

**Chivalry and the wounded : the Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem  
(1014-1914) / by E.M. Tenison.**

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CHIVALRY

AND THE

WOUNDED

BY

E. M. TENISON.

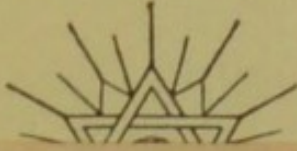


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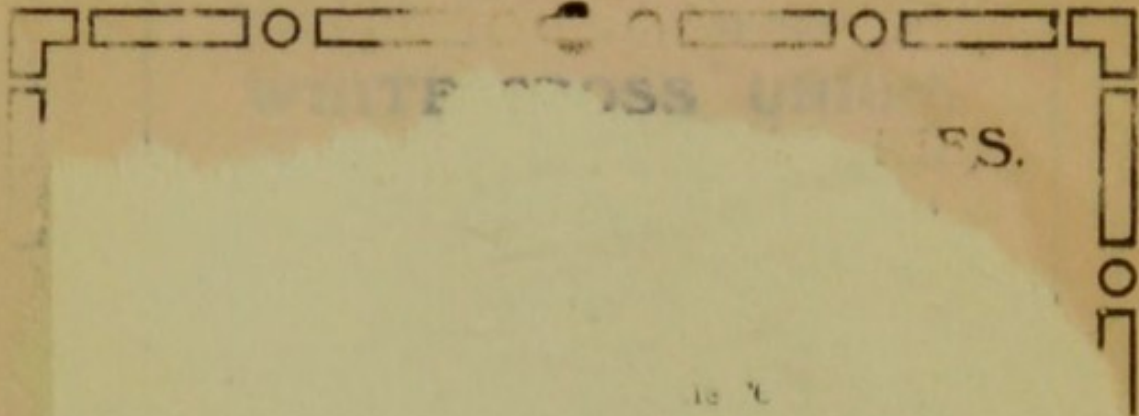


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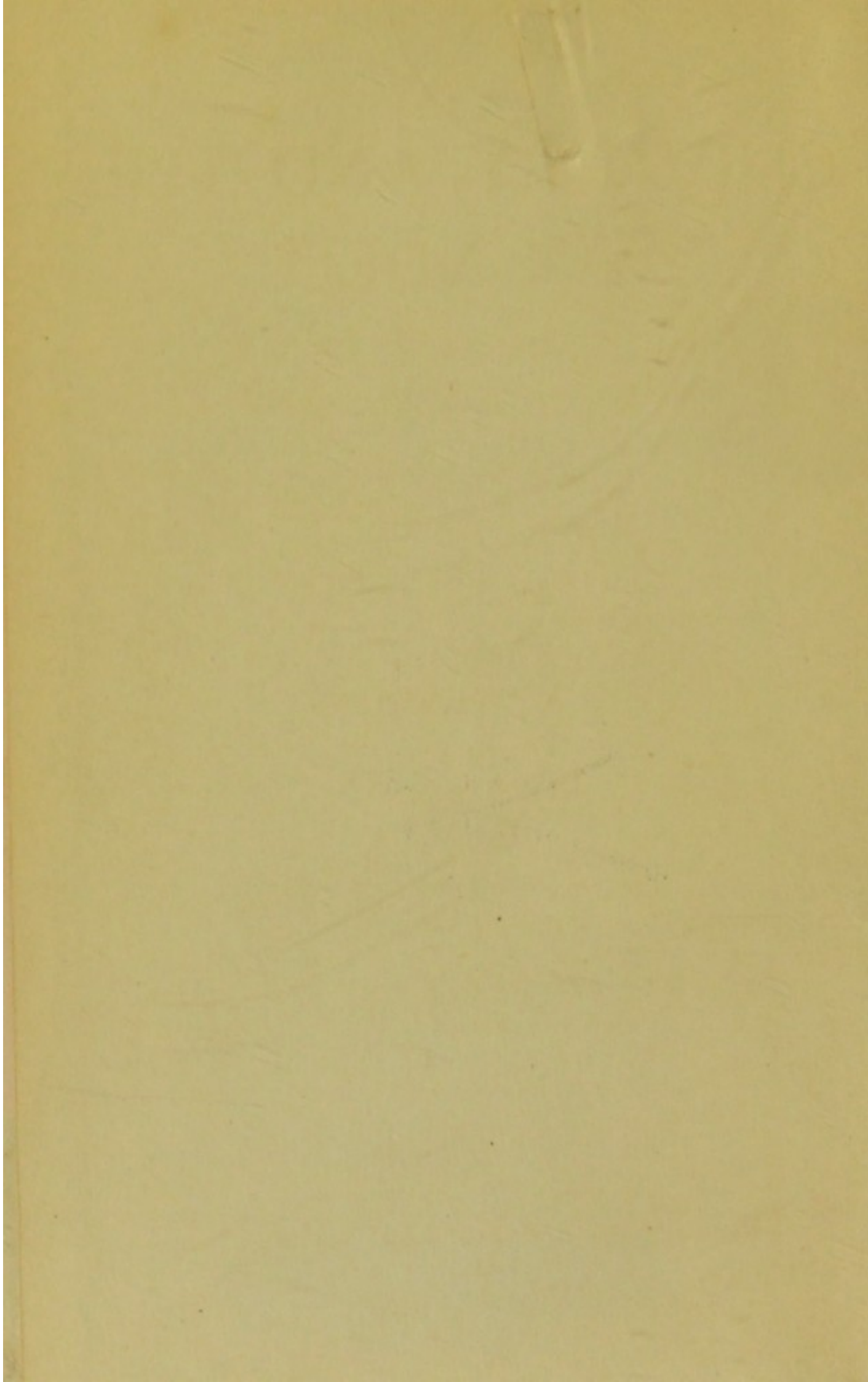
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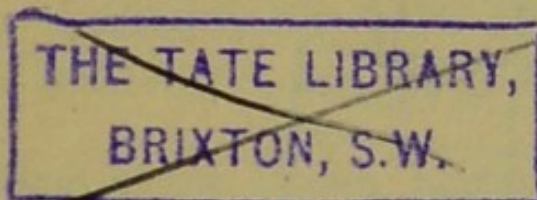
# CHIVALRY AND THE WOUNDED.

THE HOSPITALLERS OF  
ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM

(1014—1914)

BY

E. M. TENISON.



*Pro fide pro utilitate hominum.*

Motto of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem.

*Now mayst thou learn from the past.*

Motto on Ancient Sundial.

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Chairman of the Ladies' Committee  
of  
the Order of St. John.



# CONTENTS

## FOREWORD

### THE HOSPITALLERS OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM.

PART I. .... Page 9

IN PALESTINE. 1014—1187. From the founding of the first Christian Hospital in Jerusalem, to the disastrous battle of Tiberias and the surrender of the Holy City.

PART II. .... Page 25

IN PALESTINE. 1187—1291. From the establishment of the Hospital at Margat, to the re-capture of Acre by the Mahomedans.

PART III. .... Page 39

IN CYPRUS AND RHODES. 1291—1522. From the establishment of the Hospitallers as a maritime power, to their gallant defence of Rhodes against the Sultan Solyman.

PART IV. .... Page 50

IN THE BRITISH ISLES. 1102(?)—1579. From the first establishment of the Order at Clerkenwell, to its dissolution and the confiscation of its Priory by Queen Elizabeth.

PART V. .... Page 58

IN MALTA. 1530—1798. From the great achievements of Villiers de L'Isle Adam and La Valette, to the ignominious surrender of the island by Ferdinand von Hompesch, 69th and last Military Grand Master.

PART VI. .... Page 96

IN MODERN EUROPE. 1814—1914. From the modern re-creation of the Order, to the present-services of the Ambulance of St. John in the European War of 1914.

AN APPEAL TO THE NATION.

CONTENTS

PREFACE

THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

CHAPTER I. THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA. 1492. COLUMBUS'S VOYAGE. THE FIRST SETTLEMENTS. THE STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE.

CHAPTER II. THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR. 1775-1783. THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE. THE BATTLE OF BOSTON. THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN.

CHAPTER III. THE CONFEDERATION AND THE CONSTITUTION. 1787-1791. THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION. THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION. THE RATIFICATION OF THE CONSTITUTION.

CHAPTER IV. THE EARLY YEARS OF THE REPUBLIC. 1791-1800. WASHINGTON'S ADMINISTRATION. THE FEDERALIST PARTY. THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY.

CHAPTER V. THE TERRITORIAL ACQUISITIONS. 1800-1845. THE LOUISIANA PURCHASE. THE FLORIDA PURCHASE. THE MEXICAN WAR. THE OREGON TERRITORY.

CHAPTER VI. THE SLAVE QUESTION AND THE CIVIL WAR. 1845-1865. THE FUGITIVE SLAVE ACT. THE DRED SCOTT DECISION. THE ABOLITION MOVEMENT. THE CIVIL WAR.

APPENDIX TO THE HISTORY

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## FOREWORD

Her Majesty the Queen (in a message published in the *Times* of September 16th), expresses her hope that our country may appreciate the great merits of the Ambulance of St. John of Jerusalem, which, during the present war, is taking so skilled and strenuous a part in the tending of our wounded soldiers. An appeal for national support will be found on page 105, and the subject is here commended to the generosity and justice of the British public.

*October the 20th, 1914.*

# FOREWORD

The Editor of this journal has been for a number of years  
in the habit of publishing the results of the work  
of the various departments of the University of  
Chicago, and it is a pleasure to be able to  
include in this volume the work of the  
Department of Zoology, which has been  
conducted by the late Professor  
C. D. Michener, and which is now  
being continued by Professor  
C. D. Michener, Jr.

CHICAGO, ILL., 1934

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# The Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem.

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PART I.

IN PALESTINE : 1014—1187.

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In time of peace, the many-sided present and our plans and forecasts for the future may make us forgetful of the past; but when war reveals us clearly to ourselves, we realise that from the past comes much of our courage, inspiration, and hope.

Long-dead but ever-living heroes are the invisible leaders whose exploits, sacrifices, and achievements spur us into action, and awake in us a spirit of honourable emulation. When they aspired so high, and fought and toiled with such unbroken vigour, such ardent faith, and such unqualified devotion, can we bear to confess that we in comparison are cold and languid? Rather we would claim that the past, present and future are all one, and that though "Time destroys the cuirass on which

**Inspiration from  
the Past. The  
inextinguishable  
Spirit of Chivalry.**

the lances and swords were blunted," the eternal spirit of chivalry has never been extinguished, and burns to-day with a bright steady light.

In this connection it is of vital interest to recall the history of the Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem—nearly five hundred years of magnificent moral and material achievement, a slow and melancholy decline, and final extinction as a religious and military community; and then in our own day the re-creation of the Order in civilian form.

It was in the early years of the eleventh century that some rich Neapolitan merchants founded and endowed a hospital for the Latin pilgrims who thronged to Jerusalem to pray at the Holy Sepulchre.

Jerusalem long previously had fallen from the nerveless hands of the Byzantine Christians into the grasp of the vigorous Mahomedans, those mighty warriors who had captured Damascus, Antioch, and Syria, and conquered Egypt, Media, Korassan, and Mesopotamia—who had overrun the northern coast of Africa, and in Europe had by the force of their resistless arms won Cyprus, Rhodes, Sicily, Candia and Malta, and had established themselves as Kings in Spain and Portugal.

The enterprising and benevolent Christian merchants who obtained permission from the Moslem Caliph to build their Hospital in Jerusalem, should be remembered as the precursors of the Knights Hospitaller of St. John, whose institutions extended subsequently

**Degeneracy and feebleness of the Byzantine Christians.**

**Vast conquests by the Mahomedan warriors.**

**Establishment of a Christian Hospital in Mahomedan Jerusalem, 1014.**

throughout the civilised world, and attained a moral distinction and a practical utility which it is hardly possible to over-estimate.

The Hospital was in two sections, one for men and one for women; and all the chief cities in Italy and the South of Europe gave liberal donations for the continued maintenance of this place of refuge for sick or weary pilgrims. During the Saracenic rule the institution was not molested, but when the Saracen Mahomedans after four centuries of dominion were in their turn overpowered by the ferocious Turcomans—barbarians from beyond the Caspian Sea—a most disastrous epoch was inaugurated for all the Christians.

**Jerusalem  
Captured by the  
Turcomans, 1065.**

Under early mediæval conditions of transport, a pilgrimage to Jerusalem had never been an easy undertaking; but during the Turcoman *régime* it became fraught with incalculable dangers; and the few pilgrims who survived to return to Europe, bore witness to the hideous tortures and revolting cruelties which unoffending Christians suffered at the hands of the new conquerors.

**Sufferings of the  
Christians.**

Thus it was that indignation on behalf of the pilgrims led to the Crusades which were to be such an important factor in the history of mediæval civilisation.

An attempted Crusade, led by Peter the Hermit, proved futile, for Peter had no military ability; but his zealous though undisciplined followers did not die in vain, as their sufferings and overthrow aroused the Latin nations.

**Failure of Peaceful  
Crusade under  
Peter the Hermit.**

**First Military  
Crusade under  
Godfrey de  
Bouillon, Duke of  
Lower Lorraine  
and Marquis of  
Antwerp.**

In 1099 the flower of Christian chivalry, an allied army of 600,000 Horse and 100,000 Foot, advanced from Constantinople; and after capturing in rapid succession Nicea, Antioch, Tarsus and Edessa, the Crusaders on June the 7th appeared before the walls of Jerusalem and summoned the infidel to surrender.

**Siege of Jerusalem.  
Imprisonment of  
the Rector of the  
Hospital by  
Turcoman  
Governor.**

The Turcoman Governor retaliated by thrusting into prison all the Christians within the city, amongst them the Rector of the Hospital of St. John, the saintly and generous Peter Gérard, who had extended his services as freely to sick "infidels" as to his friends and fellow Christians.

While Gérard languished helplessly in a foul dungeon, echoes of the terrific combat must have reached him. The Turks were making a resistance so prolonged and stubborn that they seemed invincible; and the Christian soldiers would have been most grievously disheartened but for the unbreakable valour and resolution of their leaders, Godfrey de Bouillon, Tancred, and Raymond of Toulouse.

**Heroism of  
Crusading Leaders.**

"The Barons and Captains, to give example to their men, put themselves always to the fore in places of the greatest danger. . . . And women, who could bear no arms, ran with jars of water to the assaulting host and gave them to drink, admonishing them the while to serve our Lord with all their might."\*

A procession of pilgrims went fasting to the Mount of Olivet, and "in much great anguish" poured out their hearts in prayer for the deliverance of Jerusalem.

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\* Chronicle of William of Tyre. Ch. clxxxijj.

At last, on the morning of Friday, July 19th, after six weeks' siege, the entire Christian host felt "marvellous boldness," for a saintly hermit from Mount Olivet had seen in a vision that "this same day Our Lord would help His soldiers" and crown with victory their arduous and exhausting struggle.\*

Thus inspirited, they carried the city by storm, and Godfrey de Bouillon was the first to hoist his banner on the battlements.

Then came a heavy reckoning for the Turcomans. The torturers of Christian pilgrims were held to deserve no mercy:—

"Much blood was shed . . . and the streets of the town were covered with dead men—in such wise that it was great pity to see, had they not been of the enemies of Our Lord Jesus Christ."†

As the surrounding country was still full of Saracens, the conquerors, vigilant even in the first flush of triumph, set guards to keep the gates and watch from the battlements. Then the victorious leaders laid aside their armour, and walked barefoot to the Holy Sepulchre, in ecstasy of solemn joy and thanksgiving.

Godfrey de Bouillon was elected King of Jerusalem, but, though he accepted the responsibility, he refused the title, saying that he would never wear a crown of gold where his Saviour had worn a crown of thorns.

Then came a period of peace and prosperity for the Hospitallers; Godfrey, expressing fervent appreciation of their skill and devotion

**Storming of  
Jerusalem,  
Triumph of  
Godfrey de  
Bouillon.  
July 19, 1099.**

**Duke Godfrey  
praises the  
Hospitallers and  
endows them  
richly. 1099.**

\* Chronicle of William of Tyre. Ch. clxxxiv.

† Chronicle of William of Tyre. Ch. clxxxvi.

in tending the wounded, endowed them with the revenues of one of his richest manors in Brabant—an example followed by a number of the other Frankish noblemen.

Thus encouraged and supported, the Rector Gérard organised the Hospitallers into a regularly constituted religious Order, to be clad in a black habit adorned with a white cross of eight points; and branch hospitals were established in many of the maritime provinces of Europe, so that pilgrims could be sheltered and tended while awaiting transport to the Holy Land.

In 1113 the Pope formally recognised the Order. Five years afterwards the saintly Rector died, and was succeeded by Raymond du Puy, a French noble, distinguished, vigorous and clear-sighted. He pointed out to the brethren that it did not suffice to live piously and give medical aid to pilgrims; considering the continued power and energy of the Saracens, and the constant dangers still menacing all Christian travellers, the Hospitallers should not only be ready to live in the service of invalids and pilgrims, but willing if necessary to die in their defence. "*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends*"; and—taking a lesson from the past, when the Byzantine Christians so ignominiously lost Jerusalem because their courage and vitality had waned—Raymond du Puy adjured his followers to pledge themselves not only to chastity and obedience as hitherto, but also

**The Hospitallers  
organised as a  
Religious Order.  
1099.**

**Branch Hospitals  
Established in  
Europe.**

**Raymond du Puy,  
first Grand Master  
of the Order.  
1118.**

**Continued Dangers  
to Pilgrims; the  
Military Order of  
St. John founded  
in their defence.  
1118.**

vow to support the cause of Christianity even to the last drop of their blood.

Thus was founded the world-famous Order of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, destined to become the bulwark of Christendom, an Order whose gallant exploits and strenuous achievements form one of the most brilliant and heroic chapters in the history of the world.

The Order was reconstructed with three divisions:—Knights of Justice, religious chaplains, and serving brothers. There were also Dames of St. John; and in France, England, Italy and Spain, and subsequently in Portugal, they founded and supervised hospitals in which the poor and needy could meet with tender and compassionate care and service. The Knights and Dames were required to be of noble birth; and it is typical of the spirit of chivalry that membership of this Order "*for the service of mankind*" was an honour for which the proudest and most famous families competed eagerly. Great feudal lords, many of them in the prime of life and endowed with every worldly advantage,—wealth, strength, power and remarkable abilities,—did not hesitate to pledge themselves to perpetual celibacy, and to renounce their personal property, devoting to the Order all their revenues.

The Rule of the Order was so austere that it may seem a counsel of perfection. Sometimes the reality fell short of the ideal. But the European recognition of an ideal founded

**"Men for War,  
Men for Prayer,  
Men for Work."**

**The Dames of  
St. John, their  
devoted services  
to the sick and  
poor.**

**Zeal of Christian  
Knights and  
Ladies for the  
service of mankind.**

**Chivalry, the  
readiness of the  
strong to protect  
the weak.**

upon self-sacrifice, and embodying the essential principle of chivalry,—the readiness of the strong to protect the weak,—redeemed an age when otherwise brutality and cruelty would have prevailed throughout the world.

If we compare the Jerusalem of Nero's day with the Jerusalem of the Knights of St. John, it becomes obvious that Christian chivalry had been an enormous force in the moral progress of the human race.

So brilliant had been the series of victories gained by the leaders of the first Crusade, so vigorous and valiant were the Knights and men-at-arms, that it seemed as if they would consolidate their conquests. But early in the following century the elements of disunion crept into the camp, and gradually but surely undermined the very foundations of the Christian rule.

**Vigorous service  
and deserved  
renown of the  
Knights  
Hospitaller.**

The Knights Hospitaller formed an honourable exception; they showed unbroken loyalty to their faith, their Order, and their beloved Grand Master. But their merited renown aroused a widespread jealousy, such jealousy as mediocre men are all too apt to feel towards heroes whose ardent service and austere self-sacrifice appear a tacit reproach to every idler, egoist, or political adventurer.

**Second Crusade.  
1149.  
Disputes and  
animosity among  
the Leaders.**

The promoters of the second Crusade, Conrad of the Germanic States, Louis VII. of France, and the Greek Emperor Manuel Comnenus, looked grudgingly upon the exploits and the prestige of the Military Orders, and, instead of following up the advantages gained

by the Hospitallers and their rivals the Knights Templar, these misguided Monarchs fell to disputing the division of spoils which they were never destined to obtain. Their undignified animosities led to the vain sacrifice of 150,000 men, and the lowering of the Christian reputation throughout the East.

**Ignominious end  
of the Second  
Crusade. 1149.**

The wane and final extinction of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem makes melancholy reading, the more melancholy because its lessons are of universal significance, and are as applicable now as on the lamentable day when—near the sacred Lake Tiberias—the Hospitallers were destined to pour out their blood like water, and to die gallantly, willingly, heroically, for the cause they had been powerless to save.

In 1152 they succeeded in preventing Jerusalem from falling back into the hands of Moslem warriors; but they had only postponed not finally averted the disaster.

**In 1152 the  
Knights  
Hospitaller save  
Jerusalem from  
reconquest by the  
Saracens.**

In the Sultan Saladin they had an adversary who not only was endowed with rare intellectual abilities and brilliant military genius, but was further inspired by religious ardour; "Jerusalem," he subsequently wrote to Richard Cœur de Lion, "is as much to us Mahomedans as it can be to you Christians, and more. It is the place whence our Prophet made his night ascent to Heaven, and it will be the gathering place of our Nation at the Great Judgment."

**Religious and  
political  
ambitions of  
Saladin.**

To win back Jerusalem was Saladin's supreme ambition, and to this end he made

ready—devoting his whole heart and mind to preparation for the day when Christian dissension would make it possible for him to strike the decisive blow.

Meantime, King Baldwin IV. of Jerusalem, though only about twenty years of age, was so shattered by the ravages of leprosy that he could no longer bear the burden of his kingly office. On abdicating, he chose his infant nephew Baldwin as his successor; and an old chronicler relates how

**Coronation of Baldwin V., Christian King of Jerusalem, November 1st, 1183.**

“The King bade crown the child; so they took him to the Holy Sepulchre and crowned him. And because the child was so small they put him into the arms of a Knight to be carried into the Temple of the Lord.”

**Count Raymond of Tripoli, Regent for the Infant King.**

But, mindful of the warning “*Woe to the land whose King is a child,*” Baldwin IV. appointed as Regent his kinsman Count Raymond of Tripoli, Lord of Tiberias, one of the very few who still clung faithfully to the old ideals of chivalrous devotion, and held himself haughtily aloof from base indulgences and paltry self-interested intrigues.

Son of Count Raymond I. of Tripoli, and of Odierna, that beautiful Princess whose “great excellence and virtue” are commemorated in one of the most romantic of mediæval traditions, Raymond II. was destined to a troubled life and tragic death. His father had been assassinated by a Saracen enemy; but for Raymond was reserved the still more melancholy fate of being outwitted and betrayed by one of his own race and world.

Among the various aspirants to the crown of Jerusalem was a certain Guy de Lusignan—a Frankish Knight of ancient family but mediocre ability—who, unhappily for his fellow Crusaders, was infinitely more concerned in forwarding his personal ambition than in working for the glory of Christianity.

Count Raymond of Tripoli—who (through his mother) was grandson of King Baldwin II., and (on his father's side) the representative of Raymond of Toulouse, one of the heroes of the first siege of Jerusalem—was a probable candidate for the crown if little Baldwin V., an ailing child, should prove too delicate to grow up. Guy de Lusignan therefore set to work to sow distrust of Raymond—an undertaking in which he was deplorably successful.

Clear-sighted, outspoken, and uncompromising, Raymond was too sincere to flatter, too haughty to dissemble, and too proud to compete against Guy's unchivalrous arts of insinuation and suggestion.

The increasing degeneracy of the Christians at this period is denounced in the plainest language by a contemporary chronicler, Geoffrey de Vinsauf:—

“In the year of the Incarnate Word 1187, when Urban III. held the government of the Apostolic See, and Frederic was Emperor of Germany, when Isaac was reigning at Constantinople, Philip in France, Henry in England, and William in Sicily, the Lord's hand fell heavy upon His people, if indeed it is right to call *His* people those whom . . . the foulness of their vices had alienated from His favour . . . Corruption became so diffused throughout the land of Syria that other nations now drew

**Guy de Lusignan.**

**Degeneracy of  
Orientalised  
Christians.**

an example of uncleanness from the same source which formerly had supplied them with the elements of spiritual truth. For this cause, therefore, the Lord, seeing the land of His birth and passion sunk into an abyss of turpitude, . . . suffered Saladin to put forth his might to the destruction of an unworthy people. . . .

**Eclipses, Famines,  
Storms, Earth-  
quakes, and  
Prophecies of War.**

“The approaching disaster was heralded by divers strange events, famine, earthquakes, and eclipses both of the Sun and of the Moon; and by . . . a mighty wind that shook the earth, foreshadowing the lamentable wars and griefs which were to harass and afflict the world.”

**Death of  
Baldwin V.  
Coronation of Guy  
de Lusignan.**

The death of little Baldwin V., the election of Guy de Lusignan as King of Jerusalem, and the retirement of Raymond to his own estates, formed the prologue to the tragic struggle in which Lusignan's acrid jealousy was fated to bring about the final irretrievable disaster.

**Successful Defence  
of Acre by the  
Knights  
Hospitaller.  
Death of the  
Grand Master.**

In 1187 Saladin judged the time had come to lay siege to Acre, the chief seaport of Christian Syria. Here again the military Orders, Templars and Hospitallers, proved how unimpaired was their high standard of efficiency and valour. A night attack from the Hospitallers surprised and scattered the forces of Saladin, and, though the Mahomedans made a vigorous rally and fought like lions, the Hospitallers compelled them to abandon the siege. The victory was gained at an enormous cost of life, and among the dead lay the heroic Grand Master.

The Moslems too had lost heavily; but whereas the Christian armies were disunited even in success, their adversary Saladin was

gifted with that power of control and that magnetic charm which enables a General to keep up the courage and ardour of his followers even in defeat. His triumph was not long to be deferred. Beaten back from Acre, he marched rapidly on Tiberias, the capital of Galilee. The townsfolk yielded almost at once, but the garrison, under the Countess of Tripoli, resolutely held the citadel.

The Christian forces, led by Guy de Lusignan, then mustered at Sappharia, three miles north of Nazareth and seventeen east of Acre. Excepting perhaps the Templars and Hospitallers, there seems to have been only one man endowed with military discernment, and this was Raymond Count of Tripoli. To the amazement of the Council of War, he opposed their plan of marching immediately to the rescue of his Countess in the beleaguered stronghold.

Though in theory an attacking force has the advantage, he pleaded that the peculiar circumstances demanded a defensive line of action, at a moment when it would be folly rather than valour to hazard the fate of Syrian Christendom upon a single battle under conditions so disadvantageous as to presage a crushing defeat. Tiberias was sixteen miles across a desolate hill-district now devoid of water, and Raymond maintained that to march the army by that drought-stricken route would be to court disaster. On the other hand, to wait at Sappharia, where food and water were

**The Countess of Tripoli heroically holds the Fortress of Tiberias after Saladin has entered the City.**

**Disinterested Advice of Raymond of Tripoli.**

abundant, and to lure Saladin to attack the Christians in a position of their own selecting, was obviously the wisest strategy.

"If I lose my wife, retainers and city, so be it," said Raymond. "Rather would I see my fortress overthrown than the entire country lost."

**Disastrous result  
of King Guy's  
Jealousy.**

Had Guy been able to forego his jealousy of Raymond, victory might yet have crowned the Christian arms; but he encouraged the Barons to denounce Count Raymond as a "traitor," and at dawn he gave the fatal order to set out for Tiberias.

On the march, the Franks were harassed incessantly by Turkish skirmishers and horse-bowmen; and suffering acutely (as Raymond had predicted) from heat and thirst, they were dispirited and drooping before they even came within sight of Saladin's main force.

The advance had manifestly been a hideous blunder; but, as it was too late to retreat, Count Raymond implored King Guy to press on as rapidly as possible. The Lake of Tiberias, he said, was now only three or four miles distant, and must certainly be reached before nightfall if the army was to slake its thirst and be in fit condition to attack the city on the morrow. But Guy, incorrigibly perverse, halted the entire force and gave the command to encamp for the night. There was no food and not a drop of water.

"Alas," said Raymond, "the war is ended; we are delivered over to death, and the realm is ruined."

Then under cover of darkness the Turks came up, and all night poured their hail of arrows in upon the weary Franks: "God fed the Christians with the bread of affliction and gave them to drink without stint of the cup of repentance till the dawn of tribulation came again."\*

Next morning Guy sounded trumpets for the advance, but the situation was irretrievable. Saladin's hosts encircled the doomed Christians on all sides; and though Count Raymond's vanguard and the Hospitallers and Templars did all that mortal men could do to conquer in the face of fearful odds, the enemy had so signal an advantage in generalship, position, and numbers, that only one result was possible.

Before sunset King Guy was a prisoner in the camp of the infidel.

A prisoner also was Count Raymond. And whereas Guy, whose folly caused the terrible disaster, was destined to survive and be crowned King of Cyprus, Raymond, who had foreseen and done his utmost to prevent the ruin of the Christian force, did not live long after its downfall. He died of a broken heart within a few weeks of the fatal battle.

As for the Hospitallers, their newly-elected Grand Master was mortally wounded, and the defeated Knights fulfilled their vow to shed the last drop of their blood in defence of their faith. Saladin offered them freedom, wealth and glory if they would renounce the Cross.

**Battle of Tiberias.  
Crushing Defeat of  
the Christian  
Army under Guy  
de Lusignan.  
1187.**

**Death of Raymond  
of Tripoli.**

**Heroism of the  
Knights  
Hospitaller.**

\* Chronicles of Ralph of Coggeshall, p. 223.

They answered they would choose rather to die; and he took them at their word.

Then came hordes of Parthians, Bedouins, Medes, Arabs and Egyptians, to swell the already enormous armies of the conqueror; and Jerusalem, after only twelve days' resistance, capitulated to the warriors of the Crescent.

**Surrender of  
Jerusalem to  
Saladin.**

The golden cross was taken down from the Temple, and, after eighty-eight years of Christian guardianship, the Holy Sepulchre fell once more into the hands of the Mahomedans.

PART II.  
IN PALESTINE : 1187—1291.

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In his hour of complete triumph, Saladin showed a degree of mercy rare in Oriental conquerors. After allowing the garrison to march out with the honours of war, he permitted the few surviving Knights Hospitaller (who had remained in Jerusalem) to ransom the poor townsfolk, who otherwise would have been sold into slavery, and he granted the request of the Hospitallers that ten of their number should wait in the city until their sick and wounded were sufficiently healed to bear the hazard and fatigue of transit.

But it was a sorrowful day when the Knights and Chaplains and the Serving Brethren were obliged to abandon the stately buildings which for seventy years had been the home of their Order and a haven of refuge for many sufferers. Their beautiful Church of St. John the Baptist was converted by the Saracens into a madhouse; their Church of St. Mary Magdalen fell into ruins; and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre became a Mahomedan mosque.

Greatly diminished in numbers—for the majority had fallen at Tiberias—much

**Saladin allows the Knights Hospitaller to save the poor from Slavery, and tend the Sick and Wounded.**

**The Order of the Hospitallers expelled from Jerusalem.**

Refounding of the  
Hospital at  
Margat.

reduced in riches, for (as we have seen) their *bezants* and *crusados* had been poured out freely to redeem the captured citizens from slavery—the Hospitallers conveyed their sick to Margat, a town still held by Christian forces, and re-established the convent and hospital as far as their straitened exchequer would allow.

The Ladies of the Order, under the altered circumstances, decided to return to Europe and carry on the work in branch establishments. They met with widespread sympathy and assistance, Henry II. granting them extensive lands in Somerset, and the Queen of Arragon welcoming them at Saragossa.

The Emperor  
Frederick  
Barbarossa sends  
a challenge to  
Saladin.

The news of the fall of Jerusalem excited horror throughout Europe, and aroused the German Emperor Frederick Barbarossa to take the Cross and gather together his vast array of vassals. In the twelfth century the Teutons accepted (and as far as possible practised) the code of chivalry, so Barbarossa sent a herald to Saladin,—for “the Imperial Majesty never assails anyone without sending a defiance, and always gives notice of war to his enemies.”\*

But the valiant old Emperor died of the hardships of the journey, and the command of his army fell to his second son, the Duke of Suabia.

At this time King Guy de Lusignan, whom the magnanimous Saladin had released after

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\* Vinsauf's *Itinerary of Richard I.* Book I., ch. 18.

only a year's imprisonment, was laying siege to Acre, which had been lost to the Christians after the fall of Jerusalem.

For more than two years he had beleaguered the city in vain. Its fortifications were of colossal strength, and it was garrisoned by Turks and Thracians,—nine thousand seasoned warriors. Even when King Philip of France and Leopold Duke of Austria brought their large armies to his aid, the Moslems still held out. But the situation was entirely changed by the arrival of Richard Cœur de Lion and the English Crusaders. Richard, the ablest of strategists, the most skilled military engineer of his time, and the most inspiring leader,—with his sappers and miners, his archers and men-at-arms, and, above all, his wonderful personal magnetism,—put new life into the weary Christian army. Though a severe illness smote him down in the midst of the contest, “he caused himself to be carried on a silken bed, to honour the enemy with his presence, and animate his men to fight,” and from his bed he aimed so unerringly with his crossbow that “he slew many with darts and arrows.”

The prolonged and arduous struggle ended by the capitulation of the Turks after three years' resistance.

The Knights of St. John then established their Hospital in the conquered city, and set up once more the altars which the Turks had overthrown and desecrated.

Immediately King Richard “turned his

**The Third  
Crusade. 1191.**

**King Richard I.  
of England arrives  
at Acre. 1191.**

**Capitulation of  
Acre to Richard  
Cœur de Lion.**

**The Hospital re-  
established. 1191.**

attention to the repair of the walls to a greater height and perfection than before they were thrown down; and he himself walked about, exhorting the workmen and masons."

**Ardour and energy  
of Richard Cœur  
de Lion.**

Of all the Western warriors, Richard Cœur de Lion not only was the ablest commander by land and sea, but the most fiery and fervent Crusader; and he possessed the power of infusing into his soldiers something of the same ardour which burnt so brightly in his own soul. During the strenuous and exhausting campaign he again and again renewed the hopes of men whose energies had flagged and whose spirits were breaking under continued hardship and privation. On one occasion he was adjured to abandon some of his horsemen who were being cut off by the Turks: "Better let them perish," said his advisers, "than expose your person and all Christendom to certain danger":—

"Then King Richard changed colour with indignation at these words, and spoke quickly in reply, 'If I neglect to aid my men whom I sent forward with a promise to support them, I shall never again deserve to be called King.' He said no more, but, spurring his horse, dashed into the middle of the Turks, . . . and brandishing his sword, he carved his way into the thickest ranks. . . . The enemy were slain and scattered, and our men returned with several prisoners into camp."\*

\* Vinsauf's *Itinerary of Richard I.* Book IV., ch. 31. Although King Richard spent little time in England, and was by blood more Norman than English, he is on a gigantic scale, the prototype of the modern British officer. The devotion and confidence which his men-at-arms felt for him, their conviction he would never fail them, never ask of them anything he was not prepared to do himself, bears an extraordinarily vivid resemblance to the faith of Tommy Atkins in his leaders to-day. A great modern British General was asked the secret of his own power over his men and consequent success in action. He replied in one word—"Sympathy."

But whereas the humbler ranks throughout the army almost worshipped Richard, he was regarded by the sovereign princes with bitterest and most vehement jealousy. Saladin, his mortal foe, whose dominions he invaded and whose power he threatened, expressed ungrudging admiration for his consistent strength and prowess, but the Christian Kings, his allies, thwarted him at every turn. Rather than allow the glory of the capture of Jerusalem to fall to him—as it assuredly would have done, for he was the one military genius in their midst—they insisted upon crying out for “peace” just at the crucial moment when success was within view. Richard—who in every danger had been “the first to advance and the last to retreat,” and whose exploits at the battle of Arsouf had seemed to his adversaries something “more than human,”—was helpless in the face of French, Italian, and Austrian intrigues.

All that mortal man could do to make the Allies follow up his victory he did; but did in vain.

The Knights Hospitaller (who were of many different nationalities) had given him their strong support; and, “bold as lions,” they were eager to regain possession of their Hospital and churches in the Holy City; but even with the Knights Hospitaller of St. John, the English Knights and men-at-arms were too reduced in number for it to be possible that they alone should storm the mighty fortifications of Saracen Jerusalem.

**Great Victory of  
Richard Cœur de  
Lion at Arsouf.  
1191.**

**Eagerness of the  
Hospitallers to  
regain the Holy  
City.**

**The Allies basely  
desert King  
Richard and thus  
prevent the  
Christian re-  
capture of  
Jerusalem.**

The Latin and Teutonic armies—to their lasting dishonour—deserted in vast hordes to their ships; and it was Richard who protected the Syrian Christians by winning from Saladin a promise to leave them unmolested for three years, and give them peaceful access to the Sepulchre at Jerusalem. The English King said frankly that when the truce was ended he hoped to come back and renew the war. Saladin replied that if Allah indeed had destined him to lose the realm, he would better endure to lose it to King Richard than to any other man in all the world.

Then Richard embarked,

**The prayer of  
Richard Cœur de  
Lion.**

“and all the night his ship ran on her way by the light of the stars. When morning dawned, the King looked back with yearning eyes upon the land, and prayed aloud, “O Christ, grant me life and time to return and deliver Thy Holy Tomb!”

But another fate awaited him: shipwreck, betrayal, captivity, and unspeakable bitterness of spirit:—

“Shame be it said that one whom no enemy could resist, nor the whole force of Saladin could conquer, was seized and kept a prisoner in Germany.”\*

The jealous hatred his former allies had felt against him did not end with the Crusade. Nor did the respect and admiration of his Saracen enemies; many generations after his tragic death their chroniclers and poets still recalled his gallant exploits, and acclaimed him as the strongest, bravest and most noble adversary their race had ever known.

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\*Vinsauf's *Itinerary*. Book VI., ch. 37.

After the departure of King Richard, the Knights Hospitaller, with their Chaplains and the Serving Brethren, continued at Margat the work for which the Order had originally been founded in Jerusalem. They tended the sick and poor, protected the Christian pilgrims, gave hospitality to travelling European merchants, and toiled with unremitting zeal "in the service of mankind."

They were not, however, always able to refrain from serious quarrels with the Knights Templar; and after the capture of Damietta by King Andrew of Hungary, the differences and animosities of these two rival Military Orders were almost as evident as the disunion between the other sections of the army; the conquest therefore proved of short duration.

In 1228 Frederic II. of Germany, that most Oriental of Western Emperors, landed in Palestine. Excommunicated by the Pope, and accused of Mahomedan sympathies and habits, he was an incongruous Crusader; but as he happened to be a famous warrior, the Saracens—who had considerably declined in energy since the death of Saladin—offered no opposition to his advance. On the mere strength of his reputation and the size and discipline of his army, without striking a blow he secured an advantageous treaty, by which Bethlehem, Nazareth and Jaffa were restored to Christian rule. Though before his return to his own domains the Emperor caused himself to be crowned King in the Mosque of Omar in Jerusalem, this was a mere empty

**The Hospital at Margat.**

**Capture of Damietta by Andrew King of Hungary.**

**Disunion among Christians, and consequent loss of Damietta.**

**Crusade of Frederic II. of Germany. 1228. His large and formidable army; moral effect of its presence in Palestine.**

**Empty title of the German Emperor as King of Jerusalem; the Hospitallers refuse to be present at his Coronation.**

title, and the Hospitallers and Templars refused to be present at the coronation of an excommunicated prince.

**The Crusade of Richard Duke of Cornwall. 1240. Conspicuous services of the Hospitallers.**

In the subsequent successful Crusade of Duke Richard of Cornwall, the Hospitallers were honourably conspicuous, and expended both money and personal service in repairing the dismantled fortifications of Jerusalem, after Duke Richard had wrested the city from the control of the Egyptian Sultan. But before the work could be completed, a terrible horde of barbarians from the Caspian shores swept down upon Palestine.

**Fortifications of Jerusalem weakened; barbarian hordes choose this moment for invasion of Palestine.**

The Military Orders realised the magnitude of the danger and were prepared to meet it, but they were deplorably thwarted by the Patriarch of Jerusalem, who took upon himself the responsibility of advising a line of strategy entirely opposed to the opinions of experienced soldiers. The result was a disaster infinitely more overwhelming than the battle of Tiberias. Saladin had been an honourable foe, but the wild Korasmins were amenable to no rules of war. In Jerusalem they spared neither age nor sex, but doomed the entire population to a fate so hideous that it can never adequately be described. By the devilish stratagem of hoisting the Christian standard on the battlements, they decoyed into the city all the civilian fugitives and stragglers,—then fell upon them like wild beasts and murdered them with frightful, savage joy.

**Capture of Jerusalem by the barbarians. Terrible fate of the inhabitants.**

The Hospitallers and Templars fought to the utmost of mortal strength. Laying aside

their jealousies, their only rivalry was which of the two Orders should show the greatest valour. At Gaza, horde after horde of barbarians rolled down upon them in enormous masses; and though they fought for two days and two nights with almost superhuman resolution, they were finally overcome by sheer weight of numbers. Both Grand Masters fell sword in hand, and at the end of the battle only thirty Templars and sixteen Hospitallers were alive to capitulate.

In August, 1244, the news of this fearful disaster penetrated to France, where Louis IX., the most truly religious of French monarchs, was thought to be on his deathbed. Reviving as if by a miracle, the King took the Cross, and gathered together by degrees an enormous army. Chartering Genoese and Venetian merchant galleys, in 1248 he sailed *viâ* Cyprus to Egypt. Beginning his campaign auspiciously by the recapture of Damietta, had he pressed on rapidly he might have surprised and overthrown the enemy. But he made the fatal mistake of hesitating for several months, which gave the Egyptians time to mobilise all their forces.\* The disastrous battle of Mansourah, the King's conspicuous bravery, his capture by the Saracens, and the terrible sufferings of his army, wasted by disease and semi-starvation, have all been graphically described by the gallant Sire de Joinville, his devoted friend and vassal who shared his perils, glory, and misery.

**Almost super-human courage of Military Orders; defeat but not dishonour.**

**Saint Louis of France takes the Cross. 1244.**

**Capture of Damietta. 1248.**

**Battle of Mansourah; Defeat of the Christians; great bravery of the French King.**

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\* Napoleon's criticism of the campaign.

**Generosity of the Hospitallers.**

When King Louis in ransom for himself and his army agreed to pay the Sultan the enormous sum of 800,000 golden bezants, it was the Hospitallers who placed their entire treasury at his disposal.

**King Louis IX. refortifies Acre for the Hospitallers before returning to France.**

Forced to conclude a most disadvantageous treaty of peace, Louis and the broken remnants of his army made their way to Acre. There—at the urgent entreaty of the Hospitallers—they lingered four years, and did not sail for France until they had so strengthened the fortifications of the famous city that it seemed impregnable.

**Bitter animosity and open enmity between Templars and Hospitallers.**

After the departure of King Louis, the ever-smouldering animosity between the Templars and the Hospitallers flared up anew, and, though sworn to draw sword only against the infidel, to the scandal of Christendom they decided their quarrel in a pitched battle. The Hospitallers were victorious; but both Orders shared the just retribution for turning their arms against each other instead of against the enemy; for they subsequently lost Azotus, Antioch, Laodicea, and Karac, from sheer lack of adequate numbers to continue holding them against the Moslems.

**Disastrous results of fratricidal strife.**

Nor did the Second Crusade of Louis of France enable them to win back their lost possessions, for its course was diverted into Africa, and on August 25th, 1270, amidst the fever-breeding swamps of Tunis, the King breathed his last, lying upon ashes and praying God to “sanctify and watch over” his people.

**Second Crusade of Saint Louis. His death at Tunis. August 25, 1270.**

Reft of their leader, and decimated by

pestilence, the French Crusaders made peace without awaiting the arrival of Prince Edward of England, who was relying upon their co-operation against the infidel.

The landing of the English army at Acre awakened the drooping hopes of the Knights Hospitaller for the reconquest of Jerusalem. These hopes seemed destined to fulfilment; but just as Edward's exploits were beginning to remind the Saracens that he was of the blood of Richard Cœur de Lion, he was struck down by the poisoned dagger of an assassin.

His wound appearing likely to be fatal, he summoned the Grand Masters of the Temple and the Hospital to witness his will.

There were ardent prayers to St. John for his recovery; and he rallied and by degrees regained his strength. But before he could resume the field against the Saracens, news of grave disturbances in England broke in upon his project for the conquest of the Holy City. Intending to return—but never fated to fulfil this cherished wish—he took reluctant leave of the Knights Hospitaller and set sail for home.

For the Hospitallers in Palestine his departure marked the beginning of the end.

The final catastrophe—of which there had been sinister foreshadowings—was ultimately brought about through the degeneracy, moral and physical, of the motley population of Acre.

At this time the metropolis of Christianity in the East, Acre was famous for its wealth and beauty; contemporary chroniclers never

**Arrival at Acre of Prince Edward and the English Army.**

**Prince Edward wounded by an assassin. Grand Masters of the Military Orders witness his will. June 18, 1272.**

**Departure of Prince Edward for England.**

**Acre, the head-quarters of the Hospitallers, its beautiful buildings and lawless inhabitants.**

tire of describing its many churches with their priceless stained-glass windows, its pure-white marble palaces, sweet-scented gardens, and cool spacious courtyards. They eulogise the broad and stately streets, across which stretched embroidered canopies and silken awnings tempering the bright light of the sun. But the population thronging in these streets was reminiscent of the Tower of Babel. Of seventeen conflicting races, each speaking a different tongue, amenable to different laws, and acknowledging no community of interests, these people showed all the worst symptoms of combined Eastern and Western decadence.

Some unwarrantable acts of brigandage, committed by these so-called Christians against Moslems in the neighbouring districts, provoked the Sultan to demand a proper reparation. His requests were so entirely reasonable, and the offenders so manifestly in the wrong, that the Grand Masters of the Military Orders emphasised the need for prompt atonement. They also pointed out that the Sultan's army was of enormous strength and number, and that to refuse his just demands would be impolitic. The citizens, debased, depraved, and incorrigibly wanton, accused these Knights of "cowardice," and sent an insolent defiance to the Sultan.

**Citizens flout expert military advice.**

Precisely as the Hospitallers had feared, the Sultan saw in this affront a pretext for the overthrow of the last stronghold of Syrian Christianity. Hearing that he had mustered

160,000 Foot and 60,000 Horse, the Military Orders took pity on the unworthy citizens, and put the women and children on board some of the galleys of the Order, in charge of seamen competent to take them to the island of Cyprus, the nearest and safest place of refuge.

Beaujeu, Grand Master of the Temple, who by common consent had assumed the supreme command, had made preparations for a protracted siege before the attacking army was in sight. Indignantly he repelled an attempt of the Sultan's General to make him betray the city for an enormous sum in gold. Then the contest began, and, after a terrific struggle, it was the Hospitallers, under Villiers, their Grand Master, who succeeded in driving back the Moslem hordes even after their battalions had actually stormed the ramparts.

But this was the last gleam of success before the final crushing overthrow. After a renewed and furious series of assaults from the enraged and baffled enemy, the fortress was carried at last over the dead bodies of Knights of the White Cross and the Red, who fought until they fell. Grand Master Beaujeu of the Temple was among the slain.

Then at the very last—as the enemy was pouring into the city and the streets ran rivers of blood—Villiers, Grand Master of the Hospital, performed a feat which won him imperishable glory.

The surviving Knights were few and almost dropping with exhaustion; but Villiers—who had led them out in a last desperate sortie—

**Siege of Acre by the Sultan. 1291.**

**Templars and Hospitallers have now no rivalry except which shall be the bravest.**

**Storming of Acre by the Sultan's Army. Splendid courage of the Grand Master of the Hospitallers.**

prayed fervently that they should yet uphold the banner and traditions of their Order.

**An ever-memorable exploit.**

Rallying them with inspiring words and dauntless resolution, he made them cut their way through to his galley at anchor in the harbour. From the decks his archers kept up a volley of arrows against the Moslem squadron which strove to cut off the retreat of these the last survivors of the once-great Christian army.

As the ship weighed anchor, and turned its golden prow towards Cyprus, the favouring wind which filled its purple sails wafted from the receding shore exultant yells of the ferocious conquerors revelling in the stricken city.

And so the Hospitallers departed from the Holy Land, ruined and defeated—but ever unshaken in faith, unbroken in courage, and eager to hand on the Torch.

### PART III.

## IN CYPRUS AND RHODES: 1291—1522.

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Cyprus—that vine-clad island which the ancient Greeks after the Trojan war had wrested from Phœnician settlers—had fallen in turn to Ethiopian, Assyrian, Egyptian, even Persian conquerors, before the Roman legions mastered it. After the wreck of Rome by the barbarian hosts, it fell sometimes to Saracenic, sometimes to Byzantine lords, until in 1191 King Richard Cœur de Lion captured it, and gave it to Lusignan, the conquered King of Jerusalem. Guy de Lusignan founded a dynasty; and a century later, when the remnant of the Hospitallers from Acre set foot upon the island, they were welcomed by King Henry de Lusignan, Crusader by inheritance, a friend and ally of the Military Orders.

He gave a house to the fugitive Hospitallers at the town of Limasol, in one of the most beautiful and fertile parts of his small Kingdom.

Soon the Brethren of the Order overseas—in England, France, and Spain, in Scotland,

**Capture of Cyprus  
by Richard Cœur  
de Lion. 1191.**

Ireland, Portugal, and Italy—opened their coffers to send treasure and supplies, and, better still, despatched to Cyprus some of their strongest Knights to enable the gallant Grand Master Villiers to re-establish his Hospital.

**The Hospital for the fourth time re-established. 1291.**

Founded in Jerusalem, re-founded at Margat, and then again at Acre, the Hospital of St. John was now for the fourth time re-established.

**Sufferings of Christians condemned to slavery by the Turks.**

Although the Holy Land had fallen back under the dominion of the Crescent banner, pilgrims still made their toilsome and dangerous way to Palestine, facing indescribable fatigues and sufferings, and dreading most of all the Barbary Corsairs. To be captured by these merciless pirates meant a life of slavery, agony and bitter degradation in the galleys. Chained to wooden benches, night and day, these captives toiled and laboured at the oars; and if they flagged, they smarted beneath the lash of taskmasters whose cruelty to Christians was proverbial throughout the known world.

But a new maritime power was destined to arise. After the Hospitallers were settled in Cyprus, they went sailing in their galleys to the ports of Italy and the Adriatic; and taking on board all pilgrims seeking passage to the Holy Land, they waited to bring the travellers back to Europe. While carrying to and from the Syrian coast this cargo of devoted souls, the Hospitallers not infrequently were menaced and attacked by Barbary and Levantine pirates. The Turkish and Saracenic sea-

wolves then discovered with dismay that the White Cross Knights could fight as formidably on a galley's deck as from behind the ramparts of a fortress.

Then the Corsairs, for centuries the terror of the Mediterranean, began to find their tyrannous ascendancy persistently disputed and opposed.

The capture of Rhodes in the summer of 1310, by Villaret, Grand Master of the Hospitallers—who, like his predecessor Villiers, was Admiral or General as the occasion required—marked the beginning of a new era.

From the famous harbour (famous even in pre-Saracenic times when Rhodes had been a centre of Hellenic power, art and culture), the Hospitallers were able to send out a rapidly increasing fleet. The day of reckoning had come; no longer were the slave-markets of Alexandria and Constantinople thronged with captive Christians.\* No longer did incalculable numbers of Latin, British and Teutonic slaves tug at the oars beneath the decks of Turkish ships. The Turks learnt how it felt to labour in the galleys of the Hospitallers. And the tireless energy of the White Cross Knights in the protection of the weak against oppression, cruelty and outrage, won them the gratitude of every sick and poor or timid pilgrim; while the maritime and military

**A new maritime power.**

**Capture of Rhodes by the Hospitallers. 1310.**

**The Barbary Corsairs no longer supreme in the Mediterranean.**

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\* Amongst the slaves the Hospitallers released when (in 1365) they captured Alexandria, was Pierre de St. Georges, a nephew of the Pope,

strength which made them able so effectively to help the helpless, caused them also to be respected and feared by the great Powers.

Their influence extended far and wide, and they even made alliance with the Persian Shah and with the ruler of Armenia.

In 1365 their storming of Alexandria cost the lives of over a hundred of the bravest Knights. Alexandria had then become a *rendezvous* for pirates, so its capture, and the destruction of the Turkish shipping in the harbour, was a necessary phase in the unending task of breaking the sea-power of the Moslem.

In 1367 the Hospitallers joined forces with the King of Cyprus and the Genoese Republic to recapture Tarsus, Tripoli, Bellinas and Laodicea.

During the closing decade of the fourteenth century they went to the aid of Sigismund King of Hungary, whose gallant struggle against the invading tide of Turks and Serbians had roused the sympathy of France, Burgundy, and Venice.

As at Tiberias more than two hundred years before, although the Hospitallers fought with characteristic skill and valour, they fought a losing battle—sacrificed to the obstinacy of the Count de Nevers, who waived aside the sound strategic counsel of the King of Hungary, just as King Guy of Jerusalem had flouted the solemn warnings of Raymond of Tripoli.

The consequent overthrow of the allied armies at Nicopolis, and the massacre by the Sultan Bajazet of 10,000 Christian prisoners

**Capture of  
Alexandria by the  
White Cross  
Knights. 1365.**

**Capture of Tripoli.  
1367.**

**The Hospitallers  
aid King  
Sigismund of  
Hungary against  
the Turks.**

**Battle of  
Nicopolis;  
disaster to the  
Christians. Sultan  
of Turkey  
massacres  
10,000 prisoners.**

on the banks of the Danube, was the prelude to a period of increasingly frightful conflict between the forces of the East and West.

A new and still more terrible foe to Christianity arose in the person of Timour, a Tartar chief.\* Destining himself for sovereignty of the entire world, and seeking to gain that mastery by terrorism, cruelty, and most colossal arrogance, Timour felt towards the Order of St. John a bitter hatred, not unlike the hatred of the Prussian warlords towards the British Empire to-day. To Timour, the armoured galleys of the Hospitallers, and the maritime supremacy they typified, seemed as obnoxious as the Navy of Great Britain to the Kaiser Wilhelm.

The aspiring Tartar therefore beleaguered Smyrna, one of the White Cross strongholds; and, though the Knights fought resolutely, dauntlessly, superbly, the Tartar battering-rams at last effected breaches in their walls. Then Timour's artillerymen inserted into the gaps large wooden planks well-saturated with naphtha. These they ignited; and as the flames devoured the wood, great masses of the ramparts came down with a reverberant crash; whereon the Tartars, yelling with savage joy, hurled themselves into the citadel, and hoisted their black flag—the harbinger of death.

Next day, when the fleet from Rhodes appeared in sight, Timour announced his victory by shooting from his siege-machines on

**"Tamburlaine the Great,"** a Tartar chief, destines himself to world-sovereignty.

**Siege of Smyrna;**  
gallant defence by  
the Hospitallers.

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\* The *Tamburlaine the Great* of Marlowe's tragic drama.

to their decks the heads of the brave Hospitallers who had chosen rather to die than yield.

**Tartar chief wrecks Smyrna.**

Timour's triumph at Smyrna—a town he wrecked as thoroughly as the Prussians now have wrecked Louvain—encouraged him to undertake the overthrow of the Knights Hospitaller at Rhodes. But before he could attempt a landing on their vigilantly guarded shores, news reached him that the Emperor of India at the head of a large force had crossed the eastern frontier of his Kingdom and was pressing on towards his capital. Timour hastened back to grapple with the invading enemy.

**Ignominious end of Timour, the would-be world conqueror.**

Fortunately for European civilisation, instead of attaining universal sovereignty the Tartar chief lost all that he had gained, and then death smote him down.

**Sultan ostentatiously signs peace treaties, and goes to war. 1453.**

For a while there was peace; but when in 1453 Constantinople was attacked by the Sultan Mahomet II.—in cynical violation of the numerous treaties he had signed so ostentatiously—the Hospitallers prepared for rigorous defence. “Constantinople first, then Rhodes,” had been the Sultan's threat; and on May the 29th Constantinople had fallen.

**Capture of Constantinople by the Turks.**

Then Sultan Mahomet sent the Knights of the White Cross a summons to be vassals to his throne and pay a yearly tribute.

“God grant,” replied the Grand Master, “that I may not leave as slaves or vassals the Order I found free and glorious. If the Sultan wishes to be lord of Rhodes, he must pass over my dead body.”

The subsequent contest, and the successful resistance of the Knights under their heroic Grand Master Peter d'Aubusson was one of the most famous achievements of the century.

The ultimate victory of the White Cross against enormous odds seemed so miraculous that it was attributed to supernatural aid from John the Baptist, patron of the Order. A vision of the saint clad in goat-skins, and followed by angels bearing flaming swords, was said to have been seen not only by the Christians but by the Turks.

The following year Sultan Mahomet died, lamenting he was cut off too soon to wipe out his defeat.

Again there was a lull; but in 1522, the Sultan Solyman, having captured Belgrade, resolved to conquer Rhodes. He went through a preliminary formula of expressing devotion to the cause of peace and declaring the guilt of the war must be upon the Knights of the White Cross if they did not "instantly surrender the island and fortress."

The Grand Master at this period was the celebrated Villiers de L'Isle Adam, one of the ablest and most dauntless of the many noble Frenchmen whose exploits have reflected glory on the Order.

For six months the Moslems poured against him their unending series of battalions, led by generals versed in all the arts of war; and from June to December the Grand Master and his Knights beat back the torrent of invasion; but at last the civil population—terrified by

**The Siege of Rhodes. 1480.**

**Victorious resistance by the White Cross Knights.**

**Death of Mahomet II. 1481.**

**The Sultan Solyman expresses devotion to peace, and immediately begins a war of aggression.**

**Second Siege of Rhodes by the Sultan's enormous naval and military forces. 1522.**

Solyman's persistence, and by his threat to cut off all their ears and noses if they did not immediately capitulate—besought their brave defenders to make terms with the enemy.

Had it been a question only of the personal feelings of the Knights, they would have fought to the last rather than let their stronghold fall into the hands of the infidel. But they had reason to fear that if they did not soon surrender, the despairing inhabitants intended to betray them to the Sultan; and so the Grand Master decided to frustrate this base design and make his own conditions with the besiegers while there was still a hope of favourable terms.

He offered to give up the town and fortress provided the religion and persons of the citizens should be guaranteed safe from persecution; that the garrison should march out with the honours of war, and the Knights and Brethren should embark in their own galleys, taking such of the inhabitants as chose to accompany them. The terms were gladly accepted by the enemy; and on Christmas Day, as the Turkish chroniclers triumphantly relate, the "Sublime Sultan"—with his white-robed bodyguard, his gold-fringed banners, his favourite regiment of janissaries, and his enormous retinue of warrior-nobles, "glittering with priceless jewels,"—made his state-entry into the city,

"to the sound of salvoes of artillery and in the midst of a dense crowd.

"The rest of the bodyguard, the musicians, and the officers of all the various corps,

**Capitulation of  
Rhodes after six  
months' defence.**

**Arabic description  
of triumphal entry  
of the Sultan  
Solyman into  
Rhodes. December,  
1522.**

followed the glorious Padishah, crying *Allah! Allah! By thy will the scimitar of Mahomed has captured this proud fortress!*

“In this manner the Sultan went as far as the Temple of San Givan\* and there, where the infidel [Christians] adored an idol, he, the blessed conqueror, addressed a prayer to the true God.”†

It was then explained to L'Isle Adam that he was required to pay his respects to Solyman in person before he could depart; and accordingly, on the last day of the year, he presented himself in the camp of the Sultan and requested a farewell audience. The young Ottoman Emperor kept him waiting for many hours on a cold winter's day, in hope of humbling him; but when at last the Grand Master was admitted to the imperial presence, his venerable appearance, his noble dignity, and his lofty equanimity, impressed even his arrogant conqueror.

Praising the gallant and prolonged defence, and complimenting the Grand Master upon his generalship, the Sultan proceeded to offer him a high command in the Moslem army if he would renounce Christianity and worship Allah and the Prophet Mahomed.

L'Isle Adam's reply was brief but characteristic:

“After a life spent—not ingloriously—in combating for my faith, if I could abandon that faith for worldly gain and glory, the

**The Sultan's offer  
to the Grand  
Master L'Isle  
Adam.**

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\* Church of St. John the Baptist.

† Arab Chronicle of Ahmet Hafiz. (Quoted by General Porter. *History of the Knights of Malta*. 2nd edition. p. 376.)

Sultan himself would have a right to withdraw the esteem he has just now been pleased to express. I ask only of his magnanimity that the terms of the capitulation may be maintained inviolate."\*

Departure of the  
Hospitallers from  
Rhodes. January  
1, 1523.

Next morning—a wild and stormy New Year's Day—the Grand Master and the Hospitallers left Rhodes for ever, taking with them in their galleys four thousand of the inhabitants who preferred to abandon home and country rather than trust the mercy of the infidel.†

And thus, after two hundred and twelve years, the Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem went forth again into the world—defeated, homeless, sorrowful; but still inspired by that brave unconquerable spirit

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\* High tribute is paid to L'Isle Adam by a modern British General:—

"The heroism and grandeur of his character were such that the clouds of adversity only set it forth in greater lustre. The gallant defence of Rhodes, although ending in the worst disaster that had occurred since the loss of Jerusalem, has been so imperishably connected with him that he has become more distinguished by his conduct during that calamitous epoch than many a successful leader."

General Porter's *History of the Knights of Malta*. 2nd edition. p. 398.

†Their decision was wise, for the conditions of the capitulation were broken. The janissaries ill-treated the women, desecrated the churches, looted the shops and houses, and committed all the outrages against which the Grand Master had done his utmost to secure the townsfolk.

When reminded of the promises made to the Christians, the Moslem officers (like some of the Prussian officers in Louvain) excused themselves by saying they could not control their men. But when the Sultan suddenly announced that he would execute any officer who continued to countenance acts contrary to the terms of the capitulation, the disorder ceased immediately.

which had over and over again enabled the Order to wrest victory from the jaws of defeat.

“Something ere the end,  
Some work of noble note, may yet be done.  
..... And tho'  
We are not now that strength which in old  
days  
Moved earth and heaven,—that which we are,  
we are;  
*One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will  
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.*”

PART IV.  
IN THE BRITISH ISLES: 1102 (?)—1579.

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Early in the twelfth century—and within a few years after the crucial day when the Crusaders carried Jerusalem by storm, and freed the Rector of the Hospital from grim imprisonment—the Order established itself in England, the Prior selecting for headquarters the village of Clerkenwell, just outside the city of London. There, amidst “fields for pasture” and “delightful meadowlands with flowing streams,” he superintended the building of a Convent, Church and Hospital of St. John.

**The Order of St. John established at Clerkenwell.**

Invited to Scotland by the pious David I. (Saint David), the Order flourished north of the Tweed in the succeeding reigns, and received further endowments from King William the Lion.

**The Hospitallers in Scotland and Ireland.**

In Ireland, Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Pembroke (the famous “Strongbow”), commander of Henry II.’s army of invasion, conferred upon the Hospitallers (in 1174) the Priory and woodlands of Kilmainham; and thence they

**Kilmainham Priory conferred upon the Hospitallers by “Strongbow,” Earl of Pembroke. 1174.**

gradually extended their domains. In Meath, and Louth, in Waterford and Cork, in Sligo, Wexford, Carlow and Kildare they held estates, and tended the sick assiduously.

But no Irishman or Scotsman ever attained the supreme dignity of Grand Master of the Order.\* Among the sixty-nine Grand Masters (from the founding of the Military Order by Raymond du Puy in 1118 to its melancholy extinction in the last years of the eighteenth century), there were several Italians, Spaniards, Portuguese, and English of Norman extraction. There was one German, Ferdinand von Hompesch—now only remembered for his ignominious surrender of Malta to the forces of Napoleon. The majority of Grand Masters were French, and France should be proud that for nearly six centuries she supplied the most famous Order in Christendom with such a notable succession of saintly warriors and vigorous administrators.

The Knights Hospitaller themselves, however, laid little stress on differences of nationality; their object rather was to blend the spiritual and material strength of all the Western nations to resist the periodic waves of Saracenic conquest and aggression.

Yet while embodying this unity of aim and spirit, the Hospitallers showed wonderful adaptability in the external sphere of their services; and it is this combination of brilliant versatility with heroic constancy which made

**Mediæval  
Hospitallers strive  
to unite all  
Christian nations  
to stem the tide  
of Mahomedan  
invasion.**

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\* The heads of the European commanderies were styled Grand Prior.

them so great a moral and practical force wherever they succeeded in penetrating.

Medical and military experts in Jerusalem, at Acre they had begun to realise the importance of commanding the sea; and so at Rhodes and Malta they were able to translate into accomplished fact the lessons their Order learnt during the time their Hospital had been established in the famous Syrian seaport. In England—where they neither needed to repel Mahomedan invaders, nor to sail the seas in chase of Barbary Corsairs—they adapted themselves to the more peaceful circumstances, and added to their medical and surgical attainments an interest in agriculture and education.

**Versatility of the  
Knights and  
Brethren.**

As their vow only to draw sword against the infidel debarred them from all active part in wars between the Christian Princes, their history in England becomes much less emotional, less epic, less dramatic than when their Hospitals were held at the sword's point against an Oriental enemy.\* Unbroken peace, however, was not to be their fate, not even in the then idyllic village of Clerkenwell.

In spite of their unfailing charity, their skill and knowledge rendered them objects of suspicion to the envious demagogue Wat Tyler, who, in sheer wanton lust for destruc-

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\* Occasionally this rule was broken by individual Knights. Sir Giles de Argentine (whose gallant death at Bannockburn Sir Walter Scott describes in *The Lord of the Isles*) was a White Cross Knight (not Red Cross as Sir Walter makes him); and at the battle of Flodden Field, the Grand Preceptor of Scotland was killed fighting for James IV. against England.

tion, incited his rabble to attack the Church and Priory of St. John, and to make bonfires of the Hospitallers' library. Many valuable works on medicine, law, theology, and history—Arabian and Persian as well as French and Latin—were thus lost to the Order.\*

The Hospitallers—though individually renouncing all possessions save their robes and armour and their long cross-handled swords—were, as a community, extremely wealthy. But just as the strength and intellect of the Knights and Brethren were expended "*in the service of mankind*," so was their rich exchequer. They were regarded as the just and honourable trustees of funds for public use; and were selected to receive and administer the confiscated property of the Templars, when (through the machinations of the King of France), the Order of Knights Templar was abolished.

The Priory was rich in masterpieces of Western and Byzantine art, but these—with the collection of sumptuous illuminated books and precious documents—were sacrificed to the blind irrational fury of the mob. Sacrificed also was the Grand Prior, Sir Robert Hales, whom they slaughtered wantonly; and, having beheaded him on Tower Hill, they proceeded to burn and almost entirely destroy the beautiful and stately Priory, which for over two hundred and fifty years had been a centre of charitable exertions and civilising influences *pro utilitate hominum*.

**Church and Priory of St. John attacked by the demagogue Wat Tyler; destruction of the Library.**

**Hospitallers appointed to administer confiscated property of Knights Templar. 1314.**

**Murder of the Grand Prior, and burning of Clerkenwell Priory by Wat Tyler's mob. 1381.**

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\* "I cannot read, therefore I wish all books were burnt," says *Envy* in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*.

**Expedition of  
English  
Hospitallers to  
Palestine. 1237.**

This disaster took place long after the departure for Palestine of the most vigorous Knights of the Order. In 1237 a chosen band, headed by their Prior Theodoric, had

“set out from their house at Clerkenwell . . . with thirty shields uncovered, with spears raised, and preceded by their banner. . . They passed through the city that they might obtain the blessings of the spectators; and bowing their heads, with their cowls lowered, they commended themselves to the good prayers of all the people.”

So devastating were the ravages of battle with the Saracens, and the climatic hardships of life under the Syrian sun, that from all the branch establishments in Europe it was reasonable to despatch to Palestine from time to time the ablest fighting men. But when in 1381 the mob came roaring to the Priory gates, how poignantly the Serving Brethren and the defenceless Chaplains must have regretted the absence of the strongest of their military champions.

Patiently and laboriously the Priory was reconstructed; and in 1399—eighteen years after this cruel and inexcusable attack of the ungrateful populace upon their benefactors—the Hospitallers were able to entertain for a fortnight Henry Duke of Lancaster, soon afterwards to be King Henry IV. At the former Priory, Henry II., Edward I. of crusading fame, Eleanor his beautiful and heroic wife, John the treacherous brother of King Richard Cœur de Lion, Alexander Prince of Scotland, and many other royal and noble personages had been received as guests

**Many Royal guests  
at Clerkenwell  
Priory.**

by the Knights Hospitaller; and the theme of their talk had been "the tragical afflictions of the Eastern world," which stirred "the tears and deep compassion" of the Brethren.

In 1411 King Henry V. made a long sojourn at the Priory. He intended to take the Cross in strenuous effort for the freeing of the Holy Sepulchre, but died in France before he could accomplish this, his most cherished project.

In 1485 Richard III., the last Plantagenet King, held a royal council in the Great Hall of the Order of St. John, and denied a slanderous rumour which had accused him of intending to take as wife his niece the Princess Elizabeth of York—she who afterwards became the Queen of Henry VII., the first Tudor Monarch, enemy and conqueror of Richard.

In the reign of the second Tudor—Henry VIII. of unholy memory—came the suppression of the Religious Orders and the confiscation of their property.

**Suppression of the Religious Orders by Henry VIII.**

The Hospitallers in this time of persecution behaved with characteristic dignity:—

"The suppression of the Hospitallers deserveth especial notice, because the manner thereof was different from the dissolution of other religious houses. . . The Knights, being gentlemen and soldiers of ancient families and high spirits, would not be brought to present to Henry VIII. such puling petitions . . . as other Orders had done."\*

**Dignified conduct of the Hospitallers.**

Rather than indulge in base ignoble flattery, or deviate from any of their principles, the

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\* Fuller's *Holy War*, quoted in General Porter's *History of the Knights of Malta*. 2nd edition. p. 574.

English Knights, of their own accord, resigned their Priory and Hospital into the hands of the rapacious King.

Then the greater number of the military members of the Order escorted their lay and clerical Brethren to Malta. Of the few Knights who could not endure to exile themselves from England, Sir Adrian Fortescue and three others were executed for refusing to accept King Henry's new theology.

In 1548—by command nominally of the boy-King Edward VI., but actually of the Lord Protector Somerset—the Church of St. John was blown up with gunpowder, so that some of its materials could be used in building Somerset House. Only the Gothic crypt and the wrecked chancel still survived to indicate how beautiful the edifice had been.

But even after this calamity there was still to come one gleam of returning prosperity. The Catholic Queen Mary decreed the renewal of all the ancient privileges and prerogatives of the "Prior and Co-brethren of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem in England," and enabled them to begin rebuilding their beloved church.

But after Mary's brief and ill-starred reign, her Protestant successor, Queen Elizabeth, reversed her legislation, and dealt the final blow. Not merely did she annex the property of the Hospitallers, but—worse still—she conferred the Priory upon her Master of the Revels, who did not even appreciate the gift. He complained that it was uncomfort-

**Execution of Sir Adrian Fortescue and three other White Cross Knights, as martyrs to their faith.**

**Destruction of the Church of St. John. 1548.**

**Brief revival and final extinction of the Military Order of St. John in England. 1579.**

able and inconvenient, and that his troupe of actors found their clothes grow "musty, moth-eaten and rotten," by reason of "the dankness of the house, and want of convenient presses and other places requisite."

Heavy and sorrowful must have been the hearts of the last remnant of the once-powerful and famous Hospitallers of St. John, to see their church again desecrated, their Order—after six centuries of devoted work in England—scorned and banished, and their Great Hall, hitherto the scene of many royal conferences and noble gatherings, now a theatre for "Stage Plays and Comic Shows."

THE TATE LIBRARY,  
BRIXTON, S.W.

PART V.  
IN MALTA: 1530—1798.

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“ He has learnt much who is well acquainted with suffering ” ; and during the years of homeless wandering which followed immediately upon the loss of Rhodes, the faith and patience of the Hospitallers were severely tested. The Grand Master Villiers de L’Isle Adam was like a King without a Kingdom. But on March the 24th of 1530, the Emperor Charles V. conferred on the Order of St. John the perpetual sovereignty of the islands of Malta and Gozo, and the city of Tripoli, with all the castles and fortresses thereto belonging.

This imperial gift calls up a vision of the picturesque and stately Malta of to-day, of Valetta with its famous harbours, its massive fortifications, its superbly beautiful churches, and its Governor’s Palace—rich in tapestry and armour and the charm of dignified antiquity. But Malta, when granted to the Hospitallers, was a barren rock, its fortifications a few feeble ramparts and shallow ditches, its “ castle ” the inadequate Tower of

Malta in 1530.

St. Angelo (containing only, at the most, three pieces of artillery, and those three obsolete). The capital, inhabited by a population more Arabic than European in appearance, was a mere huddled mass of houses clustered upon a hill surrounded by a crumbling wall; and the Hospitallers, on taking possession of this desolate town and arid island, must poignantly have mourned the loss of Rhodes.

**Città Notabile, the old capital of Malta.**

Malta, however, was not without its noble families and its traditions of bygone wealth and greatness.

The *Melitas* of the Greeks, the *Ogygia* of the still earlier Phœnicians, it reached the height of its prosperity as a Roman colony, some six or seven hundred years before the Christian era. But when the Roman legions sank into luxury and ease, the terrible barbarian Vandals swept across the island like a destroying hurricane. They in their turn were dominated by the yet fiercer Goths; till the Goths were also fated to exemplify the parable of the strong man armed, who only keeps his house until there comes one stronger than he. In the time of Gothic decadence the Saracenic hosts became the masters of the island; till at last they too were overcome by skill and vigour greater than their own. Their conqueror was Count Roger of Sicily, whose kinsfolk had fought at Hastings and had seen the Norman Duke crowned King of England.

**Fame of Malta under Roman rule. 600 B.C.**

During the four and a half ensuing centuries, the Maltese—a race of mingled Saracenic and Sicilian blood—had gradually

deteriorated and dwindled, until in 1530 the entire population of the island numbered no more than seventeen thousand. But they responded gratefully to the inspiring influence and reconstructive rule of Villiers de L'Isle Adam; and in the next generation, under the leadership of the still greater Jean de la Valette—most famous of all the White Cross Knights—they rose to a height of moral and material prosperity which far exceeded even the traditional glories of their Greek and Roman past.

**Character of Jean de la Valette, greatest of all the Grand Masters. Analogy to Modern British Generals.**

The character of La Valette, a Frenchman by birth, displays in a supreme degree the very qualities which we are apt to claim as typically British. Sometimes his laconic speech and iron resolution suggest analogy to Wellington; sometimes (especially in his acute and penetrating comprehension of the soul and strategy of Moslem foes) he seems a prototype of Kitchener; while in his power of drawing forth the real affection and entire confidence of the rough soldiers of the lower ranks, he recalls most vividly Sir Redvers Buller, whose Tommies, during the time of worst reverses in South Africa, would come back singing into camp, content and even joyous in the conviction that though beaten to-day they would be led to victory by Buller to-morrow.

Born during the last decade of the fifteenth century, La Valette was only twenty when he joined the Order, and twenty-eight when he took part in the defence of Rhodes against the Sultan Solyman. From Malta he soon

became conspicuous in dashing expeditions against the Turkish pirates; and whether by sea or land he showed a tireless capacity for work, and steady zeal for the honour and service of the Order. Fervently though unostentatiously devout, in the intervals of his naval and military exploits he would lay aside his armour, resume the gown of black with the White Cross, and in the hospital or convent toil at humble tasks.

His physical strength was as remarkable as his moral austerity; and not even a terrible experience of capture and slavery in the hands of the pitiless Corsairs could tame his spirit or break his constitution.\*

Elected Grand Master at the age of sixty-three—after thirty-five years of almost incessant strain and hardship—it might have appeared as if his career must soon draw to a close; but the best was still to come, and the whole of his past life of strenuous achievement and ardent devotion was but the prologue to that great defence of Malta which has immortalised his name.

At this juncture the Order received a heavy blow in the loss of Tripoli. Taken by storm during the first Crusade in the eleventh century, lost after the wane of Christian military power in Palestine, but regained in 1367 with the aid of the Knights Hospitaller, and entrusted to the Order permanently by the Emperor

**Recapture of  
Tripoli by the  
Moslems.**

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\* He was ransomed by his Brethren; and many years later he in his turn captured Abda Racman, the Turk who had imprisoned and ill-treated him.

Charles V. in 1530, its recapture by the Sultan's forces sent a shiver of alarm through Mediterranean Christendom, and presaged another life-and-death struggle between the Crescent and the Cross.

The Ottoman Empire was still under the rule of the same Sultan Solyman who had driven the Hospitallers out of Rhodes. His reign during the intervening three-and-forty years had been one long triumphal pageant. Age had abated nothing of his thirst for conquests, and the vast armaments he kept in perpetual readiness for action were the terror of Europe.

“The fool fears not until the ill befalls”; but La Valette, bred to danger from his boyhood, was as far-seeing as courageous. He had long anticipated a supreme struggle with Solyman the Magnificent; so when in 1565, by means of the spies he kept at Constantinople, he learnt that Malta was to be the Sultan's next objective, he was neither surprised nor confounded.

Secretly and swiftly he sent his messengers abroad to every branch of the Order of St. John, summoning to his aid the best and bravest Knights;—and from Italy and France, from Arragon, Castile and Germany, there hastened in response the flower of White Cross chivalry.\*

Assembling the Knights around him, and adjuring them to stand firm in the noble cause

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\* The English branch had been suppressed fourteen years previously.

Solyman the  
Magnificent, the  
conqueror of  
Rhodes, the terror  
of Europe.

for which it was their privilege to live or die according to God's will, he led them to the Convent chapel, where they all received the Holy Communion together, and sought spiritual fortification for the coming struggle—a struggle so stupendous that even after La Valette's lifetime of preparation it might well have appalled any but the stoutest heart and most aspiring soul.

The behaviour of the Maltese population was admirable; they had perfect confidence in La Valette. There was no panic; even the women came forward to aid in the general preparations; and La Valette set the example of working with his own hands at strengthening the massive ramparts which he and his predecessors had been building in readiness for this crucial contest.

When Villiers de L'Isle Adam had persuaded the Emperor Charles V. to bestow the sovereignty of Malta upon the Order, this Grand Master had been largely determined in his choice by the configuration of the east and north side of the island, which possessed two natural harbours, subsequently fortified by the Knights of St. John and called by them respectively the Great Harbour and Marsa Muscetto. In order to understand the Turkish siege it is necessary to bear in mind that these two harbours are separated by the isthmus of Mount Sceberras, and that the fort of St. Elmo guarded the entrance to Marsa Muscetto. The Great Harbour, surrounded by hills, is diversified by an inland bay which separated

**Admirable courage  
of the Maltese.**

the suburb of Seneglea from the capital town of the Bourg; and at the extremity of the Bourg and facing Mount Sceberras the Castle of St. Angelo pointed its guns across the Great Harbour. St. Angelo, which in 1530 had been an interesting relic of antiquity rather than a useful fort, had before 1565 been almost completely rebuilt by the Knights of St. John, and was the citadel whence La Valette directed the famous operations against the forces of the Sultan Solyman.

On May the 18th, early in the morning, a signal gun from St. Angelo summoned the countryfolk to throng into the well-walled Bourg. The hour had come; the Turkish ships were sighted on the horizon.

The Sultan was not taking command in person; but he had sent the greater portion of his fleet and a large army. All on board were confident of victory.

There were a hundred and thirty armoured galleys, attended by a variety of smaller craft; and the troops consisted of thirty thousand men, of whom one thousand four hundred were the terrible janissaries.

To beat back these thirty thousand seasoned troops, the Christians—including hired Spanish soldiers, local militia, and sailors from the galleys—had less than nine thousand in all. Moreover, the Order of St. John had the depressing memory of the last siege of Rhodes in 1522—defeat after six months' titanic conflict. But "where the coward would despair, the brave man takes heart of grace"; and La

**The Christians  
with an army of  
9,000 prepare to  
face the Turkish  
Army of 30,000.**

Valette impressed not only upon his Order but upon the civil population his conviction that the forthcoming contest was destined to decide whether Islam or Christianity would rule the world. The Christians, he believed, would prevail, no matter how heavy the odds—unless dissension, treachery or cowardice crept in amongst them and thus unfitted them to be the champions of a holy cause.

**Islam or  
Christianity;  
which shall  
prevail?**

As the Turks were disembarking their troops in St. Thomas's Bay, a party of Knights were sent out to watch their proceedings and cut off any stragglers. One of these, La Rivière, was himself cut off and taken before the Turkish General, Mustapha Pasha, who questioned him as to the state of the defences.

La Rivière, as became a gallant Frenchman, was gay and debonair. The garrison, he said, was in extremely good heart, the city was provisioned against an interminable siege and resolved to hold out to the last man; but this resolution was not likely to be tested heavily, as the Order of St. John had a promise of co-operation from the Spanish and Austrian imperial fleet.

Considerably irritated by this tone of patronage, Mustapha Pasha accused his prisoner of mendacity, and put him to the torture to extract the truth.

This White Cross Knight, with his *élan* and his airy urbanity, was not devoid of the wisdom of the serpent; and while in the hands of his tormentors it occurred to him that, if he feigned to break down and confess, he might

**Strategy of La  
Rivière when  
tortured by  
Turkish General.**

mislead the heathen into opening the campaign by a strategic blunder. To give way too soon would have been inconsistent with the reputation of his Order, so he showed considerable power of endurance before he opened his lips. Then he gasped out that the General should concentrate his attack upon the Point of Castile. Gratified at having made the stubborn Christian speak, Mustapha Pasha immediately called up his janissaries. But on marching them to the north-east as indicated, it became obvious that he had been sent on a fool's errand; the Point of Castile was the strongest, not the weakest, part of the fortifications. He avenged himself by slaying the Knight who had presumed to mock him.

There was then a consultation between Mustapha and the Admiral Piali. They differed in opinion as to what should next be done. The Admiral strongly advised awaiting the arrival of Dragut, the famous Corsair, whose expert knowledge would be invaluable. But Mustapha, objecting to delay, began immediately to beleaguer Fort St. Elmo, which blocked the entrance to the stately harbour of Marsa Muscetto, where he aimed at anchoring the Turkish fleet.

His siege-guns being enormously powerful, and the Turks excellent artillerymen, the fort suffered severely, and its commander (a Spanish Knight, La Cerda) in open council demanded reinforcements, and declared he could not otherwise hold out for many days. La Valette sent him fifty Knights and two

**Differences of opinion between Turkish military and naval commanders.**

**Bombardment of St. Elmo.**

hundred Spanish soldiers, with a stern command to do his duty, and to cope with difficulties instead of complaining of them.

At this juncture Dragut, the pirate, arrived to reinforce his countrymen, with thirteen galleys and 1500 men. He condemned Mustapha's choice of St. Elmo as the first point of attack; operations, he said, should have been concentrated on the strongest, not the weakest, part of the enemy's defence—St. Elmo when captured would not give command of the island. But as the blunder had been committed, and it would look undignified to retreat, he proposed to abide by the mistake and push on the siege as vigorously as possible. He then made a feint of retiring, in order the more effectually to startle the enemy by a sudden attack. Taken by surprise, the fort would have fallen but for the gallant exploit of a young Spanish officer who, at the entrance to the drawbridge, maintained his post and withstood the onrush of the janisseries almost single-handed, until the garrison had time to come to his assistance.

The struggle was terrific, and from St. Angelo (La Valette's citadel) little could be distinguished by the watchers, for St. Elmo was enveloped in dense clouds of smoke. The guns thundered incessantly until sunset, when the Turkish standard was seen flying from the ravelin; but the White Cross still waved proudly over the fort; and the Turks retreated to their trenches after losing 2000 of their best men. The Christian loss was only a hundred,

**Dragut, the  
Corsair.**

**Gallant exploit  
of a Spanish  
Knight.**

**Turks lose 2,000  
men in the assault  
on St. Elmo.**

but twenty of these were Knights who could ill be spared, and Mustapha's artillery had done tremendous execution. La Valette sent immediate reinforcements, but found that the garrison, even the Knights, were all for abandoning the fort. Though not afraid to die when necessary and expedient, they objected to being sacrificed merely to prolong for a few days a resistance which they felt to be futile.

La Valette, however, had his strategic reasons for insisting on the holding of St. Elmo. Not only was it gratifying to see the enemy expending thousands of men in attacking the least important of the forts, but it happened that the Spanish Admiral had told La Valette he would only hazard the Emperor's fleet against the Turk provided the Christian flag had been kept flying on St. Elmo. The Grand Master therefore informed the weary garrison that if they did not appreciate their honourable task, they could withdraw, and he would replace them by other troops; but that hold the fort he must and would.

As La Valette had foreseen, they then begged to be allowed to maintain their post to the very end.

The Turks meantime were keeping up such a terrific fire of heavy guns that they gave the besieged no breathing space in which to repair the numerous breaches in their walls. For many days and nights the contest raged incessantly, and storming party after storming party was beaten back by the Christian Knights, who (once satisfied as to the strategic

Continued  
bombardment of  
St. Elmo.

need of holding out) were burning with zeal to prove that their previous hesitation had not been caused by cowardice.

From the Castle of St. Angelo, La Valette directed his artillery to rake the flank and rear of the Turkish army as it advanced to the attack; and shouts of encouragement and admiration from St. Angelo reached the gallant defenders of St. Elmo.

On one occasion they stood for six hours on their broken battlements and kept beating back battalion after battalion of Mustapha's janisaries, who hurled themselves again and again upon the stubborn Christians, and then retreated weary and baffled.

**Gallant defence  
of St. Elmo.**

The losses to the garrison were very heavy, but again by night La Valette poured in his reinforcements.

Dragut, the Corsair, then pointed out to Mustapha that as long as the Grand Master was able to send reinforcements after each assault, the garrison of St. Elmo would continue to hold out indefinitely. To prevent this, he constructed trenches in front of St. Elmo and on Mount Sceberras pointing across towards St. Angelo, and occupied the surrounding heights with his batteries, in such a way that by the 19th of June the investment was complete.\*

**Successful  
engineering of  
Dragut, the pirate**

It had been carried out under a heavy fire from St. Elmo, and Dragut—that ablest of

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\* The Corsair's name is still commemorated in Point Dragut, the spot on which he constructed his principal battery.

Turkish military engineers—was severely wounded ; but he continued to direct the operations, and for the next three days his guns kept up their incessant fire, answered by the guns of St. Elmo. Had not the lower portion of the castle been composed of solid rock, the garrison, even with all their courage and determination, could not have held out so long. At dawn on June the 22nd, after nearly four weeks of unsuccessful efforts, the Turks made another attempt to carry the fort by assault. Three times in succession they were beaten back, and when the sun sank in the west the tattered White Cross banner still showed plainly against the summer sky.

**Heroic struggle  
against enormous  
odds.**

That night a strong swimmer contrived to get across the Great Harbour to La Valette with a final appeal for help.

The Spanish Admiral's fleet was not in sight, though it had been for some days expected, and La Valette judged it useless to wait any longer in reliance on the imperial co-operation. He gave orders to withdraw the remnant of the garrison, and sent five large boats with a relieving force ; these were to bring the few survivors to a rocky islet in the harbour, whence by a secret and subterranean passage they could make their escape and reach the shelter of St. Angelo.

But the vigilant Turks, suspecting what was afoot, opened so raking a fire from Dragut's batteries that it was impossible to cross the water.

The garrison, then realising that the end was

fast approaching, assembled solemnly and silently in the little chapel of St. Elmo. Wounded, exhausted, and worn with many weeks of sleepless strife, for the last time they confessed their sins, partook of the Holy Communion, and commended their souls to God. Then, before daybreak, they prepared to meet the final assault.

Those who were too grievously wounded to walk or stand were carried in chairs to the broken ramparts, and there, cross-handled swords by their sides, they waited till the dawn began to glimmer and the Turkish battle-cry was heard again.

For four hours the conflict raged, and still the fort held out. Amazing at it seems, the Turkish losses were so heavy that Mustapha Pasha once more suspended the attack.

The Knights took advantage of the lull to bind up each other's wounds; only sixty men were still alive, and of those but a few dozen were unwounded.

Again Mustapha's trumpets sounded to the assault; and it was on June 23rd—the eve of the festival of St. John—that the White Cross standard, which had defied the infidel so long, at last was torn down. By this time all the defenders were dead or mortally wounded, and their bodies at the mercy of a ferocious enemy.

In the moment of victory—exasperated by the prolonged resistance and enormous losses—the natural ferocity of Mustapha's temper asserted itself. He ordered that the corpses of the Knights of St. John should be chosen

**The last gallant  
fight of the  
defenders of  
St. Elmo.**

**Turks carry  
St. Elmo by storm  
after four weeks'  
siege. June 23,  
1565.**

**Ferocious  
vengeance of  
Mustapha Pasha.**

**Emblem of the  
Cross gashed by  
Mustapha Pasha  
on the breasts  
of the dead  
Knights.**

**Garrison of St.  
Elmo had slain  
8,000 Turks out  
of 30,000.**

**Death of Dragut,  
the Corsair.**

out from amongst the heap of humbler dead, their heads struck off and put on poles, and their faces turned towards the still uninjured Castle of St. Angelo. Their bodies he then fastened on to planks nailed in the form of a cross, and with his scimitar he gashed the same hated emblem on each of their breasts.

But these gallant Knights had not died in vain; while during upwards of a month they had held the furious Turks at bay, they had slain 8,000 out of the Sultan's 30,000 men; and had shown by their invincible spirit what determined resistance was still to be expected from their brethren. Mustapha, standing among the ruins of St. Elmo, looked across the Great Harbour to the main fortress of St. Angelo and exclaimed, "Allah! Allah! what will the parent cost us when the child has been bought at such a price?"\*

After the taking of St. Elmo, Corsair Dragut, whose guns had contributed so largely to the victory, died of his wound; and he was a great loss to the Turks, for the surviving General and Admiral were inferior to him in ability, intensely jealous of each other, and beginning to be discouraged and doubtful of the ultimate result.

While Dragut lay dying in the Ottoman camp, the crucified dead bodies of the Knights, which had been thrown out into the harbour, floated on the surface of the water, and by

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\* The garrison of St. Elmo, by delaying the enemy in the manner described, fulfilled in the siege of Malta a part analogous to that of Belgium in the present European war.

sunrise of next morning they had drifted to St. Angelo.

The Christians, in an agony of grief and rage, demanded of each other if St. John had not forsaken them. Then La Valette assembled the garrison, townsfolk and all, and bade them rather strive to emulate the heroism of the dead than mourn their fate. What, he asked, could be more fitting than for Knights of St. John to lay down their lives for their faith on the eve of their patron Saint?—

“They have died a martyr’s death; they will reap a martyr’s reward.

“Do not be dismayed that the Moslem has at length succeeded in planting his accursed standard on the ruined battlements of St. Elmo. Has he not learnt a lesson which must strike dismay through his whole army? If that weak and insignificant fort could withstand his most powerful army for more than a month, how with a reduced force can he hope to succeed against far stronger works and a more numerous garrison? With us must be the victory. Let us on this holy day renew before the altar of God those vows of constancy which our slaughtered brethren have so nobly fulfilled.”

Meantime, the Turks were celebrating their success. The harbour Marsa Muscetto was now open to their fleet, and their galleys came streaming in, with banners flying, and martial music resounding triumphantly. Mustapha Pasha despatched the guns of St. Elmo to Constantinople as proof of his conquest; and

**La Valette exhorts  
the living to  
emulate the  
heroism of the  
dead.**

**Mustapha Pasha summons the Grand Master to capitulate.**

to the Grand Master he sent a Greek slave with a flag of truce and an offer of security of life and property for all the garrison and inhabitants if they would immediately surrender. Pointing to the ditches surrounding St. Angelo, La Valette replied, "There is the only ground in the island I intend to surrender, and that as a grave for the Turkish army."

**Spirited reply of the Grand Master.**

Thus defied, Mustapha Pasha pushed on the work as vigorously as possible, and one morning the Maltese woke to find their Great Harbour floating with the enemy's galleys. Mustapha had made his Christian slaves carry a number of galleys overland across the isthmus of Mount Sceberras, as he could not capture this harbour any other way.

**Turks reinforced by the Viceroy of Algiers.**

In a few days' time the Turks received a reinforcement of 2,500 Corsairs, under Hassan, Viceroy of Algiers, a son-in-law of Dragut, and almost equally celebrated as a successful pirate and a dashing leader.

Hassan, disdainful that so little had been achieved relative to the enormous losses, offered to lead the assault next day upon the land side of the Bourg, while one of his officers led the attack upon the spur by water.

On the early morning of July the 15th—a day of glittering sunshine—the action opened with the advance of the Turkish flotilla:—

"It was a beautiful sight, and, but for the fearful stake at issue, would have struck with admiration the gazers who crowded the bastions around. The war, however, had been carried on with so much ferocity . . . that the only feeling aroused by the display was one of rancorous hatred. Men called to mind the bar-

barous outrages which had been perpetrated on their brethren at St. Elmo, and each one, as he gazed on the proudly advancing foe, registered a vow that he would avenge that fatal day. In advance of the squadron came a boat containing two Turkish priests, who recited from the Koran such texts as were most likely to arouse the enthusiasm of their followers. When they neared the scene of strife, these holy men cared no longer to occupy their conspicuous position, but . . . returned to camp and watched the conflict from a safe distance.”\*

The ensuing combat was one of the hottest which had yet taken place, and the two Turkish Corsair leaders showed extraordinary vigour, bravery, and perseverance. The fighting lasted till sundown. At the end of the day the Algerine Corsairs had lost nearly three thousand men, while the Christian losses were under three hundred. Sorrowfully Hassan had to admit that this enemy was unlike any other he had encountered in his hitherto always-victorious career.

From this time onwards, the Turkish General

“resolved to carry out his point rather by the harassing frequency of his attacks than by their intensity. Each day, therefore, witnessed a repetition of the struggle at one or both points of attack. . . . At the appointed signal the besiegers would rush forward with shouts and yells, and would make a dash at the gaping breach, the shrill notes of the atabal ringing forth with inspiring tones. . . . Then would ensue that hand-to-hand encounter, in which the chivalry of St. John, standing on the summit of the breach, invariably proved superior to the assailants struggling up the rugged pathway. Less and less obstinately would the

**Unsuccessful  
attack by Hassan,  
Viceroy of  
Algiers.**

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\* Major-General Porter's *History of the Knights of Malta*. 2nd ed., pp. 457-458.

combat be maintained, until the signal of retreat, rising above the din of battle, announced one more failure to the Turk, and one more triumph to the Christian.”\*

And so July waned into August, and still the contest raged. La Valette, knowing the position to be growing daily more desperate, had sent his Ambassador to the Spanish Viceroy of Sicily, protesting against the delay of the promised reinforcements. The Viceroy's Council actually proposed to leave Malta to its fate; but fortunately this dishonourable and cynically selfish advice was scorned, and a message was sent to La Valette that if he could hold out till the 31st of the month he could most certainly rely upon receiving relief by that date.

While the General Mustapha and the Corsair Hassan had been conducting the daily onslaught, the Admiral, Piali, had succeeded in laying a mine under the bastion; and on August 18th the garrison were startled and horrified by a terrible explosion. Having regarded it as impossible for the enemy to mine the solid rock, the nature of the attack took them completely by surprise, and before the smoke had cleared away, the Turks were in possession of the Bourg. The alarm pealed out from the great bell of the convent church, and a priest rushed to La Valette and begged him to retreat into the fort of St. Angelo, as the Bourg was hopelessly lost.

**Exploit of  
Turkish Admiral.**

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\* Major-General Porter's *History of the Knights of Malta*. 2nd ed., p. 464.

Picking up a pike and rushing to the scene of action, the Grand Master rallied the amazed and weary garrison, and inch by inch the Turks were again driven back. La Valette was wounded, but he had saved the situation; and to put an end to any fear of further panic, wounded as he was, he took up his quarters close by the exposed bastion. The Knights besought him to go back into the Castle, but he was adamant in his refusal; and the same night the Turks attacked again, again to be repulsed.

The 19th, 20th, and 21st of August each saw another such assault, and still the Turk was held at bay; but after each terrible struggle the number of the Knights was further reduced, and at last hardly one amongst them remained unwounded. La Valette's nephew was killed in a daring sortie, and it was with great difficulty that the Brethren secured his dead body and saved it from mutilation. La Valette was devotedly attached to this young man, but he sternly checked any attempt at special condolence. All the members of the Order (he said) were equally dear to him, and his nephew no more to be regretted than any other.

While the besieged were reduced to a state which taxed human endurance to the utmost, the besiegers were becoming more and more discouraged, and a frightful pestilence had broken out amongst them. But Mustapha, spurred by a fear that the Sultan Solyman would execute him if he returned defeated, laboured to put heart into his men, and de-

**La Valette turns  
defeat to victory.**

cided to make a surprise assault upon all points simultaneously.

But some unknown friend of the besieged shot into the town an arrow with a piece of paper on which was the one word *Thursday*. Thursday would be August 23rd, and accordingly on that morning the garrison was ready; every member of the Order of St. John whose wounds did not actually prostrate him, left the Hospital and came out on to the shattered ramparts.

**Triumph of spirit over matter.**

From a material standpoint, it would seem impossible for these weary and wounded men to repel a general assault; but war is primarily a matter of spirit, and La Valette's unconquerable spirit stimulated and upheld each individual combatant. Again the enemy was beaten back, and even the janissaries began to murmur that it evidently was not the will of Allah that the Crescent should prevail in Malta.

The last day of August arrived; but the promised Spanish reinforcements were delayed. They had started out from Syracuse only to be scattered by a terrific storm, which drove them back into the port to refit. The first of September arrived; the second, third, fourth, and fifth, and still no Spanish fleet.

**Delay of reinforcements; impending defeat of Christian garrison.**

The garrison was almost in despair; there seemed nothing now that could be done, except to die like their brethren at St. Elmo. The 6th of September came; in vain the weary and anxious watchers scanned the horizon and looked eagerly towards Syracuse.

There were no Spanish ships in sight ; and it was evident that Mustapha Pasha was making extensive preparations to give the *coup de grace*. In another twenty-four hours the banner of Islam would wave from St. Angelo, the church and the convent would be desecrated, and not a single Christian would be left living in Malta.

The long hot day dragged on ; the sun set, and night spread its wing over the stricken island. La Valette, wounded, defeated, face to face with despair, still preserved his almost superhuman equanimity. They were in the hands of God, he said, and they had fought to the utmost of mortal strength ; whether they lived or died mattered little ; their spirit was unconquered.

On September 7th, the sun rose brilliantly, and a light breeze fluttered innumerable pennons.

Another Turkish flotilla ?

No. At last the Spanish reinforcements ! Malta was saved.

The despairing Mustapha Pasha made one last effort. Twelve thousand Spaniards had landed before he even realised that the reinforcements had arrived. Panic seized his army, and in vain he strove to rally his demoralised soldiers. With his own hand he shot down the men who turned to fly. Twice he was unhorsed, and twice he mounted again. But the rout was general and no longer to be checked.

**Almost super-human courage of La Valette.**

**Rout of the Turks, September 7, 1565.**

"The siege was now over; the shattered remnants of that powerful army which, a few short months before, had landed with all the pomp and circumstance of war, must wend their way back to Constantinople, there to meet the angry frowns of a sovereign who, till that moment, had scarcely known defeat.

"It only now remained that the victors should advance upon the town and greet their friends in the Bourg. A joyful meeting it was between those enfeebled, care-worn soldiers and the gallant comrades who had so opportunely come to their rescue. Their wan and haggard faces lighted up with the proud consciousness of the glorious victory they had gained. Alone and unaided, they had for months withstood the shock of one of the most powerful armaments that had ever left the port of Constantinople. . . . Well might La Valette be excused the natural exultation of the moment when he directed that the name of his town should be changed from its old appellation of the Bourg, to the proud and well-earned title of the Città Vittoriosa."\*

**A glorious  
victory.**

Applause poured in upon the Order from all over Europe, and King Philip of Spain sent an envoy to congratulate the Grand Master and present him with a golden-hilted sword. Rome was illuminated in honour of the victory, and the Pope wrote offering La Valette a Cardinal's hat. La Valette characteristically declined the honour, which he declared to be incompatible with his naval and military duties as Grand Master.

**La Valette declines  
a Cardinal's hat.**

Even in the first flush of an unparalleled triumph, La Valette never for a moment relaxed his vigilance. Divining that Solyman

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\* General Porter's *History of the Knights of Malta*. 2nd ed., p. 474.

The General's entire account of the siege should be carefully read. In the foregoing pages it has only been possible to give the merest outline; but the details are of enthralling interest.

“the Invincible” was too strong a monarch and too spirited a warrior to sit inactive under so crushing a defeat, he sent more spies to Constantinople, and was in no way astonished when they returned with news that vast crowds of slaves already were toiling day and night in the arsenals, and that the Sublime Sultan had sworn no longer to leave his expeditions to the leadership of Admirals and Generals who quarrelled among themselves. This time he would command in person, and not one stone of Malta should be left standing upon another!

**Terrible threat of Solyman the Magnificent.**

La Valette—having his forebodings thus confirmed—called a council of war to discuss what steps must next be taken. The fortifications were still in a ruinous state after the siege, the exchequer was empty, and (with the exception of La Valette himself) the strongest and most ardent fighting men of the fraternity were dead or temporarily incapacitated by wounds and exhaustion. The council in consequence advised evacuating the island and retreating to Sicily.

Then La Valette spoke:—

Had those Knights who in fulfilment of their vow poured out their blood like water, turned defeat to victory, and died fighting to the last—had they, by God’s grace, gained so great a triumph only that the survivors might tamely throw away its fruits? What though the Sultan had threatened to level the city to the ground! For his own part (said the Grand Master) rather would he be buried alive

**La Valette's unconquerable spirit.**

beneath the ruins than let the heathen think the day had come when a Knight of the Order of St. John could hesitate to die in honour of his faith.

The temper of the council changed as if by magic ; and it was unanimously agreed to hold the island no matter what the odds.

But though La Valette for moral reasons had thus insisted upon infusing into his subordinates something of his own dauntless spirit, being as eminently practical as loftily courageous, he was well aware that the garrison was not then in a condition to meet force with force. Therefore—since the Sultan had declared so openly the aggressive purpose of the work which was being pushed ahead in all the dockyards and arsenals of Constantinople—La Valette thought himself justified in sending a trusty detachment of his spies to blow up the arsenals, and wreck the fleet with gunpowder before it ever left the Bosphorus.

This surprise completely upset the Sultan's plan of campaign, and he turned his attention to the invasion of Hungary instead. There he was killed, in the autumn of 1566 ; and Grand Master La Valette was able, not only to rebuild in peace his shattered fortifications, but also to plan and carry out the new capital city which now bears his name. The Pope, the King of France, the Kings of Spain and Portugal aided him with handsome monetary contributions, and on March the 28th, 1566, amidst the acclamations of the multitude, he laid the foundation stone, on which was an

**La Valette destroys the fleet and arsenal of the Sultan, who therefore abandons prospect of attack on Malta, and invades Hungary instead.**

**La Valette able to build his new city in peace. 1566.**

inscription stating how in memory of the recent siege and in defence against all future aggression the new city was founded.

To the menace of an external enemy the Grand Master had opposed unbroken resolution, tireless energy and Spartan equanimity, but on discovering in his Knights of Christ—and striving in vain to extirpate—the taint of degeneracy and arrogance which followed upon the heels of victory, he sunk into a state of deep depression.

Austere and reticent, scornful of moral weakness in any member of his Order, though compassionate and tender to the patients at his Hospital—La Valette during the last years of his life seems to have been better loved by the sick poor and by the civil population than by the Knights of the Cross, in whom he inspired respect and admiration rather than affection. To the degenerating Knights—especially those who had been attracted to the Order subsequent to his great defence of Malta—he seemed so loftily aloof, so invulnerable, so immovable, that they resented even while they submitted to his just and logical severity. Greatest of all the Grand Masters, he was also the most solitary in spirit. His stoical asceticism and consistent vigour, his iron self-control and unconquerable resolution, resulted from the transfusion of all personal desires, emotions and ambitions into an almost super-human faith in God and in his chosen work. Such characters are always branded “cold”

**Sorrowful last  
years of Grand  
Master La Valette.**

**Character of  
La Valette.**

or "hard" by those who are themselves too cold to understand the perpetual self-sacrifice and deep devotion of which only a fiery and fervent soul is ever capable.

**Death of La Valette. 1568.**

La Valette's death—of sunstroke and violent fever—on August 21st of 1568, was felt rather as a relief than as a loss by some of his community.

The terror of evil-doers, the implacable enemy of disorder, vice, and crime, pitiless to himself, and inflexibly stern to others, he was, of all the many heroic Heads of the Order, the most completely qualified to conceive and carry out great enterprises—to build not for a century but for all time. His city, with its superb fortifications, is his lasting monument.

**Deterioration of the Order in peace.**

The corruption of which the Order had shown distressing symptoms during the declining years of La Valette's life, accelerated after his death; but mercifully the next great trumpet-call to arms against the infidel came comparatively soon—before the poison had made incurable inroads; and at the battle of Lepanto, in 1571, the Hospitallers showed courage worthy of their finest traditions.

**The call to arms; revival of old heroic courage and energy.**

The combined Christian fleets under Don John of Austria encountered the entire naval forces of the Ottoman powers on October the 7th. The galleys of the White Cross Knights were on the extreme right of the centre division of Don John's line of battle; they were only three in number, and the Corsair Viceroy of Algiers, recognising their banner and burning with hereditary hatred to the Order, singled

them out for an impetuous attack, in which he cut them off from the centre and believed the time had come when Allah had delivered them into his hands. The Hospitallers, outmanœuvred and outnumbered, sold their lives as dearly as possible. Ramirez, a Spanish Knight, "though riddled with arrows like another Saint Sebastian," continued fighting with desperate vigour until he fell dead from countless wounds; and the Prior, pierced with five arrows, was the only man left living on his vessel when the Algerians at last succeeded in boarding it. But the triumph of the enemy was brief; for in Don John of Austria, the greatest commander of his time, they met an adversary as formidable as the dead and unforgotten La Valette, and the battle ended in the decisive overthrow of the Ottoman fleet.

But though the Turkish ships were routed or destroyed, and the material power of the Sultan crippled, the Turkish energy and spirit were by no means entirely extinguished, and therefore the naval contest between Cross and Crescent was resumed, though in a more desultory and intermittent fashion than hitherto.

During the late seventeenth century—over a hundred years subsequent to the great naval victory of Don John of Austria—there was a perceptible revival of maritime activity among the White Cross Knights; for although the Order had lost much of its spiritual fire, there were still a few among the Knights who seemed to be survivals from a nobler age. Most

**Decisive battle of  
Lepanto.  
Great naval  
victory of Don  
John of Austria  
over the Turks.  
Oct. 7, 1571.**

**The Chevalier de Trémincourt, a brilliant naval officer of the Fleet of St. John.**

attractive of these was the brilliant young Chevalier de Trémincourt, whose ability as a naval officer was as remarkable as his sympathetic charm of manner and distinguished personal appearance. Returning from a victorious expedition against the infidel, his ship was whirled into a frightful storm, one of those shrieking tempests which in the Mediterranean even on the finest day may break upon the hapless sailor suddenly, with no more prologue than an ominous murmuring of wave to wave, a snake-like hissing of the wind across the waters, and a chill withdrawal of the sun behind a heavy cloud.

In such a storm, the Chevalier de Trémincourt was shipwrecked on the coast of Africa, and seized eagerly by some Moors who were overjoyed to be able to send this White Cross Knight a prisoner to the Sultan Mahomed IV., at Adrianople.

**The unchanging Oriental mind. The Sultan in the late 17th century makes the same offer to a White Cross Knight as his predecessors had made to the Hospitallers five hundred years earlier.**

The Sultan, to whom his name and reputation were familiar, complimented him upon his naval and military exploits, and made to him the offer which Saladin in 1187 had made to the Knights Hospitaller captured at the battle of Tiberias,—the same offer which Solyman the Sublime (four hundred and nineteen years later) had made to Villiers de L'Isle Adam :—wealth, glory, favour, and a high command in the Moslem army if he would renounce the Cross.

Trémincourt laconically refused, precisely as his predecessors had done.

Then the Sultan strove to tempt him by

offering him a wife, a princess of the imperial family.

Trémincourt was a Frenchman; he was young, he was extremely handsome; and—be it remembered—had not been born in the Ages of Faith; not in the days of the Crusades; not even in the early sixteenth century while the Knights of the Cross were seeing visions of St. John and of an army of white-robed angels bearing flaming swords.

This drama of the soul took place when Louis XIV. was in the height of splendour at Versailles, when Charles II.'s Court at Whitehall was scandalising the decorous John Evelyn; and when, despite the prevalence of vehement theological controversy between Catholics and Protestants, an elegant epicureanism and thinly veiled scepticism were becoming increasingly fashionable in the world to which young Trémincourt belonged by birth. Yet he continued to say "No" to the Sultan's offers, in a manner as decisive as the most fiery Crusader of the 12th or 13th century.

At last the Oriental despot grew exasperated, and for argument and rhetoric he substituted insult and torture. But Trémincourt remained no less impervious to cruelty than he had been to compliments. He was given a final choice:—on the one hand, life, beauty, wealth, power, and all the good things of the world. On the other, torment, indignity, the life of a slave, incessant misery and degradation, unless it should please the Sultan to end

**A drama of the soul.**

his sufferings by death. Unhesitatingly he chose martyrdom.

**Martyrdom of Trémincourt.**

He was led out and beheaded, and his body hurled disdainfully into the sea—the element upon which, in his brief and brilliant life, he had achieved so much renown.

**Contrast between standpoint of man of action and man of letters.**

About the time that Trémincourt at Adrianople was rivalling the early Christian martyrs, a modish man of letters, sitting comfortably in London, was summing up in halting blank-verse what he believed to be the modern rule of life :—

What is't we live for? Tell life's finest tale :  
To eat, to drink, to sleep, love and enjoy,  
And then to love no more. Only to tell  
Of deeds not worth the doing ; and to do  
Deeds dreary in the telling.

How strange such flaccid “philosophy” must have seemed to such as Trémincourt. But there were not many Trémincourts ; and during the 18th century the type became still rarer.

The spiritual fire of the Order, unfanned by crucial dangers, flickered lower and lower ;\* the old moral austerity became as obsolete as chain-mail armour ; and with the wane of moral self-command came a proportionate loss of mental energy and physical vigour.

It is true that the vast revenues of the Order were still largely expended upon excellent works of charity, that the Knights still wore their plain black gowns with the eight-pointed

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\* By the end of the 17th century the Turk had ceased to be a world-terror, for in 1683 John Sobieski, King of Poland, had driven the Sultan's forces out of Austria when they were thundering at the very gates of Vienna. The King himself wrote to the Grand Master at Malta and described the decisive victory.

Cross upon their breasts, and that the Serving Brethren toiled in Hospital, where all the halt, the blind, the lame, and the sick could still find refuge. But even in the Hospital the former spirit of loving compassion, unsleeping zeal, and Christian devotion had died out. When the English philanthropist John Howard visited Malta and was taken to see the famous Hospital, he found it dreary, depressing, ill-cared-for, uncomfortable, and lamentably disappointing.

**Hospital at  
Malta visited  
by John Howard,  
the philanthropist.**

When the enemy in Palestine kept thundering at the gates, the Hospital arrangements had been the admiration of all Christendom; and in that turbulent age the medical knowledge, surgical skill and unremitting toil of the Knights and Brethren in stemming disease and mitigating pain had been beyond all praise. But in the last years of the 18th century—the so-called “dawn of reason,”—their medical capacity had declined as grievously as their moral character.

At the end of the 13th century, in Acre, that beautiful but depraved metropolis of Syrian Christianity, the Hospitallers had kept themselves aloof from corruption; but in Malta five centuries later they drifted with the stream. What Acre had been, Valetta was in danger of becoming;—and the White Cross of St. John, no longer the outer symbol of an inner purity, lost all its power of inspiration.

Then came the French Revolution; and in 1792 news reached Malta that the demagogue masters of the situation—with that inverted

**The French  
Revolution.**

Suppression of  
the Order in  
France by  
Revolutionaries.

exclusiveness so common to their type—had decreed that any Frenchman joining an Order of Knighthood requiring proofs of noble birth could not be eligible for the blessings of liberty and fraternity. This was the preliminary to the suppression of the Order in France, and the confiscation of those revenues which for so many centuries had been administered *pro utilitate hominum*—an Order in which men of birth and position, who had possessed all the good things of the world, spontaneously renounced their personal possessions and personal ambitions in order to devote their lives, their wealth and talents to the service of humanity.\*

During the orgies of 1792 and 1793 vast numbers of the innocent suffered for the guilty, and amidst this welter of horror there were Knights of St. John who showed a dignity, a firmness, and an uncompromising spirit worthy of the best traditions of the Order. "I see," said one of them, "that the time has come when a man of honour, in performance of his duty, may die as gloriously on the scaffold as on the field of battle."

But in the peaceful calm of Malta the French Knights of St. John had no ambition for the honour of martyrdom.

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\* One of the many differences between the aristocratic Military Order of St. John as founded by Raymond du Puy in 1118 and the "progressive" democratic revolutionaries of 1792, was that the aristocrats gave up their own possessions and poured out their own blood for the good of the community, whereas the political adventurers of 1792 gave up other people's possessions, and copiously shed other people's blood, sending thousands of innocent men and women to the scaffold, all in the name of enlightenment and brotherly love.

Their Grand Master de Rohan was not wholly forgetful of the old ideals ; and he was personally urbane and charming, and conspicuous for generosity, compassion and charity ; but his character was agreeable rather than strenuous, and in 1791 he had been smitten with apoplexy, so that his broken health increased his temperamental inability to save the Order from its fast approaching doom. As he lay dying, on July the 13th, 1797, the Knights named to him his probable successor, the Bailiff von Hompesch. De Rohan sighed and said, "The German is not the man for such a crisis as this ; and I shall be the last to die Grand Master of an illustrious and independent Order."

**Death of  
Grand Master  
de Rohan. 1797.**

Ferdinand Joseph Antoine Herman Louis von Hompesch belonged to one of the noblest families of the Lower Rhine, and had been the Envoy of the Order at Vienna, and afterwards Grand-Bailiff of Brandenburg. At the time he took up the duties of Grand Master he was only fifty-three, the youngest Grand Master who had been elected for centuries.

By this time the French Directory, which had long resented the independent sovereignty of the Knights of St. John at Malta, had decided to gain possession of this valuable strategic point, and on the "23rd Germinal of the year Six" (in plain language, on April 12th, 1798), it was secretly agreed that the Order, by its hereditary Royalist and Catholic principles, could be regarded as in a state of war against the Republic, and might therefore

**French Revolu-  
tionaries resolve  
to annex Malta.**

logically be punished and annexed if possible. But a private supplementary decree set forth a cautious qualification :—

**Secret orders to  
Napoleon Bonaparte  
1798.**

“The order given to General Bonaparte, Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the East . . . to obtain possession of the island of Malta, shall not be carried into effect by him unless he considers it feasible without risking the success of other operations confided to his charge.”

Although these instructions were private, the Grand Master received ample warning. The ambassador of the Order at the Congress of Rastadt wrote him a letter which was a veritable trumpet call to action :—

**Grand Master  
von Hompesch  
warned of the  
impending attack.**

“I warn your Highness that the expedition now preparing at Toulon is intended against Malta and Egypt. . . You will most certainly be attacked; take, therefore, all necessary measures for defence. The Ministers of all the Powers in alliance with the Order who are now here have received the same information as myself; but they know that Malta is impregnable, or at all events in a position to offer a resistance of three months' duration. Let your Eminent Highness be on your guard. Your own honour and the preservation of your Order are concerned. If you yield without a defence you will be lowered in the eyes of all Europe.”

His “Eminent Highness,” however, had led a pleasant and easy life, and was ignorant of warfare; in his self-sufficiency he chose rather to listen to flowery reassurances than strenuous warnings.

On the 6th of June, 1798, a French fleet (of eighteen sail and seventy transports) appeared in sight. The Knights unsuspectingly allowed a few frigates to enter the harbour. Three days later the main portion of the expedition

arrived under the command of General Bonaparte in person ; making in all fourteen battle-ships, thirty frigates, and three hundred transports. The French Consul demanded entrance for the entire Fleet into the Grand Harbour.

Von Hompesch and his Council replied that it was contrary to the treaty of 1768 to allow the entry of more than four ships of war at a time ; and he added that they relied upon the good faith and peaceful intentions of the French Republic.

**Von Hompesch absurdly relies on the "peaceful intentions" of the enemy's fleet and army.**

The word "surrender" was not spoken among the Knights, and yet they neglected the most obvious precautions ; their Grand Master was worse than useless ; and the emissaries of the French Republic strolled openly about Valetta pointing out to the uneasy and indignant Maltese that it would be folly to attempt resistance when no preparations had been made for a siege, and there was obviously no leader capable of carrying out an organised resistance.

On Sunday, June 10th, at four o'clock in the morning, General Bonaparte began the disembarkation of his army ; by noon the island was in his hands and 15,000 men had landed.

During the landing operations, several Knights ventured near enough to the enemy to be taken prisoners, and they were brought before Bonaparte. "How could you believe it possible," said he, "that with a few wretched peasants you could defend yourselves from troops which have conquered the whole of Europe?"

**Characteristic remark of Napoleon Bonaparte.**

Apparently they did not believe it possible. Von Hompesch sat indoors in his palace, and gave no orders. One French Knight (Le Soubiras) and the Maltese militia had the initiative to attempt resistance, but such spasmodic and detached efforts were useless.

The same evening there was an angry Maltese mob howling Arabic curses in front of the Grand Master's palace, and several of the Knights were murdered by the populace.

**Bitter indignation of the Maltese people against the incapable Grand Master von Hompesch. 1798.**

At Rhodes in 1522 it had been the people who cried out to yield to Solyman, but in Valetta in 1798 it was the people who were burning to resist, and the Grand Master who—in defiance of their wishes—signed the capitulation treaty which delivered them over to an enemy they dreaded and abhorred. They walked helplessly about the streets, weeping with rage and grief. Oh, for one hour of Villiers de L'Isle Adam or La Valette! Of what avail were the impregnable fortifications, of what avail past glories and superb traditions, when the Order of the White Cross had withered at the root and had abandoned them?

“How fortunate,” remarked one of Napoleon's staff, “that we had friends to open the gates, for otherwise a couple of dozen men could have held the city against us for many weary months!”

To hold it for a few weeks would have sufficed; Nelson and the British Navy were not far away.

Bitter was the wrath of the Maltese when they soon afterwards realised that had their

effete Grand Master but closed the gates and waited a little longer, their independence would have been saved.\*

. . . . .

In the spring of 1805, there lay dying at Montpellier, in the blue gown of a Penitent Brother, a weary old man, so poor he could not even pay the physicians who had tended him during his long and painful illness. Nor had he any money with which to make provision for his funeral or order masses for his soul.

He died on May 12th and was buried in the chapel of the Blue Fraternity.

This lonely and desolate pauper penitent was Ferdinand Joseph Antoine Herman von Hompesch, 69th, last, and unregretted Grand Master of the ruined Order of Knights Hospitaller of St. John of Jerusalem.

**Death of the  
69th Grand  
Master. 1805.**

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\* It was not until 1814 that the Treaty of Paris confirmed the sovereignty of Great Britain over Malta. Whereas the French Government had mutilated the churches, destroyed many of the records, and endeavoured to discourage the Maltese even from remembering the Knights of St. John, the British Government erected in Valetta a new gateway surmounted by statues of Villiers de L'Isle Adam and La Valette.

*The love of the Maltese and the voice of Europe have confirmed these islands to the possession of Great and unconquered Britain. A.D. 1814.* Such is the inscription in Latin over the portico of the main guard-house in the centre of Valetta.

PART VI.  
IN MODERN EUROPE : 1814—1914.

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Like the fabled phoenix, which consumes itself in flames and then is born anew from its own ashes, the Order of St. John had risen again and again after apparent ruin and destruction. The final dissolution came not from without but from within. As long as the flame of faith and devotion burnt brightly in the souls of the Knights, in Palestine and Cyprus, Rhodes and Malta, no enemy could daunt them, no defeat could quench their ardour, no calamity could shatter their ideal of service. But as this spirit waned and paled, the Order crumbled, and the surrender of Malta by Von Hompesch to Napoleon was only the outward expression of an inner degeneracy which had carried in itself the seeds of spiritual death.

But though the sixty-ninth and last Military Grand Master was so utterly lacking in the

old heroic vigour, though the fraternity at Malta had fallen away from their sublime traditions, the Grand Prior in France had been conspicuous for dauntless fidelity to his faith and plighted word when, amidst the orgies of the Revolution, chaos had come again.\*

Therefore it was appropriate that from France was ultimately to come the first attempt to re-create the Order.

But the Military Order of Raymond du Puy's foundation could never be restored. No more would soldiers pledge themselves to a perpetual celibacy, to the renunciation of personal property and of that individual liberty which to the modern man is dearer than life itself. No longer was there any one great universal spirit of faith and service strong enough to unite the noblest warriors of all the European nations in brotherhood against a common foe. The vigour and menace of Islam against the Cross had waned. The Cross itself had been torn down by revolutionaries in

**Contrast between  
the world in 1814  
and in 1118.**

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\* We may hope that the modern French Republican would no more defend the hideous treatment of Marie Antoinette by the Revolutionaries than the modern English Churchman would defend the burning of Joan of Arc.

One a queen and a woman of the world, the other an illiterate peasant—but a saint, inspired mysteriously with an astounding military genius—both in their different ways were scapegoats; both were victims to that spirit of demoniac cruelty which seems to pass in periodic waves over the world.

The Hospitallers were not among the persecutors of Joan of Arc; and in 1792 were not only guiltless of offences against the ruined King and Queen, but were ready with monetary aid, and strove thus to support Count Fersen's gallant but ill-fated attempt to rescue Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI. Though the enterprise was in vain, the devotion which inspired it should never be forgotten.

France, who boasted that as they had slaughtered their King on earth, so would they overthrow the Majesty of Heaven.

Moreover, the decline of the maritime and military power of the Knights Hospitaller was the less unfortunate for the world at large, inasmuch as the British Navy was completing the overthrow of those dreaded Barbary Corsairs whose power the Knights of Rhodes and Malta had broken but not entirely extinguished.

In Lord Exmouth's victory over the Dey of Algiers, piracy and the slave trade received at last their deathblow;\* and, as a naval and military power, the Order of St. John in the early nineteenth century was no longer required to stem the tide of lawless barbarism.

But though the work of the Order in its military and naval form was finished or had fallen into other hands, the work of tending the sick and poor is never finished, nor are there ever too many—or enough—skilled workers.

Lord Exmouth  
and the  
British Navy  
complete the  
extirpation of the  
Barbary Corsairs.  
August 26,  
1816.

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\* After Napoleon was taken back to Elba, Admiral Lord Exmouth was in command in the Mediterranean, where his vigour and ability enabled him to wring from the Moslem rulers of Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli, *a treaty abolishing the slavery of Christians*. It was when these treaties were violated that he made his famous punitive expedition against the Dey of Algiers (in 1816). The British Admiral was severely wounded, and his coat cut to pieces with grapeshot, but he survived to return home in triumph, and received the thanks of both Houses of Parliament. In strategy and tactics—as well as in its results—the battle of Algiers was one of the most brilliant and gallant achievements in the whole of our maritime history; yet so quickly do landsmen forget what we owe to the Navy that it may be doubted if even the members of the Anti-Slavery Society now remember Lord Exmouth's great victory.

Gérard's White Cross Brotherhood and Sisterhood in the eleventh century had been—as we have seen—of lay origin; it only developed into a Monastic Order after the Christian conquest of Jerusalem; and its subsequent military development was brought about by sheer necessity. When the mighty warriors and wealthy noblemen of Europe first formed a religious Knighthood for the protection of the Serving Brethren and Sisters, they were prompted by the conviction that unless the Order possessed a permanent army of defenders, it would in all human probability cease to exist. But for the strong arm of Knighthood, Brethren and patients must have lived in ceaseless terror of the Turcoman and Saracenic scimitars.

But after nearly eight hundred years the time had come again when it was expedient to consider the re-creation of the Order on the lines of the first foundation.

After the fall of Napoleon, such of the Knights and Brethren as had survived in France assembled a Chapter-General and sent their representatives to the Congress of Vienna in 1814, and again in 1822. In 1826 they suggested the revival of the English Order of St. John, with such modifications as were necessary to the altered conditions and to the views of the Established Church of England.

In 1831 this suggestion was carried into practical effect; and the re-constituted Order, with the King as its Sovereign Head—and

**Envoy of the  
Order of St. John  
at the Congress  
of Vienna. 1814  
and 1822.**

**Revival of the  
Order in England  
in a modernised  
form. 1831.**

with its titular Prior and sub-Prior, its Knights and Ladies of Justice, Knights of Grace and Ladies of Grace, Prelates and sub-Prelates, Bailiffs and Commanders, and Serving Brothers and Sisters—undertook the honourable task of toiling to alleviate the miseries of the sick and helpless. Then followed the foundation and maintenance of cottage hospitals and convalescent homes, the forming of classes of instruction for the training of skilled nurses, the establishment of the St. John Ambulance Association in the large railway centres and chief mining districts, so that the railway men and colliery labourers might learn how to treat the victims of accidents in peace and be ready and able to tend sufferers from wounds in war.

**The St. John's  
Ambulance. 1877.**

Then a "Hospice and Ophthalmic Dispensary" was founded in Jerusalem, the Sultan contributing a gift of £900 (Turkish) towards the cost of building. Of this institution—established to try and mitigate the horrible sufferings caused in Palestine by the great prevalence of eye-diseases and the woeful ignorance as to their treatment—a British General wrote enthusiastically in 1883 :

**British General's  
eulogy of  
Ophthalmic  
Hospital  
established by  
the Order in  
Jerusalem.**

"Crowds of afflicted Syrians flock thither for relief, and as the work is strictly on a non-sectarian basis, no opposition is encountered. Of all the charitable operations now carried on by the [English] *langue* [of St. John] there is none that promises to effect so much real good as this, none which more closely copies the objects of the original founders of the Order."\*

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\* Major-General Whitworth Porter's *History of the Knights of Malta*, 2nd edition, 1883, p. 584.

In Austria—whither many of the Knights took refuge after the surrender of Malta—an Envoy from the Order of St. John of Jerusalem still takes his place among the members of the Diplomatic Corps. The Emperor of Austria has the nominating of a Grand Master, who is resident in Rome. In Bohemia there is a Priory of St. John of Jerusalem, in which the work of charity and pity has been steadily maintained throughout the centuries since its foundation in the Middle Ages.

**The Order in  
Austria and  
Bohemia.**

In Germany there is a Bailiwick of Brandenburg, an offshoot of the Order. Established in 1160 by the Margrave Albert "the Bear," on his return from the Holy Land, it was subject to the control of the Grand Prior of Germany, who also had jurisdiction over the branches of the Order in Hungary, Bohemia, Poland and Denmark.

**The Order in  
Germany.**

In the course of a somewhat stormy existence it underwent several changes and suppressions; but was revived in its modern form in 1852, and performed ambulance service in the field in 1866 in the war between Prussia and Austria, and again in the Franco-German war of 1870.

In Spain the King still wears at church on Good Fridays the insignia and robe of this ancient historic Order, in which the chivalry of Spain in the fifteen and sixteenth centuries played a proud and brilliant part.

**The King of  
Spain and the  
Order.**

Under the French Republic the Order holds no lands; and it is to be feared only a few antiquarians among Frenchmen adequately

realise how sublime and splendid were its services to civilisation and humanity.\*

**In the  
British Empire.**

In the British Empire of our own day—in India, Canada, and the Australian and other Colonies, as well as in the Mother Country—the work has been carried on so quietly, so modestly, that it is only now, since the Great European War, that we (the outer circle of the public) can realise how large a debt of admiration and applause we owe to these devoted and courageous souls. In peace the Ambulance of St. John has toiled and trained so well and faithfully that its Serving Brethren were ready to set out in thousands as soon as the summons had gone forth for war. And to-day, on French and Belgian battlefields—in the terrific contests of Mons, Cambrai, and on the Aisne, at Antwerp and wherever there is suffering and danger—they labour in the same devoted spirit of compassion as their mediæval prototypes, expending ungrudging service upon friend and foe alike, bringing healing to the wounded, comfort to the dying, and moral reinforcement to the strong.

**On French and  
Belgian battle-  
fields to-day.**

In the South African war many of the brave orderlies of St. John met their own death in rescuing the wounded under fire. Many more will lose their lives in this stupendous war which rages now. But let us not insult them

**Death under fire  
of many brave  
Ambulance  
Orderlies.**

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\* After the present war we may venture to hope that the majority of our French allies will no longer limit themselves to pride in their post-revolutionary history, but will remember as national heroes the White Cross Knights of French extraction, whose courage, energy, and brilliant administrative ability their living Generals may equal but can never hope to surpass.

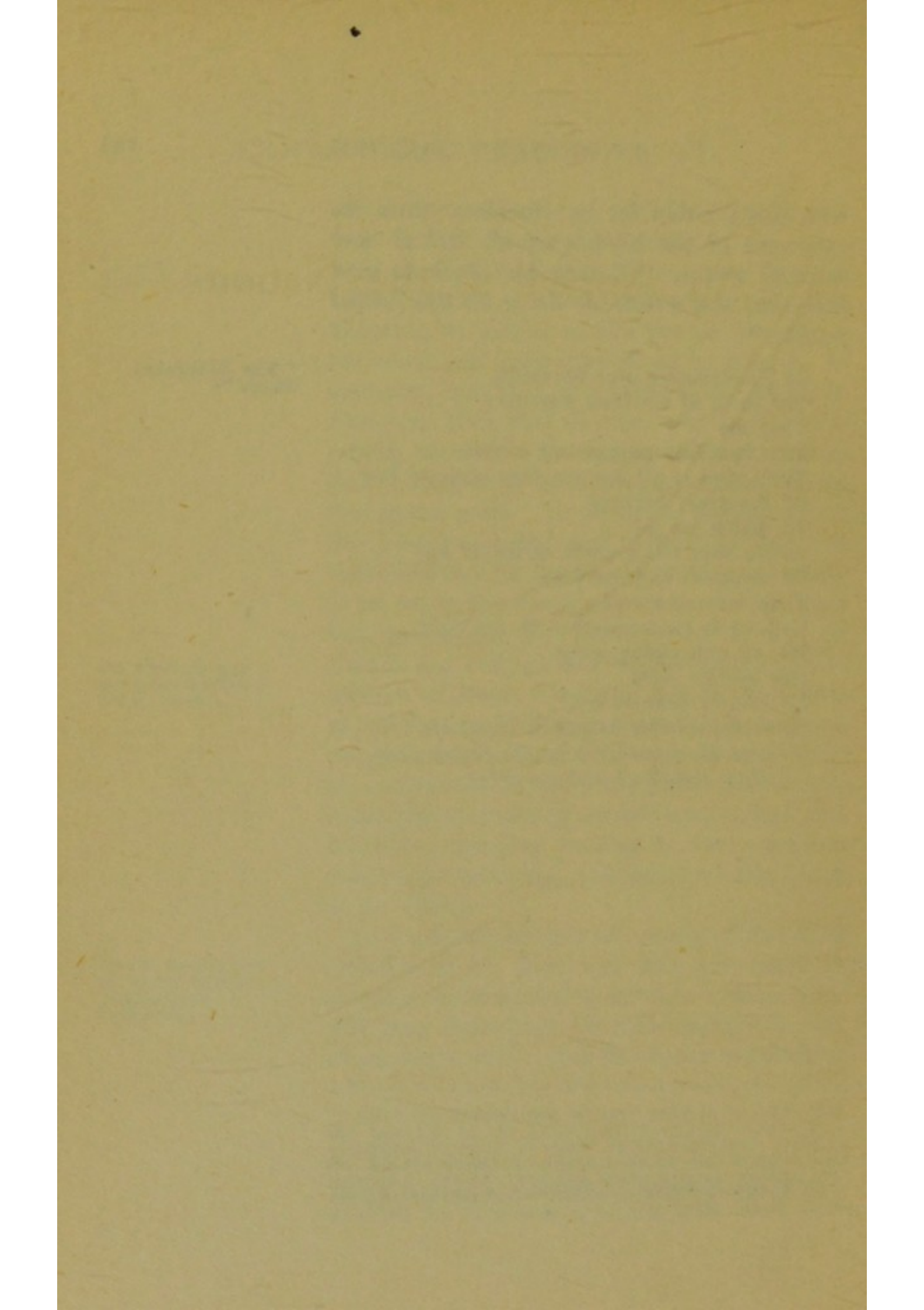
with pity; rather let us reverence them as exponents of the highest of all ethical and spiritual truths, "*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*"

As clouds sweep over the moon,  
 The hosts of the dead pass by; . . .  
 They see  
 The steadfast purpose of eternity.  
 Their care is all for us; they whisper low  
 Of the great heritage  
 To which we go.  
 As one may tell a child of tender age  
 Of manhood and its joys,  
 They from our toys  
 Call us to contemplation of the light.  
 We, all unknowing, *wage*  
*Our endless fight*  
*By ghostly banners led,*  
*By arms invisible helped in the strife.*  
*Without the friendship of the happy dead*  
*How should we bear our life?*

**"The Liberated  
 Hosts."\***

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\* By Evelyn Underhill. *Immanence, a Book of Verse.*  
 (J. M. Dent. 1912.)



# An Appeal to the Nation.

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Early in August, 1914, H.M. the Queen delegated to Her Grace Adeline Duchess of Bedford the formation of a Ladies' Committee drawn from the Ladies of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in England, assisted by a considerable number of co-opted members. Her Majesty graciously consented to become the President of this Committee. A number of sub-committees were promptly formed to supervise the despatch of units to the front, and for other necessary work. These units consist of surgeons, doctors, nurses, and orderlies belonging to the St. John Ambulance Brigade; and large supplies of material for hospital treatment have been sent with them. A warehouse for receiving clothing and comforts for the troops was also opened, and a good supply of motor ambulances is being rapidly organized. These enterprises are

**Her Majesty the  
Queen, President of  
the Ladies' Com-  
mittee of the  
Order of St.  
John.**

extremely costly, and an appeal couched in the following terms was issued, signed by the Archbishop of York, Prelate of the Order, Adeline Duchess of Bedford, the Earl of Plymouth, Sir Herbert Perrott, Sir Richard Temple, and Sir Herbert Jekyll.

To the Editor of the *Times*.

Sir,—We think the time has arrived when the attention of the public should be drawn to the very important work which has for so many years been carried on by the English Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, of which the King of England is always the Sovereign Head.

It has not been generally recognized that this ancient Order, which dates back 800 years, is the senior Red Cross organization in this country, and, in fact, the St. John Ambulance Association was nearly 40 years ago the pioneer of all "ambulance" work.

The work of the St. John Ambulance Brigade has been so quietly carried on and built up, mainly by the industrial classes, that it has not been prominently observed by the public. The carrying on of this true labour of love has been almost entirely voluntary, and implies a vast amount of self-denial on the part of those employed on the railways, in the mines, and in the large industrial centres.

Now at the call of their country, 5,000 men

**H.M. the King is  
Sovereign Head  
of the Order of  
St. John in  
England.**

**5,000 ambulance  
orderlies  
mobilised.**

belonging to the St. John Ambulance Brigade have been mobilized, serving with the Royal Navy and Army as hospital orderlies, and thousands more are ready to come forward. The work of the Order does not end here. One hundred and thirty highly-trained nurses have been sent out to tend the wounded, and large numbers are waiting. The Order insists upon the highest possible standard, feeling that nothing but the best should be given to the brave defenders of our country. If this great work of maintaining hospitals and convalescent homes and sending out surgeons, nurses, and hospital orderlies is to be carried on, it is imperative that there should be an immediate and generous response.

In peace time the Ambulance Department is self-supporting. Its funds are most economically managed, and the strictest accounts, audited by chartered accountants, have been kept ever since its incorporation. All money subscribed in time of war goes direct to the relief of the sick and wounded, nothing being deducted for office expenses or salaries.

One of the most striking parts of the work is the way in which the members of the Brigade have hitherto largely raised their own funds. It will be realized what this means to working men and women, and also the urgent need of assistance at this time.

To further the progress of this patriotic organization spread over the whole Empire, may all unite to carry out the ancient motto of

**In Peace-time the Ambulance is self-supporting, but financial help is urgently needed in War.**

CHIVALRY AND THE WOUNDED.

the Hospitaller Order—*Pro Fide Pro Utilitate  
Hominum*—[For the Faith and for the Service  
of Mankind.]

We have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servants,

COSMO EBOR : Prelate of the Order.

ADELINE M. BEDFORD, Chairman of  
Ladies' Committee.

PLYMOUTH, Director and Chairman  
of the Ambulance Department.

HERBERT C. PERROTT, Bt., Secre-  
tary-General of the Order.

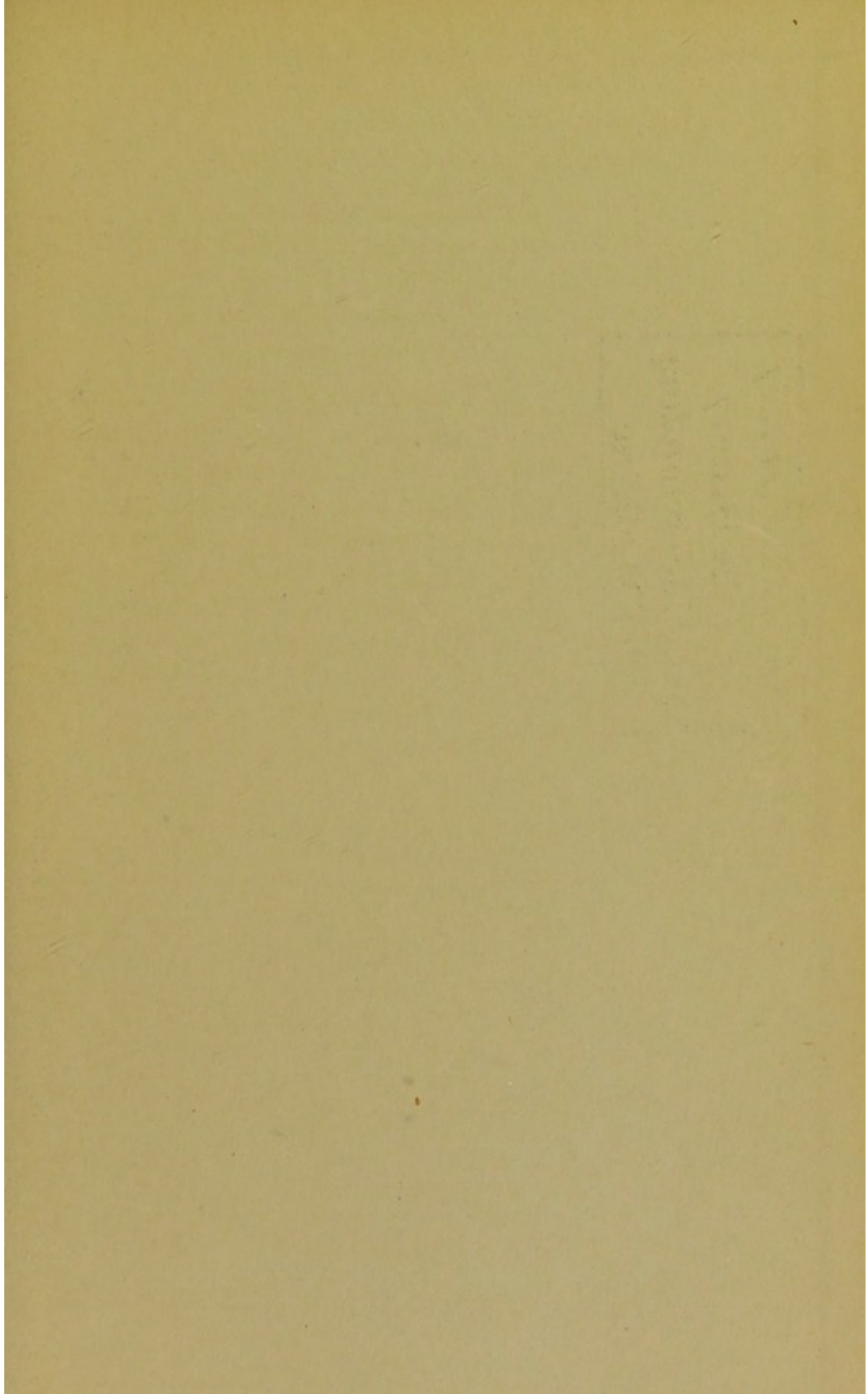
RICHARD TEMPLE, Bt., Assistant-  
Director of the Ambulance  
Department.

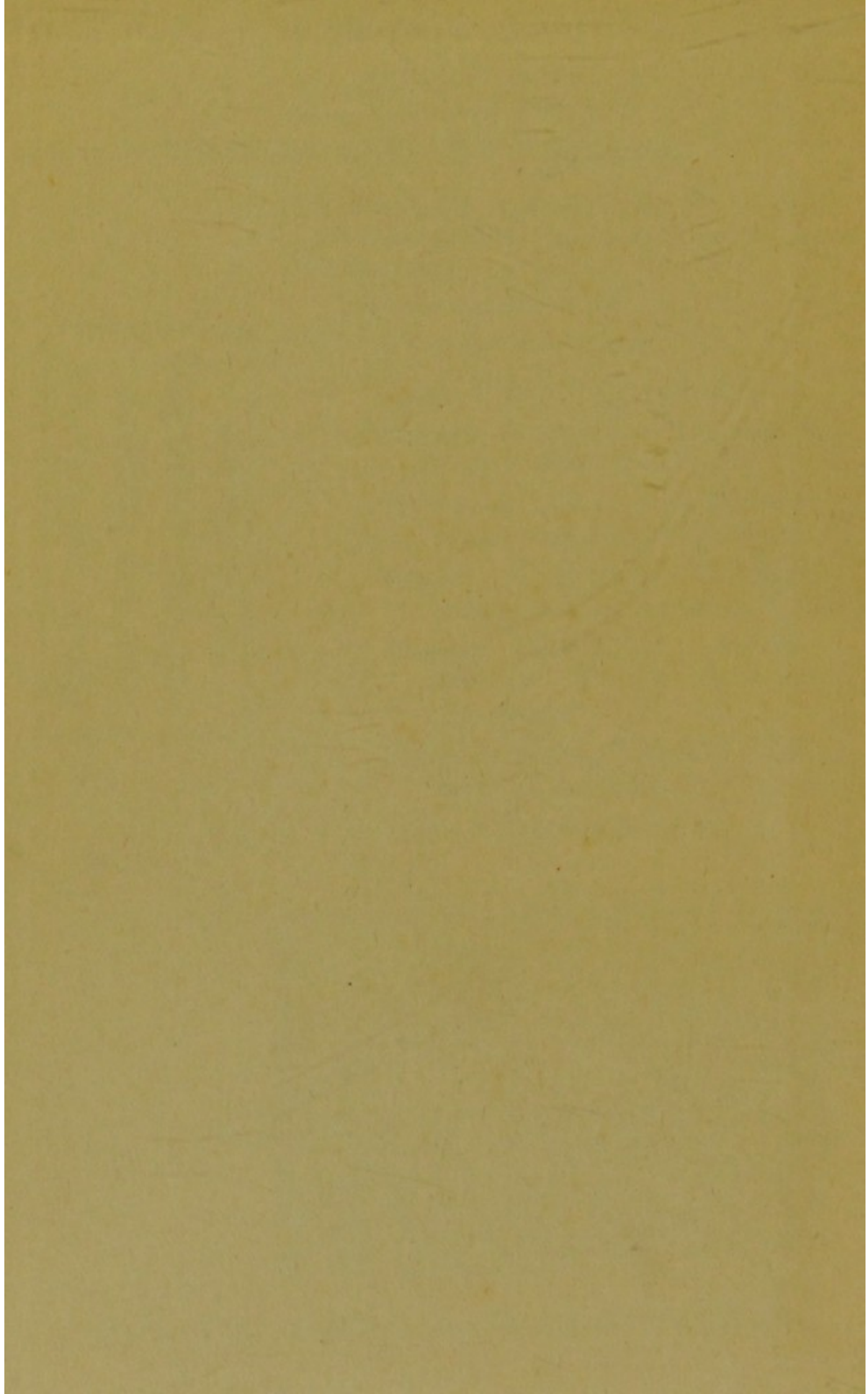
HERBERT JEKYLL, K.C.M.G., Chan-  
cellor of the Order.

*St. Johns' Gate, Clerkenwell, E.C.,  
Sept. 11.\**

\* Since the foregoing appeal was made (in the *Times* of September 12th) the Order of St. John of Jerusalem has formed a sub-committee for the special purpose of looking after the Indian troops; and at a recent meeting at St. John's Gate, Clerkenwell (the old gatehouse of the original Priory of the Order), it was decided to establish Indian hospitals in suitable climatic quarters. Various staff officers of the St. John Ambulance Brigade, having returned from Belgium and France, were able, as eye-witnesses, to testify to the crying need for continued activity. Lord Robert Cecil wrote that the sufferings of the wounded were too terribly heartrending to describe. Not only is there need to treat the wounded, but there is the dread of pestilence, for the Germans have filled many of the Belgian wells with dead bodies, and an outbreak of typhus will be the logical result. By means of disinfectants and skilled precautions and care, the surgeons and nurses are endeavouring to fight against the inroads of disease. It is hoped and anticipated that the public will make a generous and sympathetic response in this time of overwhelming need.

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