's mutual destruction, rode at a slow pace towards the fountain of palm-trees to which the Knight of the Couchant Leopard had been tending, when interrupted in mid-passage by his fleet and dangerous adversary. Each was wrapt for some time in his own reflections, and took breath after an encounter which had threatened to be fatal to one or both; and their good horses seemed no less to enjoy the interval of repose.

That of the Saracen, however, though he had been forced into much the more violent and extended sphere of motion, appeared to have suffered less from fatigue than the charger of the European knight. The sweat hung still clammy on the limbs of the latter, when those of the noble Arab were completely dried by the interval of tranquil exercise, all saving the foam-flakes which were still visible on his bridle and housings. The loose soil on which he trod so much augmented the distress of the Christian's horse, heavily loaded by his own armour and the weight of his rider, that the latter jumped from his saddle, and led his charger along the deep dust of the loamy soil, which was burnt in the sun into a substance more impalpable than the finest sand, and thus gave the faithful horse refreshment at the expense of his own additional toil; for, iron-sheathed as he was, he sunk over the mailed shoes at every step which he placed on a surface so light and unresisting.

"You are right," said the Saracen—and it was the first word that either had spoken since their truce was concluded; "your strong horse deserves your care. But what do you in the desert with an animal which sinks over the fetlock at every step as if he would plant each foot deep as the root of a date-tree?"

"Thou speakest rightly, Saracen," said the Christian knight, not delighted at the tone with which the infidel criticized his favourite steed—"rightly, according to thy knowledge and observation. But my good horse hath ere now borne me, in mine own land, over as wide a lake as thou seest yonder spread out behind us, yet not wet one hair above his hoof."

The Saracen looked at him with as much surprise as his manners permitted him to testify, which was only expressed by a slight approach to a disdainful smile, that hardly curled perceptibly the broad, thick moustache which enveloped his upper lip.

"It is justly spoken," he said, instantly composing himself to his usual serene gravity; "List to a Frank, and hear a fable."

"Thou art not courteous, misbeliever," replied the Crusader, "to doubt the word of a dubbed knight; and were it not that thou speakest in ignorance, and not in malice, our truce had its ending ere it is well begun. Thinkest thou I tell thee an untruth when I say that I, one of five hundred horsemen, armed in complete mail, have ridden—ay, and

ridden for miles, upon water as solid as the crystal, and ten times less brittle?"

"What wouldst thou tell me?" answered the Moslem. "Yonder inland sea thou dost point at is peculiar in this, that, by the especial curse of God, it suffereth nothing to sink in its waves, but wafts them away, and casts them on its margin; but neither the Dead Sea, nor any of the seven oceans which environ the earth, will endure on their surface the pressure of a horse's foot, more than the Red Sea endured to sustain the advance of Pharaoh and his host."

"You speak truth after your knowledge, Saracen," said the Christian knight; "and yet, trust me, I fable not, according to mine. Heat, in this climate, converts the soil into something almost as unstable as water; and in my land cold often converts the water itself into a substance as hard as rock. Let us speak of this no longer, for the thoughts of the calm, clear, blue refulgence of a winter's lake, glimmering to stars and moonbeam, aggravate the horrors of this fiery desert, where, methinks, the very air which we breathe is like the vapour of a fiery furnace seven times heated."

The Saracen looked on him with some attention, as if to discover in what sense he was to understand words which, to him, must have appeared either to contain something of mystery or of imposition. At length he seemed determined in what manner to receive the language of his new companion.

"You are," he said, "of a nation that loves to laugh, and you make sport with yourselves, and with others, by telling what is impossible, and reporting what never chanced. Thou art one of the knights of France, who hold it for glee and pastime to GAB, as they term it, of exploits that are beyond human power. [Gaber. This French word signified a sort of sport much used among the French chivalry, which consisted in vying with each other in making the most romantic gasconades. The verb and the meaning are retained in Scottish.] I were wrong to challenge, for the time, the privilege of thy speech, since boasting is more natural to thee than truth."

"I am not of their land, neither of their fashion," said the Knight, "which is, as thou well sayest, to GAB of that which they dare not undertake—or, undertaking, cannot perfect. But in this I have imitated their folly, brave Saracen, that in talking to thee of what thou canst not comprehend, I have, even in speaking most simple truth, fully incurred the character of a braggart in thy eyes; so, I pray you, let my words pass."

They had now arrived at the knot of palm-trees and the fountain which welled out from beneath their shade in sparkling profusion.

We have spoken of a moment of truce in the midst of war; and this, a spot of beauty in the midst of a sterile desert, was scarce less dear to the imagination. It was a scene which, perhaps, would elsewhere have

deserved little notice; but as the single speck, in a boundless horizon, which promised the refreshment of shade and living water, these blessings, held cheap where they are common, rendered the fountain and its neighbourhood a little paradise. Some generous or charitable hand, ere yet the evil days of Palestine began, had walled in and arched over the fountain, to preserve it from being absorbed in the earth, or choked by the flitting clouds of dust with which the least breath of wind covered the desert. The arch was now broken, and partly ruinous; but it still so far projected over and covered in the fountain that it excluded the sun in a great measure from its waters, which, hardly touched by a straggling beam, while all around was blazing, lay in a steady repose, alike delightful to the eye and the imagination. Stealing from under the arch, they were first received in a marble basin, much defaced indeed, but still cheering the eye, by showing that the place was anciently considered as a station, that the hand of man had been there and that man's accommodation had been in some measure attended to. The thirsty and weary traveller was reminded by these signs that others had suffered similar difficulties, reposed in the same spot, and, doubtless, found their way in safety to a more fertile country. Again, the scarce visible current which escaped from the basin served to nourish the few trees which surrounded the fountain, and where it sunk into the ground and disappeared, its refreshing presence was acknowledged by a carpet of velvet verdure.

In this delightful spot the two warriors halted, and each, after his own fashion, proceeded to relieve his horse from saddle, bit, and rein, and permitted the animals to drink at the basin, ere they refreshed themselves from the fountain head, which arose under the vault. They then suffered the steeds to go loose, confident that their interest, as well as their domesticated habits, would prevent their straying from the pure water and fresh grass.

Christian and Saracen next sat down together on the turf, and produced each the small allowance of store which they carried for their own refreshment. Yet, ere they severally proceeded to their scanty meal, they eyed each other with that curiosity which the close and doubtful conflict in which they had been so lately engaged was calculated to inspire. Each was desirous to measure the strength, and form some estimate of the character, of an adversary so formidable; and each was compelled to acknowledge that, had he fallen in the conflict, it had been by a noble hand.

The champions formed a striking contrast to each other in person and features, and might have formed no inaccurate representatives of their different nations. The Frank seemed a powerful man, built after the ancient Gothic cast of form, with light brown hair, which, on the removal of his helmet, was seen to curl thick and profusely over his head. His features had acquired, from the hot climate, a hue much

darker than those parts of his neck which were less frequently exposed to view, or than was warranted by his full and well-opened blue eye, the colour of his hair, and of the moustaches which thickly shaded his upper lip, while his chin was carefully divested of beard, after the Norman fashion. His nose was Grecian and well formed; his mouth rather large in proportion, but filled with well-set, strong, and beautifully white teeth; his head small, and set upon the neck with much grace. His age could not exceed thirty, but if the effects of toil and climate were allowed for, might be three or four years under that period. His form was tall, powerful, and athletic, like that of a man whose strength might, in later life, become unwieldy, but which was hitherto united with lightness and activity. His hands, when he withdrew the mailed gloves, were long, fair, and well-proportioned; the wrist-bones peculiarly large and strong; and the arms remarkably well-shaped and brawny. A military hardihood and careless frankness of expression characterized his language and his motions; and his voice had the tone of one more accustomed to command than to obey, and who was in the habit of expressing his sentiments aloud and boldly, whenever he was called upon to announce them.

The Saracen Emir formed a marked and striking contrast with the Western Crusader. His stature was indeed above the middle size, but he was at least three inches shorter than the European, whose size approached the gigantic. His slender limbs and long, spare hands and arms, though well proportioned to his person, and suited to the style of his countenance, did not at first aspect promise the display of vigour and elasticity which the Emir had lately exhibited. But on looking more closely, his limbs, where exposed to view, seemed divested of all that was fleshy or cumbersome; so that nothing being left but bone, brawn, and sinew, it was a frame fitted for exertion and fatigue, far beyond that of a bulky champion, whose strength and size are counterbalanced by weight, and who is exhausted by his own exertions. The countenance of the Saracen naturally bore a general national resemblance to the Eastern tribe from whom he descended, and was as unlike as possible to the exaggerated terms in which the minstrels of the day were wont to represent the infidel champions, and the fabulous description which a sister art still presents as the Saracen's Head upon signposts. His features were small, well-formed, and delicate, though deeply embrowned by the Eastern sun, and terminated by a flowing and curled black beard, which seemed trimmed with peculiar care. The nose was straight and regular, the eyes keen, deep-set, black, and glowing, and his teeth equalled in beauty the ivory of his deserts. The person and proportions of the Saracen, in short, stretched on the turf near to his powerful antagonist, might have been compared to his sheeny and crescent-formed sabre, with its narrow and light but bright and keen Damascus blade, contrasted with the long and ponderous Gothic war-

sword which was flung unbuckled on the same sod. The Emir was in the very flower of his age, and might perhaps have been termed eminently beautiful, but for the narrowness of his forehead and something of too much thinness and sharpness of feature, or at least what might have seemed such in a European estimate of beauty.

The manners of the Eastern warrior were grave, graceful, and decorous; indicating, however, in some particulars, the habitual restraint which men of warm and choleric tempers often set as a guard upon their native impetuosity of disposition, and at the same time a sense of his own dignity, which seemed to impose a certain formality of behaviour in him who entertained it.

This haughty feeling of superiority was perhaps equally entertained by his new European acquaintance, but the effect was different; and the same feeling, which dictated to the Christian knight a bold, blunt, and somewhat careless bearing, as one too conscious of his own importance to be anxious about the opinions of others, appeared to prescribe to the Saracen a style of courtesy more studiously and formally observant of ceremony. Both were courteous; but the courtesy of the Christian seemed to flow rather from a good humoured sense of what was due to others; that of the Moslem, from a high feeling of what was to be expected from himself.

The provision which each had made for his refreshment was simple, but the meal of the Saracen was abstemious. A handful of dates and a morsel of coarse barley-bread sufficed to relieve the hunger of the latter, whose education had habituated them to the fare of the desert, although, since their Syrian conquests, the Arabian simplicity of life frequently gave place to the most unbounded profusion of luxury. A few draughts from the lovely fountain by which they reposed completed his meal. That of the Christian, though coarse, was more genial. Dried hog's flesh, the abomination of the Moslemah, was the chief part of his repast; and his drink, derived from a leathern bottle, contained something better than pure element. He fed with more display of appetite, and drank with more appearance of satisfaction, than the Saracen judged it becoming to show in the performance of a mere bodily function; and, doubtless, the secret contempt which each entertained for the other, as the follower of a false religion, was considerably increased by the marked difference of their diet and manners. But each had found the weight of his opponent's arm, and the mutual respect which the bold struggle had created was sufficient to subdue other and inferior considerations. Yet the Saracen could not help remarking the circumstances which displeased him in the Christian's conduct and manners; and, after he had witnessed for some time in silence the keen appetite which protracted the knight's banquet long after his own was concluded, he thus addressed him:—

“Valiant Nazarene, is it fitting that one who can fight like a man should feed like a dog or a wolf? Even a misbelieving Jew would shudder at the food which you seem to eat with as much relish as if it were fruit from the trees of Paradise.”

“Valiant Saracen,” answered the Christian, looking up with some surprise at the accusation thus unexpectedly brought, “know thou that I exercise my Christian freedom in using that which is forbidden to the Jews, being, as they esteem themselves, under the bondage of the old law of Moses. We, Saracen, be it known to thee, have a better warrant for what we do—Ave Maria!—be we thankful.” And, as if in defiance of his companion's scruples, he concluded a short Latin grace with a long draught from the leathern bottle.

“That, too, you call a part of your liberty,” said the Saracen; “and as you feed like the brutes, so you degrade yourself to the bestial condition by drinking a poisonous liquor which even they refuse!”

“Know, foolish Saracen,” replied the Christian, without hesitation, “that thou blasphemest the gifts of God, even with the blasphemy of thy father Ishmael. The juice of the grape is given to him that will use it wisely, as that which cheers the heart of man after toil, refreshes him in sickness, and comforts him in sorrow. He who so enjoyeth it may thank God for his winecup as for his daily bread; and he who abuseth the gift of Heaven is not a greater fool in his intoxication than thou in thine abstinence.”

The keen eye of the Saracen kindled at this sarcasm, and his hand sought the hilt of his poniard. It was but a momentary thought, however, and died away in the recollection of the powerful champion with whom he had to deal, and the desperate grapple, the impression of which still throbbed in his limbs and veins; and he contented himself with pursuing the contest in colloquy, as more convenient for the time.

“Thy words” he said, “O Nazarene, might create anger, did not thy ignorance raise compassion. Seest thou not, O thou more blind than any who asks alms at the door of the Mosque, that the liberty thou dost boast of is restrained even in that which is dearest to man's happiness and to his household; and that thy law, if thou dost practise it, binds thee in marriage to one single mate, be she sick or healthy, be she fruitful or barren, bring she comfort and joy, or clamour and strife, to thy table and to thy bed? This, Nazarene, I do indeed call slavery; whereas, to the faithful, hath the Prophet assigned upon earth the patriarchal privileges of Abraham our father, and of Solomon, the wisest of mankind, having given us here a succession of beauty at our pleasure, and beyond the grave the black-eyed houris of Paradise.”

“Now, by His name that I most reverence in heaven,” said the Christian, “and by hers whom I most worship on earth, thou art but a blinded and a bewildered infidel!—That diamond signet which thou

wearest on thy finger, thou holdest it, doubtless, as of inestimable value?"

"Balsora and Bagdad cannot show the like," replied the Saracen; "but what avails it to our purpose?"

"Much," replied the Frank, "as thou shalt thyself confess. Take my war-axe and dash the stone into twenty shivers: would each fragment be as valuable as the original gem, or would they, all collected, bear the tenth part of its estimation?"

"That is a child's question," answered the Saracen; "the fragments of such a stone would not equal the entire jewel in the degree of hundreds to one."

"Saracen," replied the Christian warrior, "the love which a true knight binds on one only, fair and faithful, is the gem entire; the affection thou flingest among thy enslaved wives and half-wedded slaves is worthless, comparatively, as the sparkling shivers of the broken diamond."

"Now, by the Holy Caaba," said the Emir, "thou art a madman who hugs his chain of iron as if it were of gold! Look more closely. This ring of mine would lose half its beauty were not the signet encircled and enchased with these lesser brilliants, which grace it and set it off. The central diamond is man, firm and entire, his value depending on himself alone; and this circle of lesser jewels are women, borrowing his lustre, which he deals out to them as best suits his pleasure or his convenience. Take the central stone from the signet, and the diamond itself remains as valuable as ever, while the lesser gems are comparatively of little value. And this is the true reading of thy parable; for what sayeth the poet Mansour: 'It is the favour of man which giveth beauty and comeliness to woman, as the stream glitters no longer when the sun ceaseth to shine.'"

"Saracen," replied the Crusader, "thou speakest like one who never saw a woman worthy the affection of a soldier. Believe me, couldst thou look upon those of Europe, to whom, after Heaven, we of the order of knighthood vow fealty and devotion, thou wouldst loathe for ever the poor sensual slaves who form thy haram. The beauty of our fair ones gives point to our spears and edge to our swords; their words are our law; and as soon will a lamp shed lustre when unkindled, as a knight distinguish himself by feats of arms, having no mistress of his affection."

"I have heard of this frenzy among the warriors of the West," said the Emir, "and have ever accounted it one of the accompanying symptoms of that insanity which brings you hither to obtain possession of an empty sepulchre. But yet, methinks, so highly have the Franks whom I have met with extolled the beauty of their women, I could be well contented to behold with mine own eyes those charms which can transform such brave warriors into the tools of their pleasure."

"Brave Saracen," said the Knight, "if I were not on a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre, it should be my pride to conduct you, on assurance of