

## Literature, &amp;c.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

From Graham's Philadelphia Magazine.  
THE CROWN AND DAGGER.

A TALE OF THE THIRD CRUSADE.

MANY months had elapsed since the event occurred recorded in our last chapter. The marriage of Conrad and Isabelle had been solemnized by the Bishop of Beauvais with becoming splendor; and the wedded pair, with their armed retainers, lay in the camp at Ptolemais, then closely invested by the combined armies of France and England. Despite the personal bravery of Richard Plantagenet, and the diplomatic ability of Philip Augustus, the siege had proved protracted beyond all precedent. Saladin had concentrated the flower of his army in the neighbourhood of Ptolemais, aware of the importance of the invested city. Until it should fall, it would be in vain for the Christians to attempt to march on Jerusalem. They dared not advance a step leaving so formidable a stronghold in their rear in the hands of enemies. Discord was rife among the crusading leaders. The kings of France and England could ill-conceal their mutual aversion. Philip condemned the rashness of Richard, and Coeur-de-Lion despised the prudential maxims of the French Monarch. But the insurmountable obstacle to all unanimity was the active rivalry between the candidates for the yet unconquered kingdom of Jerusalem. Philip Augustus strongly favored the pretensions of the Marquis of Montferrat; while Richard, repelled by the crooked policy and intriguing disposition of Conrad, supported the cause of Guy de Lusignan, already crowned King during his life-time, in right of his wife, the deceased Queen Sybilla.

The Bishop of Beauvais in vain endeavored to heal these dissensions so fatal to the pilgrim cause. The King of England, without apparent motive, obstinately refused to sanction the election of Conrad, although in his opposition he well nigh stood alone; and liberal compensation had been offered to Guy de Lusignan, which the count, it was understood, was willing to accept. It was whispered that intimations affecting Conrad's loyalty to the Christian cause had reached the ears of Coeur-de-Lion; and that Richard expected ere long to be in possession of certain intelligence which would convict the prince of Tyre of blackest treason. These reports pointed at a supposed intrigue carried on by Conrad with the Moslem, to the effect that he should be secured in the possession of Jerusalem, in return for aid in discomfiting the designs of the Crusaders, and breaking up the mighty army which still invested Ptolemais, and threatened, if successful, the entire dismemberment of Saladin's empire. Whether this were so, or, if true, how these dim intimations had been conveyed to Richard, were as yet unfathomable mysteries. It was likewise asserted that the king waited only their confirmation to achieve the ruin of Conrad; or, failing the transmission of certain intelligence of his baseness within a specified period, had resolved to yield to the wishes of his colleagues, and assuming the innocence of the Prince of Tyre from the absence of legitimate proof of his guilt, to confirm to him the much coveted title of King of Jerusalem.

While these political topics were yet fiercely debated in the camp at Ptolemais, the Bishop of Beauvais, anxious for any public ceremonial which might bring the hostile parties into amicable relations, proposed to hold there a baptism of converts, reclaimed by his zeal from the errors of Mohammedanism. Two youths in particular had been zealous catechumens, and had resided in the Bishop's palace at Tyre for instruction in the mysteries of the Christian faith, ever since the prelate had been domesticated in that city. The intelligence, the child-like docility which these youths had evinced, had completely won the heart of the Bishop, who prided himself not a little on his skill in controversy. Despite his utmost endeavours the ceremonial for the admission of his converts into the bosom of the Church excited little interest among the leaders in the camp. The soldiery, it is true, crowded around the font; but those for whose benefit the bishop had principally desired this public display, held aloof. The disheartened prelate, accompanied by his newly-baptized disciples, returned to Tyre, resolved to interest himself for the future more exclusively in his spiritual affairs. Nor was he the only seceder from the pilgrim camp. The disruption in the army had become general, and many of the leaders withdrew in anger or in dejection.

There had been a vast expenditure of blood and treasure with little result. Ptolemais, it is true, was eventually taken, but not till it had become a heap of ruins, and the plain around had been strewn with the best and bravest of Europe's chivalry, cut down during the protracted siege. Frederick Barbarossa died in Asia Minor, before reaching the Holy Land; Philip Augustus, wearied with his long Syrian sojourn, returned to France;

Richard Plantagenet alone remained—the centre of authority, the one head of his yet mighty confederacy, which now prepared to march on Ascalon.

The reader also must return to Tyre. We shall there introduce to him the converts whose public baptism has already been narrated, whom we find, seated in close converse, in a room in the episcopal palace.

The Syrian youths, thus strangely domesticated in the Bishop's house, appeared to be brothers; so close was their resemblance in feature, though the expression of their countenances was wildly different. They had hardly attained the age of manhood—for the cheek of the elder was but slightly fringed with down, while as yet the younger was completely beardless. They wore the white flowing robes usually adopted by catechumens at that period, as symbolic of their baptismal purity. Their conversation, carried on in subdued tones, was yet free and animated; and the various passions which agitated their minds, were clearly expressed by the speaking countenances of the youthful Orientals.

‘Has your resolution never swerved, your courage never faltered?’ asked the elder of his companion.

‘My resolve once taken, my determination is unchangeable,’ was the firm reply. ‘But tell me, Akbar, whence have you, who have no personal wrongs to redress, this unflinching endurance, this disdain of life, even when it is but opening before you, and holding its proffered cup of pleasure brimly to your lips? I should ask you, do you hesitate? Remember, whether our enterprise succeed or not, our fate is certain. If, then, you would live—if you shrink from a cruel death—leave me, brother, while it is yet time. I am, even alone, equal to the perilous attempt; and for me, as you well know, existence is but one continued misery.’

‘Do not speak to me, as if it were possible that I could waver, even for a moment,’ replied Akbar, quickly—‘I, an adept of the Ansarii, and who have been deemed by our great chieftain, Hussan, one of his most faithful disciples! I should have feebly profited by the lessons taught at Alamut—to say nothing of the mysteries, which even to thee I must not reveal—did I not know that my life is in the hands of Allah, who gave it; that it must cease when my Maker recalls the living soul he has breathed into my perishable body; and that, until such be his will, not all the malice, nor art of man can deprive me of this vital spark. The moment of my death, believe me, is already recorded in the book of fate; nor is it in my power to hasten or retard the appointed time. How unless then, these arguments you have so long urged—and urged in vain. When I think of your wrongs, I languish for the inevitable hour which must feed my just vengeance.’

‘Hearken, brother!’ rejoined the younger speaker; ‘that crowning vengeance must be my work. When I summoned thee to my aid, I added this express stipulation. And thinkest thou that it was not for the purpose that I retarded—with what difficulty thou knowest—the mission of my fellow-victim, Homfroi de Thoron? The revelations he would have made—the proofs he would have adduced—might have transferred to another hand the revenge which mine only must execute. Besides, have I not told thee of the sibyl's prophecy?—Thy fates lie in the hand of the one who loves thee best. No agency but mine can touch his charmed life.’

‘How strange it seems to me,’ said Akbar, thoughtfully, ‘that one, heretofore so gentle as thou wert, should now thyself so fiercely resolve to shed his blood that betrayed thee, and plunge, if possible, with thine own hand, the avenging dagger into the traitor's breast!’

‘Believe me, Akbar, I seek not his blood in resentment for my own injuries; nor was it, till he became the murderer of my child—indirectly, it is true, and through me—that I vowed I would have life for life. Oh! my brother, thou couldst never know my sufferings on that dreadful night! I raved in delirium; nor did consciousness return till the screams of my terrified child recalled me to myself. In my first thought to soothe it, I rashly held it to my bosom; it imbibed the poison which flowed thro' my veins. Fearful convulsions racked its tender frame; it perished before my eyes. I looked on the agonized countenance of my darling, but shed no tear. Its death was to me only a relief. I solaced myself with thoughts of vengeance. ‘He shall not escape me!’ I madly uttered. The sole link which yet bound me to him is unbroken—and broken by his cruel act. He is truly the murderer of my boy, as if he had stabbed him to the heart. But the innocent shall not perish unavenged. I devote myself to his destruction!’

‘Calm, for the present, this excitement,’ said Akbar, gently. ‘The time may not be far distant when we shall have to act. Till then, silence and secrecy must be our shield. Farewell, for the present. I go to the reception-room of the unsuspecting bishop—there I may glean intelligence of moment to us—We are on the eve of great events. Richard the lion-hearted, they say, is to return at

once to England. In his absence the crafty Philip has stirred up John Plantagenet to usurp the crown. Before his departure, the King of England will be urgently solicited to decide between the rival claims of De Lusignan and Conrad of Montferrat. We have, for the present, suppressed the proofs of the Prince of Tyre's treacherous negotiations and base overtures of Saladin. Failing these, perhaps Richard may relent, and for the sake of unanimity, confer on the unworthy Montferrat the crown he has so long aspired to wear, and for which he has condescended to such unparalleled ignominy.’

Our narrative reverts to the plain of Ascalon, where the triumphant Christian host celebrated the festival of Easter, in the year of our Lord 1192. The ‘Bride of Syria’—as Ascalon was called—was a desolate ruin, Saladin having dismantled its ramparts and citadel, hopeless of defending it against the crusading army.

‘By the holy name of Allah!’ he exclaimed, ‘I would rather part with my right hand than destroy one stone of the beautiful city! The security of the faithful must, however, be my first object. Level Ascalon, stone by stone. Allah's will be done!’

In the pilgrim camp all was joy and harmony. Every occasion for discord and dissonance had ceased; for Richard Plantagenet about to return to his own dominions, had at length yielded to the request of the army, and consented that the kingdom of Jerusalem should be confirmed to Conrad of Montferrat.

Conrad was not in the camp when Richard announced his nomination. The affairs of his principality required his presence in Tyre, and thither the grateful intelligence was conveyed by a deputation headed by Count Henry of Champagne.

Conrad's surprise was intense on hearing of his elevation to the highest object of his ambition.

‘My fortunate planet is in the ascendant,’ he said, addressing in exulting tones the Count of Champagne, and the other chieftains who had waited on him with the joyful intelligence; ‘my star has reached its zenith in three progressions—the principedom of Tyre, the hand of Isabelle, the throne of Jerusalem. But here, in the sight of all, at the summit of glory, I invoke the King of Kings, and beseech Him to remove the regal diadem from my brow if I am not worthy to wear it. The All-wise Searcher of hearts knoweth that I lie not, when I vow before Him that I will hold life itself as dust in the balance when weighed against the glory and security of the kingdom of Jerusalem. If there be one other more worthy to do battle in this sacred cause, let the sparkling circlet be transferred to him; but, while I live to guard it, it shall suffer no stain, no dishonor, no disgrace—so help me God!’

The newly chosen king of Jerusalem raised his eyes to heaven, as if invoking the Divine guidance, and expressing his emotions of gratitude toward his Maker for thus crowning his utmost wishes. He then hastened, accompanied by his friends, to the episcopal palace, to apprise the bishop of Beauvais of his elevation, and request of the friendly prelate to perform at once the ceremony of his coronation.

The streets of Tyre were thronged with admiring crowds as Conrad, closely followed by the Bishop, nobles, clergy, and a brilliant guard of honor, passed, in his splendid coronation robe, in stately procession from the episcopal palace towards the cathedral church, there to receive the holy oil of consecration.

Turning to the Count of Champagne, who was near him, Conrad reminded them of their conversation, when they descended together the mountain passes of the Libanus, before entering Tyre.

‘Since then,’ he observed, ‘my promotion has been rapid—marquis prince, and king!’ At the moment of utterance a piquard entered his side.

‘Tu ne seras plus ni marquis ni roi,’ was whispered in his ear; and, ere he could shriek aloud, a second dagger directed by a second hand pierced him near the heart.

The assassins disappeared, and were lost in the crowd before the fact of the murder was known. All was confusion. The bleeding Conrad was borne towards the church, while his guard pursued the fugitives, who sped with the velocity of lightning towards the city gates. Before the soldiery came up with them, one of the murderers had entirely disappeared; the other, gained on by his pursuers, rendered himself a captive without an effort.

It was hoped that Conrad's wounds would not prove mortal. He was faint from loss of blood; but his ample robes had, in both cases, broken the destined blow. The prog-nards of the assassins had merely gazed his breast and side. He was carried into the cathedral, and laid near the steps of the high altar; while his friends, who had clustered around him, bared his bosom to the reviving air, and having examined his wounds, assured him that they were of slight conse-

quences. A grateful smile overspread his palid face.

‘My foes have no power to harm me,’ he murmured audibly.

The hope of life had inspired him with renewed strength for he endeavored to rise himself from the ground. At that moment the draperies of the altar moved; and, starting from concealment, the gleaming steel was again plunged into his heart by the younger of the assassins who before had wounded him. This time the deadly work was more surely accomplished. Again and again the piquard entered his bosom, at each thrust stained anew with his life-blood; and, before the murderer could be torn from the bleeding body of the victim, those words were whispered in his ear—‘Thou fallest by the hand of the one that loves thee best!’

Conrad of Montferrat expired at the foot of the altar. The ruthless assassin swooned away. Even in the death-like trance, it was apparent that the murderer was young and beautiful. But there was short time for speculation as to the motive which had instigated the commission of the cruel crime. The assassin who had been captured by the guard, was dragged into the church, and here confronted with his revived accomplice. In reply to the interrogatories put by the Bishop of Beauvais and the Count of Champagne, they answered not a word. They were mute and motionless; their eyes were fixed on one another, but they made no sign, nor did they seem conscious of aught, that surrounded them.

When placed on the rack, to extort by torture a confession of the instigator of the murder, they were equally unmoved. Their tender limbs were torn one by one on the wheel, yet the tortured wretches expired without having uttered a single word or given even one last parting cry of agony.

## A MONTH IN ENGLAND.

By Henry T. Tuckerman.

CHRIST'S HOSPITAL.

HERE, I thought, as I looked around upon the old quadrangle and massive corridors, knots of childish admirers would gather about the ‘inspired charity-boy,’ and listen reverently to the musical voice destined, in after years, to chant immortal Genevieve, and reason eloquently of ‘fore-knowledge, will and fate;’ in yonder angle, perhaps, sat the kind soul, Lamb's old relative, to bestow on her darling ‘the extraordinary slice of bread and butter from the hot loaf of the Temple;’ and by her side, stood the grateful boy, inwardly struggling between hunger and generosity, his pale features lit up with expectancy, and ‘contending passions at the unfolding.’

In that chamber, perchance, whose ancient window overlooks this broad arena, the devout Baxter expired; over these wet stones the youthful Addison sped to his recitation, meditating, as he walked, a Latin epigram, lighting with his smile the gloomy shadow of this vestibule, jovial Steel threw his arm caressingly over the shoulders of his comrade, and, in the twilight nook of the opposite porch, Leigh Hunt dreamed many an Arabian tale. Stillingfleet practiced his first rhetoric, Blackstone felt, on his palm, the majesty of offended law, and Richardson caught his earliest dramatic glimpses of life touched by the mellow hue of sentiment—afterward to expand in ‘Clarissa Harlowe’—here, amid the sports, lessons, and monastic seclusion of Christ's Hospital, in historical, not less than personal association, is the edifice rich and impressive: the greater part of the victims of the plague were buried there, in the reign of the third Edward. Kings, nobles, friars, pensioners, and charity boys, have had their dwelling-place here in succession; every variety of human character, from Wesley to Tooke, and from Barrow to Camden, have here imbibed the milk of knowledge; and, as I invoked the forms of the departed, a throng consecrated by genius, piety, or adventure, gathered to my mind's eye, in every gallery and over the hollow square, until a vision as glorious as ever filled the brain of the opium eater, of whose school days also this was the scene, irradiated the venerable and lonely cloisters.—Gazing up at the enormous roof, I thought of the donkey secretly tethered there, for whom the school-boy-tyrant (made eternally intamous by ‘Elia's’ record) kept bread from his younger companions; and in their lofty dining hall, ‘hung round with pictures by Verrio, Lely, and others.’ I wondered if blue and tasteless milk porridge was still the order of the day for Monday, and mutton scraps on Friday; I could almost taste the smack of ginger and cinnamon which there, endeared millet to the then unsophisticated palate of the child, who was indeed ‘father of the man,’ and reverted to his boyhood, with a moral zest indicative of its perennial quality. I looked into the faces of the crowd of blue-coated archins, then listening to ‘grace after meat,’ and would fain have asked if there were yet among them, a young stork like him immortalized in the ‘Recollections,’ as a martyr to the imputation of meanness, while starving himself to feed his parents. I longed too to recognize Master Matthew Field, that rare combination of ‘gentleman, scholar and