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The Religious military orders, a lecture by the Most Rev. John B. Purcell, D.D.

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THE

RELIGIOUS

MILITARY ORDERS,

A LECTURE,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE YOUNG MEN'S CATHOLIC LITERARY INSTITUTE,

On the 8th December, 1856,

BY THE MOST REVEREND JOHN B. PURCELL, D. D.,

ARCHBISHOP OF CINCINATI.

CINCINNATI:
JOHN P. WALSH, 170 SYCAMORE STREET.

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YOUNG MEN'S CATHOLIC LITERARY INSTITUTE ROOMS,
CINCINNATI, DECEMBER 12, 1856.

To the Most Rev. J. B. Purcell, D. D., Archbishop of Cincinnati.

MOST REVEREND AND ESTEEMED SIR:

At a regular meeting of the Institute held last Tuesday evening, Dr. J. J. Quinn, President, in the chair, the undersigned were appointed to tender you the thanks of the Society for the eloquent Lecture which you delivered before them on the 8th instant.

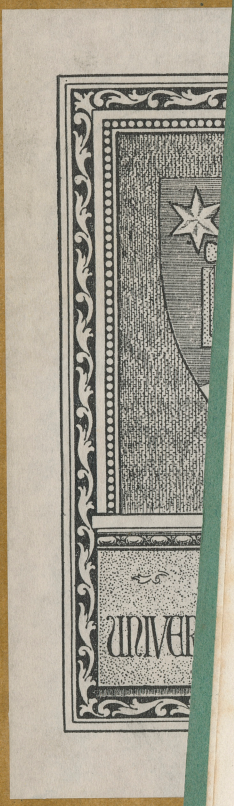
Believing that the Lecture will prove eminently useful and instructive to the public, as well as to the Society for which it was prepared, the members of the Institute desire to preserve it in a permanent form, and earnestly request a copy of it for publication.

In behalf of the Society,

Most sincerely, your obedient servants,

PATRICK GIBBONS,
MICHAEL REGAN,
R. C. FARTHING,
JOHN McAULIFFE,
M. H. O'SULLIVAN.

Committee of Correspondence.



CINCINNATI, 14th December, 1856.

GENTLEMEN:

I have received your kind letter requesting a copy of the Address delivered by me before your Society, on Monday evening.

Hoping that its perusal may show the advantage of directing the attention of Catholics to the glory reflected on the Church by the Religious Military Orders during the seven hundred years of their eventful existence; that a better knowledge of the lives and deaths of the members of those noble Orders may illustrate the words of the Apostle: "that piety is profitable to all things;" and that all may be convinced that fidelity to God, in any state of life, is the best security for personal honor and usefulness to Society, I hereby place the Lecture at your disposal.

It gives me great pleasure to believe that the devotedness to the objects of their respective associations evinced by your own and the other English and German Catholic Associations of this city—religious, charitable and literary—needs but the occasion to display the spirit that glowed with so much lustre in the bosoms and the conduct of the Knights.

With best wishes for your happiness and the success of the Institute,

I remain, truly, yours,

✠ J. B., *Archbishop of Cincinnati.*

Messrs. PATRICK GIBBONS,
MICHAEL REGAN,
R. C. FARTHING,
JOHN McAULIFFE,
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LECTURE.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The most brilliant pages of Prescott's History of the Reign of Philip II. are those which that eloquent, but prejudiced, writer devotes to the memorable defence of Malta by the soldiers of the Cross against the fanatical Moslem. I was reading them when requested by the gentlemen of the Catholic Institute to deliver one of the present course of lectures. Having had my Christian blood warmed by the record of the glorious achievements of the Knights, and, perhaps, dazzled by the splendors of a theme which has never failed to interest the student of history, of whatever creed he might have been, I selected for its subject the Religious Military Orders established by the Church to protect Christian civilization from the blighting invasion of Mahomedan barbarism.

By the Religious Military Orders I mean,

1. The Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, or Hospitallers, or of Rhodes, or of Malta, as the same Order has been successively designated. 2. The Templars. 3. The Teutonic Knights; leaving out of this view the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre, of Calatrava, of St. Iago of the Sword, and others, which cannot be regarded as strictly religious orders,

have no such name in story, nor rendered such important services to Christendom as those which I have first named.

The institution of numerous communities which exhibited in their lives the union of charity and enmity, of piety the most tender and hostility the most uncompromising, and which has since found a partial imitation in the Cromwellians, the Mormon Legion, and the Sharpe's Rifle Brigade —which, it may be hoped, shall have no chance of fleshing its sword in a Christian bosom—was unknown in the Christian world until the close of the first Milenium. But to the Catholic Orders belongs the glory of having originated in charity alone, and of having been compelled only by a long series of unparalelled insults and wrongs to array their unfaltering faith and their invincible arms in self-defence against the infidel.

In the seventh century, the Emperors of Constantinople inherited nothing of those famous Cæsars, the once proud masters of the world, but an empty name. Their Eastern empire extended from the Euxine to the Euphrates; but it was overrun by barbarians from the North and the East, whilst those shadows of royalty were either immersed in sensual indulgence, or too much taken up with the discussion of subtle questions of Theology, to suppress domestic treason, or repel invasion from abroad.

To precipitate their ruin, Mohamed appeared. The impostor ascended from the desert. He proclaimed himself the envoy of Heaven, the Caliph, or Vicar, of Allah, greater than Moses, or Christ, whose religion he affected not to condemn, but to perfect, and he aspired to universal dominion. To gain proselytes, he availed himself of the learning of a Persian rabbi and a Nestorian monk in extracting

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from the Old and New Testaments the doctrines and moral precepts which were likely to conciliate the Christians and the Jews. But he took care, at the same time, to infuse largely into the new creed what experience had taught him would flatter the passions and the propensities of the Pagan Arabs. The religious code thus formed he called the Coran, or Scripture by excellence, and his followers Mussulmans, or believers.

Alarmed at the audacity of the adventurer and the progress of his sect, the Governor expelled him from Mecca. He took refuge in Medina, to which place his flight is called the Hegira, from which the Mahommedan Chronology is dated as the greatest epoch of history. Finding argument too slow a propagandist for his policy, he added to the Koran a sword which he pretended to have been brought to him by the Angel Gabriel, with orders to slay all who refused to embrace the new religion: and he took, thenceforward, for his watchword: "Believe or die."

In twenty-three years, according to some writers, others say in ten, he made himself master of all Arabia. His successors with equal rapidity overran Syria, including Palestine, Egypt and Western Africa. Thence they passed into Spain, of which garden of Europe they retained many provinces for eight hundred years—and even ravaged those portions of France that lay beyond the Loire, threatening to establish themselves permanently in the most Christian kingdom until their disastrous defeat by Charles Martel in the plains of Poitiers. In eighty years, as Gibbon informs us, the empire of Mahomet was more extensive than that of Imperial Rome.

But of all the conquests of the infidels the most painful

to Christians was that of the Holy Land and of Jerusalem. From the moment that the Christian religion became the religion of the State, under Constantine, the greatest happiness of the Christian people, next to the reception of the life-giving Sacrament, was to visit the places where the mysteries of our redemption were accomplished. Walking in the very footsteps of the Man-God, and impressed with an holy awe by the near contemplation of the scenes where He wept and prayed, and pardoned the Magdalen, and instructed the ignorant, and consoled the afflicted, and wrought His stupendous miracles, and overthrew the Tempter, and agonized and died for our salvation, they felt in the supernatural emotions of contrition and love which they experienced that their offences were forgiven, and heard the divine words, "Sin no more."

There are minds to which all this may appear superstition. But without entering into a more elaborate defence, it is sufficient for our purpose to remark that the Christians of those days did not think so. And in reply to their modern censors, we may place on their lips "mutatis mutandis," the language employed by Dr. Johnson in speaking of the Sacred Scenes in the Hebrides: "We were treading that illustrious island which was once the luminary of the Caledonian regions, whence savage clans and roving barbarians derived the benefits of knowledge and the blessings of Religion. To abstract the mind from all local emotion would be impossible if it were endeavored, and foolish if it were possible. Whatever withdraws us from the power of our senses, whatever makes the past, the distant, the future predominate over the present, advances us in the dignity of thinking beings. Far from me and from my friends

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be the frigid philosophy that would conduct us indifferent and unmoved over any ground which had been dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue. That man is little to be envied whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plain of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Jona."

The access to the Holy Land was comparatively easy, while all the countries traversed by the pilgrims were under one sceptre and governed by the same laws. But the revolution which had taken place in Arabia, Syria and Egypt rendered the pilgrimage exceedingly perillous. No Christian sympathies cheered the pious palmer on his weary way. No chapel by the roadside invited him in the sultry noon to shelter and repose. The Holy Name of Jesus, which, in his native land, was music to his ear, and honey in his mouth, and in his heart melody, was here uttered only to be blasphemed. And when he reached Jerusalem, Jerusalem "the city of perfect beauty, the joy of all the earth," he found that strangers possessed its gates. They were barred against him, as the inns of Bethlehem had been to Christ, and gold alone could purchase for him the privilege of weeping and of prayer at the tomb of the Saviour. But love still triumphed over all these obstacles. "Many waters" of intensest suffering, both mental and physical, "could not extinguish charity." Christians still flocked to the scenes of redemption, preferring that their right hand should wither ere they forgot that sacred mountain of Calvary where the earth that contained the ashes of the parents of the human race had been moistened by the blood which boundless mercy shed for their and our forgiveness!

Towards the middle of the eighth century, God permitted,

as if to reward them for this heroic constancy in suffering for His love, that the Calif of Egypt, Aaron Reschid, through respect, or fear, for Charlemagne, should allow a Hospital to be erected for their accommodation in the Holy City. But after the death of the great emperor, the hospital was destroyed, and the Christians were subjected to fresh indignities, the Mussulmans calling them dogs and treating them as such—so as to regard the house defiled that harbored a Christian; while the Greek schismatics pursued them with feelings of little less malignity.

In the middle of the eleventh century the merchants of Amalphi, in the kingdom of Naples, who traded with Egypt in rich merchandize and works of art, and who had often experienced in their visits to the Holy Land the cruelty of Greeks and Saracens, purchased, by costly presents to the Caliph and his courtiers, permission for the Latin Christians to have two hospitals in Jerusalem, one for men and the other for women. The chapels attached to these hospitals were dedicated, respectively, to St. John the Almoner and St. Magdalen. They were served by self-appointed seculars whose charity induced them to forego the pleasure of homes and friends to devote themselves to the care of the sick, the poor, and the stranger in the Holy City. This was the cradle of the Knights Hospitallers.

Four hundred years after the conquest of Syria by the Saracens, the Turks, or Turkomans, from Asiatic Sarmatia, or that portion of it that lies between Mount Caucasus, the river Tanais, the Palus Mœotis and the Caspian, issued from their deserts and established in an equally brief period an empire as extensive as that of Mohamed and his first generals, on its ruins, but adopting its faith and ferocious

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spirit, and after cutting to pieces the Sultan's garrison, in 1065, became masters of Jerusalem. This event took place seventeen years after the erection of the two hospitals, which were again pillaged, their inmates turned into the streets to die, and the Christians generally subjected to worse than former insults and oppression. Avarice alone, or the desire to continue in the receipt of the excessive tribute exacted from the pilgrims, preserved the holy Sepulchre. But notwithstanding all their sacrifices, the Christians were unable to satisfy the rapacity of their new oppressors. They died in great numbers in sight of the Holy City, deprived in death of the only consolation they had sought when living—of venerating the Saviour's tomb. Those who survived, on their return to Europe filled its cottages and palaces, its thoroughfares and byways, its crowded marts and remote hamlets with the story of their wrongs. They complained of the degeneracy of Christian Europe, whose turbulent barons so grudgingly obeyed the voice of the Church suspending their sanguinary feuds by the Truce of God, while the sands of Syria were soaked with Christian blood, and the scoffs of the deicidal Jew against the Savior of the world were prolonged against his defenceless followers by the Turk. But to Pope Urban was it given to thrill the soul of Europe with the vivid portraiture of Christian woes and Turkish cruelty. "Jerusalem," said the Pontiff, "this ancient love of Israel, this nurse of prophets, this city of the King who wore the crown of thorns, the cradle of our salvation, the fountain of the faith, Jerusalem placed in the centre of the earth to unite in its bosom the wandering nations, Jerusalem which ought to attract the faithful as the magnet does iron, as the sea does

rivers, Jerusalem is a prey to the cruel avidity of an impious and sacriligious nation. The worshipers of Christ are repelled from its borders. It is only by dint of entreaties and gold, it is only by the endurance of a thousand injuries that they can approach the tomb that redeemed them. O sorrow which tears cannot relieve! O sad predictions of Isaiah! The plains which ought to resound night and day with hymns and thanksgivings hear only imprecations and blasphemy. Golgotha, which ought to be an altar for the universe, is polluted by the sect of an impostor."

The appeals of Peter the Hermit were equally fervid. To all who heard them, or of them, it was "the will of God" that the blessed memorials of the Lord's dispensation should be rescued from the profanation of the infidel. All orders of the population especially of Southern Europe, took the Cross. The road to Asia was the road to Heaven. . . . Nothing could resist the valor of the armies of Christendom. The result of every hard-fought field, of every obstinate defence, of every brief, or protracted siege, was the supplanting of the Crescent by the victorious banner of the Cross. The gates of Nice, Antioch, Tarsus, Edessa, were opened to the Crusaders. In vain did the perfidious Greek, Alexis Emperor of Constantinople, who had invited them as his deliverers, unite his army with those of the Turk for their destruction. In vain did the no less faithless Calif of Egypt break the solemn treaty which he had hasted to make with them on their arrival in the East—availing himself of their exhaustion and of that of his and their enemies, the Turcomans, to drive the latter from Jerusalem, thirty-eight years after they had taken

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it by the massacre of his troops. The heroes of the true faith still continued on their victorious march to the capitol of Judea.

The army of the Crusaders, which is said to have numbered 700,000 men when it left Europe—many of so vast a multitude being, doubtless, non-combatants, and rather an embarrassment than an advantage to the regular troops—was now reduced by war, disease and the necessity of garrisoning the conquered cities on the road, to 20,000 infantry and 1,500 horse. The force in the city consisted of 40,000 of the Calif's chosen troops, and 20,000 of the inhabitants whom Aladin, the Calif's general, had armed for the defence. All the suspected Christians were thrown into prison, including Gerard, Administrator of the Hospital of St. John, and Agnes, Directress of the Hospital for women.

Nothing that ingenuity could invent, or the art of war suggest, or malice aided by all but unlimited resources execute, was left undone to render the success of the besiegers hopeless. The wells and cisterns were filled up, the suburbs laid waste, so that not a hut or tree remained to shelter the Christians from the burning sun, or the arrows and murderous projectiles that were shot from the walls. But Christian valor proved superior to every obstacle. The siege was opened on the 7th June, 1099. On the 15th July the city was taken by storm, and soldiers and citizens, without distinction of sex or age, were made to pay, at the edge of the sword, the long arrears demanded by the conquerors for ages of cruelty to the friendless pilgrims.

The shedding of blood was followed—such is the contrast

presented in the annals of the holy wars—by the shedding of tears; and the noise and the tumult of battle were succeeded by the songs of joy, and the hymns of thanksgiving and piety. Godfrey of Bouillon was conducted to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, to be invested with the insignia of royalty as Sovereign of Jerusalem. But in the ceremonial of inauguration, the brave, but humble, prince protested that no one should see on his head a crown of gold and jewels, where the Savior had worn one of thorns. The title of King he also refused, assuming instead only that of Defender of the Holy Sepulchre. He was soon reminded that his office was no sinecure.

The Calif of Egypt, ignorant of the fall of Jerusalem, was rapidly advancing, at the head of a powerful army, to raise the siege. Godfrey took the field—met him on the edge of the desert that separates Palestine from Egypt, and defeated him with great slaughter. On his return to the city, after devout thanks to God, he visited the wounded soldiers in the Hospital of St. John, where he was received with due honor by Gerard. The invalids crowded around him, vieing with one another in their praises of the good Samaritans who charitably alleviated their sufferings and regaled them with the best wheat flour bread, while they were themselves contented with the hardest beds and the coarsest fare. Many of the noblest of the Crusaders joined the Brotherhood—and Godfrey, who is said to have envied the happiness he could not share, presented to them, for the support of the Hospital, a large portion of his estates in Brabant. His example was followed by many other chieftains, and the Hospital was promptly endowed with rich domains in Europe and Palestine. Latin pilgrims, sick or

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well, and Greeks and infidels, were made to partake of its charities.

Anxious to perpetuate and enlarge the sphere of its usefulness, Gerard proposed to his companions, and Agnes to her Nightingales, to form religious communities devoted to the care of the sick, the poor and strangers, and bind themselves always to serve them for "the two loves that are one." This suggestion was also taken for the "Will of God;" and the Order was established. Their costume was a sable robe, with an eight-pointed white cross on the left breast. They made the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience in the hands of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Paschal II. approved the Order, exempted its estates from tithes, confirmed the donations made to them in behalf of the Hospital, and ordained that, after the death of Gerard, they alone should have the right of choosing his successor, forbidding any power, lay or clerical, to abridge them of their rights, or in aught molest them in the administration of their revenues, or the government of the Order.

Having thus accomplished the great object of the Crusade, the various chiefs, with the remnant of their followers, returned to Europe, leaving only 2,000 infantry and 300 horse and the brave Tancred with Godfrey—his brothers Baldwin and Boemond retiring with their men into their conquests of Edessa and Antioch.

The homeward-bound Crusaders published everywhere on the road the wonders which it had pleased God to achieve by their arms, the emotions they had experienced, and the blessings they had received on the soil consecrated by heavenly mercies. A new impulse was thus given to the pil-

grimages to the Holy Land—and every returning palmer testifying to the charity of the Hospitallers; princes and people united in gratitude to the Order. Succursals, or branches thereof, were established and endowed in every province of Western Europe, and along the route to Palestine, where the pilgrims were hospitably entertained, and infidels and robbers prevented from molesting them on the "sacred way." In the mean time, a magnificent temple, under the invocation of St. John Baptist, was erected in Jerusalem, by Gerard, near to which stood the Hospital where Knights of noble blood washed the feet of the travel-stained pilgrim, cured his diseases and ministered to all his bodily wants, while faithful chaplains attended to the interests of his soul.

The good government of the city was provided for by Godfrey, who drew up in a Congress, which he called the Assizes of Jerusalem, a code of laws, or "Letters of the Holy Sepulchre," a style or name by which they are better known in history. And by the conquest of Tiberias and other towns situated, on the Lake of Galilæ, he repelled from its confines the external enemies that could disturb its peace. At his death, his brother Baldwin of Edessa succeeded to the kingdom of Jerusalem. He was as brave, but not as wise as Godfrey, and assuming the title of King, and imitating certain propensities of David, he placed on the throne sensuality and pride—vices which, sooner or later, sap the foundations of the strongest, the oldest, and the most legitimate dynasties. However, like Sion's second King, he was successful in the overthrow of enemies and, at his death, left the k ngdom much enlarged to his cousin, Baldwin II. of Edessa.

Gerard was now called to his reward, and Raimond Dupuy

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elected his successor. The new Grand Master conceived the design of adding to the vows of the Hospitallers that of bearing arms for the defence of Christians, against the infidels.

To understand the reason of this essential change in the constitution and spirit of the Hospitallers, it must be borne in mind that notwithstanding the victories and conquests of the Crusaders and the princes of Jerusalem, the kingdom was of small extent. Its principal towns were separated by strongholds of the enemy. The country around the military stations of the Christians was occupied by Mahomedan peasants, who neglected no opportunity of robbing or assassinating a Christian. The Turks and the Saracens, mutual foes but unrelenting enemies to Christians, availed themselves of the winter, when the Christians could not keep the field, to penetrate into their territory with fire and sword, killing the men, carrying women and children into slavery, and subjecting all their captives, male and female, young and old, to the dread alternative of losing life and honor, or of denying Jesus Christ. But, perhaps, a more urgent reason than any that has been named was the necessity of substituting for the uncertain and desultory assistance of the Crusaders, should they even return to the Holy Land, a body of brave and disciplined Knights always on hand, prepared for every emergency, and bound by honor and duty to lay down their very lives, if necessary, in defence of the Christians of Palestine.

The appeal of the Grand Master was irresistible. His bold companions had Christian and soldiers' souls. They took with alacrity the fourth vow to fight against the infidel. Their rich endowments enabled them to keep on foot a small,

but efficient army—and it was by the prudent foresight of the Hospitallers, their heroism and fidelity, that the throne of the Kings of Jerusalem continued so long to defy the enemies of the Christian name.

The Hospitallers were divided into three bodies, or classes. 1st. Those distinguished by birth, or the rank they had held in the army of the Crusaders; 2d. Ecclesiastics who were to superintend the Hospitals and serve as chaplains to the army in peace and war: 3d. Lay-Brothers, or servants. A new classification was afterwards made from the seven different languages spoken by the Knights—i. e., those of Provence, Auvergne, France, Italy, Arragon, a little later including Castile and Portugal, and England, until she apostatized.

The government was aristocratic. The supreme authority was vested in a Council of which the Grand Master was President. The different houses of the Order were administered by preceptors, or overseers, removable at pleasure, and who were held to a strict accountability. The same austerities were practised by all—and the necessity of bearing arms was not suffered to interfere with the strict observances of the convent. Purity of life, and prompt obedience to orders and detachment from the world, were the distinguishing virtues of the soldier monks.

The Templars were founded by Hugh de Payens and eight others, all natives of France, to protect the pilgrims on their way to and from Jerusalem, and to unite with the Hospitallers and aid the King of Jerusalem in repelling the incursions, humbling the pride, and chastising the audacity of the infidels. They were too proud to serve in hospitals. Their costume was a white mantle, with a red cross on the left breast. Their name was de-

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rived from their residence near the Temple. They were approved by Honorius II. Their rule was given them by St. Bernard by order of the Council of Troyes. Their exemption from what was considered the degrading, or ignoble, obligation of waiting on the sick, drew to the new Order a vast multitude of the richest lords and princes of Europe, so that the Templars soon outshone the Hospitallers in the splendor of wealth—but never in that of virtue. Nevertheless, they continued for centuries to render essential services to Christendom in checking the aggressions of Mahomedanism. The Teutonic Knights commenced their existence on the plain before Ptolemais, or St. Jean d'Acre. Many of these brave Germans, who had followed their gallant Emperor, Frederic 1st, and his son, the Duke of Swabia, to the holy wars, when wounded in the frequent sorties of the garrison, lay helpless on the battle-field, unable to communicate their wants and sufferings in a language unknown to their brethren in arms. A few Germans, who had come by sea from Bremen and Lubeck, commiserating the hard fate of their countrymen, took the sails of their ships and made tents into which they collected the wounded and served them with their own hands. Forty of them chiefs of the same nation united with them in the work of charity and from this noble association sprang a new religious and military Order like to those of the Templars and Hospitallers. They were approved by Celestine III. at the prayer of Henry VI. of Germany, in 1192, receiving the name of the Teutonic Knights of the House of St. Mary of Jerusalem. They got this name from the fact of a German's having built in Jerusalem a hospital and

oratory under the invocation of the Blessed Virgin, for the sick pilgrims from his fatherland. Their uniform was a white mantle, with a black cross; they were bound by the three vows like the Hospitallers and Templars. Before being admitted to the Order, they were required to make oath that they were Germans, of noble birth, and that they engaged for life in the care of the poor and sick and the defence of the Holy Places. These were the three Orders on which Christendom relied more than on the irregular efforts of the Crusaders for the protection of the Holy Land. They formed the "Three-fold cord which is not easily broken," as the Cardinal Vitry, quoting those words of the Holy Ghost in the Bible, observes of them. They fought side by side in many of the hardest contested fields in the annals of human warfare, for three or four centuries in the East and in Hungary; until the Templars became odious by their real or imputed vices, and were finally suppressed. And Albert of Brandenburgh, the Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights, when these had driven the barbarians from Prussia, broke his solemn vows, followed the example and the errors of Lutner, and took forcible possession of the treasury and estates of the Order, thus founding in treachery and sacrilege the present kingdom of Prussia.

Forty-eight years after the conquest of Jerusalem by the first Crusaders—an interval illustrated by innumerable victories and reverses of the Knights—I say illustrated by reverses—for in many instances, they nobly preferred, when taken prisoners, to die rather than deny Jesus Christ--the city was again taken by the Turks under Saladin. Before entering it he ordered the expul-

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sion of all the Latin Christians, with the exception of the Hospitallers, whom for their indiscriminate charity to Mahomedans and Christiaus he suffered to remain for a year. The Patriarchal Church he next despoiled of its suit of bells, which he broke and melted. The cross which surmounted it—a special object of aversion to the enemies of Christ—he had torn down and dragged for two days in the mire. The church was then washed inside and out with rose water, and when thus purified, he proclaimed from its sanctuary the religion of the Impostor. At the expiration of the year, the Hospitallers retired to Margate, a fortified castle on the borders of Judea. After the conquest of Acre in the second Crusade, before which place they performed prodigies of valor, they chose it for their principal residence. It was here that Andrew, King of Hungary, admiring their fidelity to their vows, their fervor in their devotions, their care of the sick, and their bravery in war, at his earnest request, was admitted into the Order. The Teutonic Knights; having, with only a few exceptions, left the Holy Land to save the Christians of Poland from their idolatrous neighbors, the Hospitallers and Templars were the chief reliance of Christendom for the defence or recovery of the Holy Land; while a requisition was made on the former, to which they generously responded with the aid of their recruits from the ranks of the Crusaders, to assist the Kings of Spain in their death struggles with the Moors.

Jerusalem, as the fruit of the second Crusade, was again restored to the Christians by the treaty made with the Sultan of Egypt by Richard Cœur de Lion. But scarcely were its temples restored to the Christian worship, when it was taken by the fierce tribes called the Corasmins, or

Hircanian Persians, who surpassed both Turks and Saracen in their cruelty to the disciples of Christ. In a pitched battle with those ferocious enemies of the human race, the Hospitallers and Templars of the Holy Land were almost annihilated —only twenty-six of the former and thirty-three of the latter escaping from the butchery. The fault of this terrible disaster was thrown upon the Templars who had broken the truce which the Emperor Frederick had made with the Sultan. While the blood of the Hospitallers thus freely flowed in Syria, their brethren in Hungary gained the most decisive victories over the Tartars, who had been ravaging Transylvania, Hungary, and Poland.

To repair their losses in Judea, the Hospitallers called to their aid the novices of the Order and secular troops from various convents in Europe, and sent two of their Knights to Salich, Sultan of Grand Cairo, to ransom their brethren who had been made prisoners in the late battles. This Sultan was the founder of the famous corps of the Mamelukes, or purchased slaves, composed of youths bought from the Tartars who had taken them in war. The mission was a new one, for the Knights who had previously reputed with the dead those of their members who had allowed themselves to be made prisoners. The mission was unsuccessful. The Mameluke Sultans of Egypt, after the return of St. Louis, having resolved to drive the Christians out of Palestine, put to death ninety-six Hospitallers, who with a large garrison were shut up in the fortress of Assur, one of the strongest in Palestine. The same fate befell the Templars and six hundred troops in the fortress of Sephet. All these were martyrs, who suffered death rather than turn Mahomedans. Antioch and Carach, in which

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an immense number of Christians were either killed or carried thence into slavery, successively fell before the Mameluke arms. And St. John d'Acre, after an obstinate struggle, in which 60,000 Christians perished, or were made prisoners, rang in its fall the funeral knell of the Christian power in the Holy Land. The handful of Hospitallers and Templars who escaped from the ruins, took refuge in Limisso, in the island of Cyprus—their eyes still turned towards Jerusalem.

Soon as the Hospitallers had filled up their exhausted ranks with reinforcements from Europe and felt themselves again able to act on the offensive, they resolved to make themselves masters of Rhodes. The island was so called by the Greeks, who had formerly called it opheuse, from ophis, a serpent, abridging the Phœnician name of Gesirath Roth, or Rod, which means Isle of Serpents—as that is called which is now contended for by Russian, Gaul, and Britain, at the mouth of the Danube. Another etymology derives it from the Greek name for a rose, for the rose grows in profusion and beauty in that island. The conquest of Rhodes cost them four years of hard fighting with Greeks and Saracens. As a monument of a conquest as glorious to the Order as it was useful to Christians and formidable to Turks, the Hospitallers were subsequently called the Knights of Rhodes. The numerous islets around Rhodes were also conquered by the Knights. Their fleets and ships issuing from those harbors were long the terror of the infidel corsairs of the Barbary coasts, and the convoy of the rich Christian commerce of the East and the West. The better to guard against danger, they planned and executed a successful descent on Smyrna, which was little

better than a nest of ferocious and daring pirates. The Grand Master followed up this success by the equipment of a naval armament against the Turkish fleet in the harbor of Embro, twelve miles from the entrance of the Dardanelles. On this, as on every similar occasion, the Knights never stopt to count the number of the enemies' ships, or estimate that of his crews. They never liked long range, but hand to hand encounters, like that of Decatur on the enemy's deck, with the Turk that had just killed his brother, when he burned the Philadelphia in the harbor of Algiers. The boarding pike and cutlass of a Christian were more than a match for Turkish scimetar or dagger.

Five thousand slaves and one hundred and eighteen of the Turkish vessels were the trophies of these victories. To estimate aright the merits of the Hospitallers, it must not be overlooked that many of those slaves were Christians reduced to that sad condition by the Turks, and who were now restored to home and friends, to freedom and to Christ, by their deliverers.

Constant, or Livrin, king of Lesser Armenia, hearing of their glorious exploits, invoked their aid against the Christian foe who threatened to deprive him of his dominions. Although he was a schismatic, the Grand Master acceded to his request and sent a fleet and troops to his aid. They destroyed an immense multitude of the enemy, and left the king in peaceful possession of his throne.

But they constantly refused to take part in the wars of Christian princes, or people, ever faithful to their obligation to draw the sword only against the enemies of the

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Cross of Christ. And truth to say, the infidels gave them enough to do. The corsairs of Egypt were as fierce and rapacious as any of Barbary. Barengarius, Grand Master in 1365, and the Christian king of Cyprus, not content with giving them battle on the high seas, resolved to chastise them in their own. With a fleet of one hundred vessels, large and small, well filled with bravest knights and chosen troops, chiefly from the French coasts. they sailed on a secret expedition, of which Pope Urban V. alone had knowledge. In less than five days their scaling ladders were lodged against the walls of Alexandria, the largest and richest city of Egypt. The Alexandrians were taken by surprise; but nothing daunted, soldiers and citizens innumerable man the walls and with pike and halberd and rocks and sinewy arms hurl besiegers and ladders into the ditch. New besiegers take the places of the dead and wounded, and heedless of the fate of their comrades, strive to gain the top of the walls. The besieged greet them with the trusty falchion and unerring arrow, and the boiling oil. The Greek fire consumes the warlike machines and engines, and men are forced to fly on fire, to cast themselves into the water. Never were assault and defence more furious, or more murderous. But, spite of their losses, the Knights, animated by their own courage and sustained by the intrepid port of their Grand Master, return with new ardor to the conflict, make a stairs of the dead bodies of their companions, reach the parapet, leap into the city, cut down soldier and citizen, young and old, who dare oppose them, plunder the rich houses, make a vast number of prisoners of all who escaped the first fury of the soldiers,

set fire to all the enemies' vessels in port, and return with their prisoners and an incalculable treasure, the King to Cyprus, and the Knights to Rhodes. The Grand Master having rescued many Christians from the dungeons of the infidels, and among them a nephew of the Pope, was preparing to conduct him to Urban, when he was informed that the Pontiff had died with the memorable act of faith on his lips: "I believe firmly all the Catholic Church believes and teaches, revoking any thing I might have ever said or written contrary to her teaching, from which I have never wilfully deviated."

The annihilation of the Crusaders and the defeat of the Knights by Bajazet at Nicopolis, where "every thing but honor" was lost by the latter, led to their alliance with Tamerlane, one of the most powerful of the successors of Gengiskhan. The famous saying of Tamerlane, "that a king was never secure unless his throne was set in a lake of blood," and his tower of human skulls, will foreshadow the consequences of his friendship to Christians. But Constantinople was saved for the present by the defeat of the Turks at Sebaste, and their still more fatal losses in the plain at the foot of Mount Stella, where Pompey had encountered Mithridates. The Tartar turned his victorious arms against the Knights, the only enemies he considered worthy of his prowess, and after successively planting his terrible signals, of white, red, and black flags, razed Smyrna to the ground, putting the inhabitants to the sword.

Notwithstanding the losses of the Hospitallers in a hundred battles marked by the ever varying issues of all human things, the Order never reckoned braver knights,

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or in greater number, than at this time. The Grand Master was regarded as the greatest Christian prince in the East, the sea was covered with his fleets, the merchants of Rhodes enriched themselves by commerce, and no corsair dared stop them, with impunity, on their way. But they had soon to test their strength against all the power of Egypt, headed by the Mameluke parvenu, Elnazer-el-Daher. This ambitious prince, knowing that the stability of his throne depended on his keeping his seditious and inconstant troops constantly occupied in war, attacked the island of Cyprus, whose king was an ally of the knights. A decisive battle was fought and lost by the Christians. Many of the knights were killed and the king taken prisoner. After several engagements on land and sea, the Sultan, in 1440, appeared before Rhodes with an army of 18,000 Saracens and a large body of horse and Mamelukes. The siege lasted forty days. The besiegers were beaten off with immense loss. The glory of the knights resounded through Europe, and a large number of nobles came to join the Order.

In the midst of all these wars and armaments, the rules of the order were strictly observed. The knights never dispensed themselves from their austere fasts in Lent and Advent. They abstained from fleshmeat on all the Wednesdays of the year and kept profound silence in the refectory, the chapel and elsewhere during the hours devoted to recollection and prayer.

Their next opponent was the Ottoman Amurat. He had conquered John Castriot, the Christian King of Albania, granting him an ignominious peace, and taking his three sons hostages for its observance. The two oldest he deprived of

sight and treated with still more inhuman cruelty. The youngest he made a Mahomedan, and admiring his talents, his proud bearing, and his bravery, named him Scanderberg, or the Lord Alexander, from his real or fancied resemblance to the King of Macedon. Scanderberg forgot not his origin. He bided his time—it came—recovered possession of his father's kingdom, defeated four armies of Amurat under as many generals, and finally the Ottoman himself, who died broken hearted, bequeathing to his son and successor the empire—and revenge! This son was Mahomet the Second, styled the Great, one of the greatest generals in the world. He signalized his accession to the throne by laying siege to Constantinople with an army of 300,000 men, besides a fleet of 250 sail. The Greek emperor resolved not to survive the loss of his capital. He perished with 40,000 of his people; 60,000 were sold as slaves, and nothing escaped the fury and cupidity of the soldiers, but the most beautiful youths of the two sexes, reserved as slaves for the Seraglio.

An exquisitely beautiful Greek girl, of noble birth, named Irene, only seventeen, fell into the hands of a Pacha. He thought her a prize worthy of the Sultan, to whom he accordingly presented her. The East had never seen any thing so perfect in feature, or in form. The fierce heart of Mahomet was subdued. War was no longer his ruling passion. He shut himself up for many days at a time from his ministers and his army, with his beautiful captive, or conqueror. The soldiers murmured at the change. The officers caught the contagion and complained that the Sultan forgot, in his dalliance, his duty to pay them for their devotion with the spoils of conquest. Yet no one dared interrupt him in his pleasures. At length a faithful Pacha,

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named Mustapha, ventured to speak to him of the discontent of the troops, which was going to break out into open rebellion. The Sultan heard him in sullen silence, as if reflecting on what he should do, and starting from his revery, curtly told him to command the army to be marshalled the following morning for a review. He then returned to the apartment of Irene, and remained with her until the next day. Never did the young princess appear so beautiful, never did the young Sultan lavish on her greater marks of affection. He commanded all his female slaves to exert their utmost art in adorning her person and rendering her charms, if possible, still more imperious. He then conducted her into the presence of his army—and drawing the veil from her matchless countenance, demanded if they had ever seen anything so beautiful. They answered with a cry of admiration—and Mohamed suddenly folding one of his hands in the flowing locks of the young Greek, with the scimetar in the other, cut off her head at one blow, exclaiming: "This steel at my bidding can cut the chains of love." His next victim was the faithful Mustapha—who was rewarded for his fidelity with the bowstring. And of that immense army, there were few whose heads did not roll in the dust in the long wars that followed, not so much to satisfy his ambition, as in revenge for the loss of the young Greek! Such was the enemy the Hospitallers had now to encounter.

The Janizaries were the arm of Mahomet. They were at the same time, from the very fact of their institution and discipline, the glory of the Christian Knights—for the Ottoman Sultans despaired of conquering Christendom unless they had control of a body of troops resembling as nearly

as possible the Religious Military Orders of the Catholic Church. By a master stroke of policy, inspired from hell, and with intensified hatred, worthy of Turks, they resolved that they should be composed of the sons of Christians. For this purpose, they sent their pressmen, or Protogeros, through the empire, giving orders that all the young Christians over seven years of age, distinguished for beauty and strength, activity and talent, should be brought to Constantinople, where they were trained in the Mahomedan religion, lodged in cloister-like barracks, and accustomed to silence, obedience, abstinence from food, and celibacy, in a word, became soldier-monks of the Koran-rite. Their consecration was pronounced by a dervish, with the prayer: "May their countenances be ever bright, their hands victorious, their swords keen, their spears on the heads of their enemies, and wherever they go, may they return with a white face"—white and black, as in Pagan Rome, having been among the Turks, terms of praise and reproach. The boast of those troops was true—they never fled in battle, from their establishment in 1389 to their suppression in 1826, when by deposing, insulting, murdering Sultans, they expiated the crime that perverted them from Christ.

Mahomet's arms were turned for a season from Rhodes. The Christian league formed by Pope Calixtus III. gave him employment at Belgrade, and an enemy worthy of his fame in Huniades. The Christian hero destroyed his fleet, mustered in strength on the Danube, killed 20,000 of his troops, and had well nigh made him pay for his ambition with his life. But the Janizaries bore him dangerously wounded and fainting, and asking, it is said, for poison, from the field to the camp.

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The Knights meantime were not idle. They blockaded his ports, captured his merchantmen, and ravaged his coasts.

As soon as Mahomet recovered, he directed one of the most powerful fleets over which ever waved the Crescent, to ravage the groups of islands around Rhodes, and to sweep from that island itself, if possible, the detested Knights. To the prisoners taken on this occasion he proposed the cruel alternative of "believe or die." Many of the unfortunate peasants were weak enough to deny their faith, and these were compelled to serve as guides to the corsairs on their return to the islands. Mahomet was however defeated in every attempt to drive the Knights from Rhodes. After many fruitless efforts and immense losses to Turks and Christians, his career was terminated by a sudden death on the 3d May, 1481. He had conquered kingdoms and taken three hundred cities, but his epitaph, as greater than all, recounted only that he had "designed to take Rhodes and subdue proud Italy."

The fate of Rhodes was to be decided under one of his successors. Solyman despatched against it 400 sail and an army of 140,000 soldiers, with 60,000 Hungarian and Bulgarian slaves to work in the trenches. They were digging their own and their masters' graves from spring to autumn, so fast they fell under the terrible precision of the Rhodian fire. Solyman had himself to come with large reinforcements to save his fleet and army from disaster and dishonor. Five thousand regular troops, of whom six hundred were Knights, and the sailor and citizen soldiers of the port and place, were all that the Grand Master had at his disposal to meet this formidable array from the

commencement to the close of the siege. But this intrepid band, when tower and bastion fell, rushed headlong on the besiegers, and following the reeking cutlass of I'sle Adam, the Grand Master, who prepared for every such conflict by a short prayer at the altar of Our Lady of Victory, drove the invaders to the trenches, while that brave man cut the flag-staff of the Turkish banner and trampled it in the dust. In every fresh assault of the English, German, Spanish, or French defences, thousands of the Ottomans, with their highest and bravest chiefs, paid the tribute of their death, to Christian valor. Nor did the Knights' blood flow scantily. How could they quail when Christ's red cross waved over them? when aged men and youthful maidens and mothers with their young children handed to them the hoops of fire—the flaming girdles—to fling upon the foe, while they poured down on them buckets of the boiling pitch—a shirt of Nessus to the Paynim. Solyman having condemned his bravest general to death and his admiral to receive one hundred lashes on the poop of his own galley for their ill-success—the sentence was not executed—was preparing to abandon the siege, when an Albanian deserter informed him of the condition of the defences and the weakness of the garrison. Yes, but their hearts were strong—and five and fifteen thousand turbaned heads, in two successive conflicts, told the tale. The very church of Our Lady of Victory, when other defences failed, was torn down, altar and all, to build another fortress. Provisions and ammunition were exhausted at last. The citizens with tears besought the Grand Master to save their wives and daughters from Turkish brutality. The depth of winter—it was January, 1523—forbade the hope of relief

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from the Christian powers of Europe, engaged in inglorious war among themselves, and the Christian flag, that had floated in glory for two hundred and twenty years on the ramparts of Rhodes, was now destined to protect a few shiploads of hapless but still honorable exiles and a few surviving Knights, in search of other homes.

It is unnecessary to detain the audience by the history of the Knights at Candia, Viterbo, Cumæ, Messina, or to relate the adverse circumstances, within and without the Order, from the opposition of Christian princes and of Turks, until the shelterless and almost barren island of Malta was ceded to them by Charles V. The suppression of the Order and the confiscation of its revenues at this period by Henry VIII.,* in England, was one of its severest losses. . . . . In the last month of 1530, the Knights took their new name from their occupancy of Malta. It was simultaneous with their attack on the Ottoman port of Molon and the carrying off of treasure and slaves as the first instalment for their losses at Rhodes, and to put themselves in a condition to recover all the debt.

The knights were soldiers, engineers, political economists, legislators, statesmen, factors or purveyors, sailors. They surrounded their island with bastions, towers, forts, redoubts. They dug deep chambers in the solid rock which they filled with grain—they imbedded, or dug in it mortars, called fangaces, or blasts, of a barrel of powder each, on which piles of heavy stone were placed, which, on the appli-

* The Knights Ingley, Forest, Fortescu, and Marmaduke Bohus, refusing to abjure the faith, were sent by Henry to the scaffold. Thomas Mytton and Edward Waldegrave died in prison; and Richard and James Bell, John Noel, and many others, completely stripped of their possessions, had to fly for their lives. The Order was suppressed, in England, in 1834.

cation of the match, hurled the destructive shower on an enemy's vessels. They enriched the inhabitants by fostering commerce, trade, arts, sciences, and enterprise. If they were in need of money, they had but to issue bits of brass, or copper, with the inscription "non œs, sed fides," on them, and they passed among a people, who knew that their plighted pledge was never repudiated, for gold and silver. Nothing can be more honorable to the able and paternal administration of the knights than the contrast which an American tourist, Bigelow, drew in 1827–8, between the happiness of the islanders under the knights, and their degradation and impoverishment since the island became the prey of the British.

"If there be meaning in the proverb, that a man is a benefactor to his species who makes two blades of grass grow where but one was produced before, then what praise is due to the creative industry of those who have clothed the rock of Malta with unequalled fertility and abundence. Every thing in its visible wonders has been wrought out since the island became the property of the knights. For although its shores had been trod successively by Tyrians, Carthaginians, Romans, and Saracens, though they had planted their colonies and scattered some seeds of art and civilization, the traces of their occupancy had nearly all passed away. A new era commenced when the ensign of St. John was lifted over Malta. The Rock became 'instinct with life.' A handful of people that had gained a scanty and precarious existence swelled and augmented to tens of thousands, in the enjoyment of exuberant plenty. . . . . The productions in wheat, barley, cotton, esculent roots, the various fruits of fields, gardens, and orchards, be-

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came immense. The annual value of the cotton crop alone was 600,000 Spanish dollars. A magnificent city, La Valetta, was erected on a rocky promontory. Sumptuous edifices arose both as places of worship and as hospitals for the reception of the poor and sick of every country. Neat villages adorned the island; roads were opened in every direction; while great numbers of country houeses, from the superb villa down to the peasant's rude but snug abode, erected in different parts, announced the flourishing state of Malta. What was it that produced this wondrous change in an island which but a short time before could scarcely have been selected by the most inhuman government for a penal colony, and in the condition of a people deprived of 'earth and water' and exposed to constant alarms from the descent of the merciless corsairs? It was the energy of Christian knights, who shed no 'unmanly tears' over their altered fortunes, but trusting in God, girded themselves to the work which their hands found to do, and resolved 'that their later home should surpass the fame, if not the beauty, of their former—Rhodes—which had been the joy and boast of their Order through two centuries of glory.'"

As the testimony of a man who loses no opportunity of depreciating the tenets of Catholicism, it will scarcely require an apology to add to this extract his testimony to the Knights, who, be it remembered, owed all that they were to their religion. "I confess," he says, "it is at times with a kindling of feeling approaching to enthusiasm, that I find my mind revolving on the deeds of valor performed by these heroic spirits; when I contemplate their unshrinking intrepidity, their splendid chivalry and sublime sel devotion. Proud they were, but it was a pride which

claimed pre-eminence in the post of danger. Theirs was a moral courage which if nourished in part by fanaticism (it was no fanaticism) yet had its root in the faith which is divine. It sustained them in the darkest hours, and stood unshaken in peril and in storm. Their succors were generously lent to their brethren of the Christian nations. Their squadrons were ever ready to be united with others in opposing the common foes of humanity, civilization, and religion. The banner of St. John shone conspicuous in the front of the battle during every war betwixt the Christian and the infidel."

But while Malta was happy under the sway of its Knights, the Ottoman power was preparing a gigantie expedition for their extinction. Lavalette, the Grand Master, heard the first low mutterings of the thunder-storm. "Fortune," says Sutherland, "could not, at this critical period, have devolved the supreme power on a more efficient and magnanimous commander." The noble chief sought not to conceal the extent and magnitude of the danger from his brave companions. "A formidable enemy," he admits, in his address to the Knights, "is coming, like a thunder-cloud, upon us. And if the banner of the Cross must quail to the unbeliever, let us remember that it is a signal of Heaven's demanding from us the lives which we have solemnly devoted to its service. He who dies in this cause dies a happy death, and to render us worthy to merit it, let us renew at the altar those vows which ought to make us not only fearless, but invincible in the fight." Bending in brotherhood before the symbol of the faith, forgiving injuries, embracing one another, fed on the Eucharistic Bread, they vowed to stand between it

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and profanation until their redemption was accomplished, or the last drop of their blood was shed.

The spirit that animated the opposing hosts may be judged of by a single, but an awful, incident. Three hundred Knights and thirteen hundred soldiers having fallen at the "Bourg," the Turkish General, who had lost on that occasion eight thousand of his bravest troops, ordered the bodies of the Knights to be stripped, their hearts torn out, and their breasts gashed in form of the hated Cross. Their headless trunks were then fastened to planks and cast into the sea, to be drifted by the tide into the harbors of the city. "Lavallete," says a quaint old chronicler, "to teach them a lesson of humanity, cut off the heads of his Turkish prisoners and gave them to the Maltese artillerists to be fired for balls into the Turkish camp."

From the 18th of May, 1565, to the 20th of June following, 30,000 Turks and Moors, the flower of their respective and now combined armies, with a fleet of 180 ships, afterwards reinforced by 13 galleys under the famous commander Dragut, with well-appointed crews, kept up an incessant fire, or menaced with hardly less wasting alarms, the little garrison of the town and castles of Malta, consisting, all told, of only 9,000 fighting men. Many of the enemies' guns threw balls of from fifty-six to one hundred and twelve pounds weight against the walls of the castle of St. Elmo. The fortress was almost in ruins and the garrison nearly exhausted by hunger, vigils and unrelenting skirmishes with 6,000 Janizaries, who followed up every breach in the Christian defences by a murderous assault, when the Feast of Corpus Christi, which the Order never failed to solemnize, summoned all the Knights, except those engaged with the

enemy in St. Elmo, to the festival. They were followed, in the procession, by the entire population of the town—and on reaching the church, all prostrated themselves before the Sacred Host, imploring that their enemies and the enemies of their faith may not prevail against them. The battle raged on the following day with fresh fury. "It seems," it is Prescott who here speaks, "as if the defenders of St. Elmo, exhausted as they had been by their extraordinary sufferings, had renewed their strength as by a miracle. Thrice the enemy returned to the assault, and thrice he was repulsed. The carnage was terrible—Christian and Mussulman grappling fiercely together, until the ruins on which they fought were heaped with the bodies of the slain."

It would take more time than we can here afford to tell of the fall of St. Elmo, the fight of the chevaux de frise between the besieging Turks and the Maltese survivers who had carried their swords in their teeth, the gallantry of a priest of the Order who, though wounded himself, headed the soldiers of Christ, with a crucifix in one hand and a sword in the other, and the cool calculation of De Guiral, who waited until he could see the "whites of their eyes" to open his masked battery from the water's edge on a fleet of ten galleys with a fresh force of a thousand Janizaries sent to reinforce the assailants, the uncompromising obstinacy of Turk and Moor in renewing the sanguinary assault after every discomfiture; the mining and countermining and the terrific hand-to-hand encounters in the subterranean galleries, surpassing all that history has since told of Saragossa or Sebastopol. The cause of God—the prayers and swords of brave men prevailed; and the

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banner of the Cross waved in victory and glory from fortress and from ruin over the disappearing fleets of the besiegers and the bones of 25,000 of their troops which were left to moulder in the trenches!

It was on the eighth of September, feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, that the siege was raised—and on that and every returning anniversary, while the Knights retained possession of the Island, the solemn High Mass and devout Te Deum bore up to Heaven the thanksgivings of the Order and of the citizens of Malta in commemoration of the victory. Nor in these rejoicings were the eight thousand of their own gallant dead forgotten.

Vertot remarks that the Knights loved rather to do great deeds than to record them. This is particularly true of their naval exploits. But the conviction is here hazarded, that even from the imperfect materials they have left us, a history may be composed of achievements on the deep, by the fleets, or single galleys, of the Order, which even "Brittania," that claims to "rule the waves," has never surpassed, and which her young giant rival in the West has not yet equalled. In the battle of Lepanto, to the success of which Justiniani, the Maltese commander, so eminently contributed, who, with three arrows sticking in him, whipped the fierce Ucchioli, the supremacy of the Christian flag was triumphantly asserted against the largest fleets and bravest commanders of the Ottomans. The death of the Turkish General-in-Chief, of five thousand officers and thirty thousand men, the capture of one hundred and forty galleys, the sinking or burning of many more, and last, not least, the liberation of twenty thousand Christian slaves, is a glory unreached and unrivalled by Nelson and

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the Nile. The subsequent achievements of the Order, especially at Candia, illustrated by the heroic death of the Chevalier de Sales, nephew of the Holy Bishop of Geneva, and of so many of his brethren, were, however glorious to the Christian arms, but the gleanings of the harvest. The Kersolares were the acroceraunian rocks of the naval and military power of the Turks, that sea, the Maellstrom, in which it disappeared to alarm the nations no more.

The destiny, the mission, of the Order was accomplished. The treaty of Westphalia gave their possessions to Protestant princes; the acquisition of a few islands in the West Indies was retained but a dozen years; the God forsaking army of the French revolution, under Bonaparte on his way to Egypt, iniquitously seized on their island and its treasures, sacred and secular, on the 10th of June, 1798; the French, in their turn, were dispossessed by the British, the Congress of Vienna refused to grant the Order an independant territory in Europe, or elsewhere, for that of which they were so unjustly deprived, and the heresy of England, and the infidelity of France, achieving what the followers of the Impostor were unable to accomplish, have the glory, or the shame, of writing the epitaph of an Order to which the Christian world owes a debt of gratitude which it can never repay!

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