THE TALISMAN

By Sir Walter Scott, Bart.

INTRODUCTION TO THE TALISMAN.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sir Walter Scott

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

The most remarkable part of its history, perhaps, was that it so especially escaped condemnation when the Church of Scotland chose to impeach many other cures which savoured of the miraculous, as occasioned by sorcery, and censured the appeal to them, "excepting only that to the amulet, called the Lee-penny, to which it had pleased God to annex certain healing virtues which the Church did not presume to condemn." It still, as has been said, exists, and its powers are sometimes resorted to. Of late, they have been chiefly restricted to the cure of persons bitten by mad dogs; and as the illness in such cases frequently arises from imagination, there can be no reason for doubting that water which has been poured on the Lee-penny furnishes a congenial cure.

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

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

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

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

ABBOTSFORD, 1st July, 1832

* 

APPENDIX TO INTRODUCTION.

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

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

"Though his men should be hanged,
They ne might, in that countrey,
For gold, ne silver, ne no money,
No pork find, take, ne get,
That King Richard might aught of eat.
An old knight with Richard biding,
When he heard of that tiding,
That the king's wants were swyche,
To the steward he spake privyliche--
"Our lord the king sore is sick, I wis,
After pork he alanged is;
Ye may none find to selle;
No man be hardy him so to telle!
If he did he might die.
Now behoves to done as I shall say,
Tho' he wete nought of that.
Take a Saracen, young and fat;
In haste let the thief be slain,
Opened, and his skin off flayn;
And sodden full hastily,
With powder and with spicery,
And with saffron of good colour.
When the king feels thereof savour,
Out of ague if he be went,
He shall have thereto good talent.
When he has a good taste,
And eaten well a good repast,
And supped of the BREWIS [Broth] a sup,
Slept after and swet a drop,
Through Goddis help and my counsail,
Soon he shall be fresh and hail.'
The sooth to say, at wordes few,
Slain and sodden was the heathen shrew.
Before the king it was forth brought:
Quod his men, 'Lord, we have pork sought;
Eates and sups of the brewis SOOTE,[Sweet]
Thorough grace of God it shall be your boot.'
Before King Richard carff a knight,
He ate faster than he carve might.
The king ate the flesh and GNEW [Gnawed] the bones,
And drank well after for the nonce.
And when he had eaten enough,
His folk hem turned away, and LOUGH.[Laughed]
He lay still and drew in his arm;
His chamberlain him wrapped warm.
He lay and slept, and swet a stound,
And became whole and sound.
King Richard clad him and arose,
And walked abouten in the close."

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

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

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

"The swarte vis [Black face] when the king seeth,
His black beard and white teeth,
How his lippes grinned wide,
'What devil is this?' the king cried,
And 'gan to laugh as he were wode.
'What! is Saracen's flesh thus good?
That never erst I nought wist!
By God's death and his uprist,
Shall we never die for default,
While we may in any assault,
Slee Saracens, the flesh may take,
And seethen and roasten and do hem bake,
[And] Gnawen her flesh to the bones!
Now I have it proved once,
For hunger ere I be wo,
I and my folk shall eat mo!'"
The besieged now offered to surrender, upon conditions of safety to the inhabitants; while all the public treasure, military machines, and arms were delivered to the victors, together with the further ransom of one hundred thousand bezants. After this capitulation, the following extraordinary scene took place. We shall give it in the words of the humorous and amiable George Ellis, the collector and the editor of these Romances:--

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

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

"The invitation was gratefully accepted. Richard, in the meantime, gave secret orders to his marshal that he should repair to the prison, select a certain number of the most distinguished captives, and, after carefully noting their names on a roll of parchment, cause their heads to be instantly struck off; that these heads should be delivered to the cook, with instructions to clear away the hair, and, after boiling them in a cauldron, to distribute them on several platters, one to each guest, observing to fasten on the forehead of each the piece of parchment expressing the name and family of the victim.

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

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

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

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

"King Richard spake to an old man, 'Wendes home to your Soudan!"
His melancholy that ye abate;
And sayes that ye came too late.
Too slowly was your time y-guessed;
Ere ye came, the flesh was dressed,
That men shoulden serve with me,
Thus at noon, and my meynie.
Say him, it shall him nought avail,
Though he for-bar us our vitail,
Bread, wine, fish, flesh, salmon, and conger;
Of us none shall die with hunger,
While we may wenden to fight,
And slay the Saracens downright,
Wash the flesh, and roast the head.
With OO [One] Saracen I may well feed
Well a nine or a ten
Of my good Christian men.
King Richard shall warrant,
There is no flesh so nourissant
Unto an English man,
Partridge, plover, heron, ne swan,
Cow ne ox, sheep ne swine,
As the head of a Sarazyn.
There he is fat, and thereto tender,
And my men be lean and slender.
While any Saracen quick be,
Livand now in this Syrie,
For meat will we nothing care.
Abouten fast we shall rare,
And every day we shall eat
All as many as we may get.
To England will we nought gon,
Till they be eaten every one."
The reader may be curious to know owing to what circumstances so extraordinary an invention as that which imputed cannibalism to the King of England should have found its way into his history. Mr. James, to whom we owe so much that is curious, seems to have traced the origin of this extraordinary rumour.

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

"A Norman, who, according to all accounts, was of noble birth, but who, having lost his horse, continued to follow as a foot soldier, took the strange resolution of putting himself at the head of this race of vagabonds, who willingly received him as their king. Amongst the Saracens these men became well known under the name of THAFURS (which Guibert translates TRUDENTES), and were beheld with great horror from the general persuasion that they fed on the dead bodies of their enemies; a report which was occasionally justified, and which the king of the Thafurs took care to encourage. This respectable monarch was frequently in the habit of stopping his followers, one by one, in a narrow defile, and of causing them to be searched carefully, lest the possession of the least sum of money should render them unworthy of the name of his subjects. If even two sous were found upon any one, he was instantly expelled the society of his tribe, the king bidding him contemptuously buy arms and fight."
"This troop, so far from being cumbersome to the army, was infinitely serviceable, carrying burdens, bringing in forage, provisions, and tribute; working the machines in the sieges; and, above all, spreading consternation among the Turks, who feared death from the lances of the knights less than that further consummation they heard of under the teeth of the Thafurs." [James's "History of Chivalry."]

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

ABBOTSFORD, 1st July, 1832.

*

TALES OF THE CRUSADERS.    TALE II.--THE TALISMAN.

*

CHAPTER I.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As the Knight of the Couchant Leopard continued to fix his eyes attentively on the yet distant cluster of palm-trees, it seemed to him as if some object was moving among them. The distant form separated itself from the trees, which partly hid its motions, and advanced towards the knight with a speed which soon showed a mounted horseman, whom his turban, long spear, and green caftan floating in the wind, on his nearer approach showed to be a Saracen cavalier. "In the desert," saith an Eastern proverb, "no man meets a friend." The Crusades was totally indifferent whether the infidel, who now approached on his gallant barb as if borne on the wings of an eagle, came as friend or foe--perhaps, as a vowed champion of the Cross, he might rather have preferred the latter. He disengaged his lance from his saddle, seized it with the right hand, placed it in rest with its point half elevated, gathered up the reins in the left, waked his horse's
mettle with the spur, and prepared to encounter the stranger with the calm self-confidence belonging to the victor in many contests.

The Saracen came on at the speedy gallop of an Arab horseman, managing his steed more by his limbs and the inflection of his body than by any use of the reins, which hung loose in his left hand; so that he was enabled to wield the light, round buckler of the skin of the rhinoceros, ornamented with silver loops, which he wore on his arm, swinging it as if he meant to oppose its slender circle to the formidable thrust of the Western lance. His own long spear was not couched or levelled like that of his antagonist, but grasped by the middle with his right hand, and brandished at arm's-length above his head. As the cavalier approached his enemy at full career, he seemed to expect that the Knight of the Leopard should put his horse to the gallop to encounter him. But the Christian knight, well acquainted with the customs of Eastern warriors, did not mean to exhaust his good horse by any unnecessary exertion; and, on the contrary, made a dead halt, confident that if the enemy advanced to the actual shock, his own weight, and that of his powerful charger, would give him sufficient advantage, without the additional momentum of rapid motion. Equally sensible and apprehensive of such a probable result, the Saracen cavalier, when he had approached towards the Christian within twice the length of his lance, wheeled his steed to the left with inimitable dexterity, and rode twice around his antagonist, who, turning without quitting his ground, and presenting his front constantly to his enemy, frustrated his attempts to attack him on an unguarded point; so that the Saracen, wheeling his horse, was fain to retreat to the distance of a hundred yards. A second time, like a hawk attacking a heron, the heathen renewed the charge, and a second
time was fain to retreat without coming to a close struggle. A third time he approached in the same manner, when the Christian knight, desirous to terminate this illusory warfare, in which he might at length have been worn out by the activity of his foeman, suddenly seized the mace which hung at his saddle-bow, and, with a strong hand and unerring aim, hurled it against the head of the Emir, for such and not less his enemy appeared. The Saracen was just aware of the formidable missile in time to interpose his light buckler betwixt the mace and his head; but the violence of the blow forced the buckler down on his turban, and though that defence also contributed to deaden its violence, the Saracen was beaten from his horse. Ere the Christian could avail himself of this mishap, his nimble foeman sprung from the ground, and, calling on his steed, which instantly returned to his side, he leaped into his seat without touching the stirrup, and regained all the advantage of which the Knight of the Leopard hoped to deprive him. But the latter had in the meanwhile recovered his mace, and the Eastern cavalier, who remembered the strength and dexterity with which his antagonist had aimed it, seemed to keep cautiously out of reach of that weapon of which he had so lately felt the force, while he showed his purpose of waging a distant warfare with missile weapons of his own. Planting his long spear in the sand at a distance from the scene of combat, he strung, with great address, a short bow, which he carried at his back; and putting his horse to the gallop, once more described two or three circles of a wider extent than formerly, in the course of which he discharged six arrows at the Christian with such unerring skill that the goodness of his harness alone saved him from being wounded in as many places. The seventh shaft apparently found a less perfect part of the armour, and the Christian dropped heavily from his horse. But what was the surprise of the Saracen, when, dismounting to examine the
condition of his prostrate enemy, he found himself suddenly within the grasp of the European, who had had recourse to this artifice to bring his enemy within his reach! Even in this deadly grapple the Saracen was saved by his agility and presence of mind. He unloosed the sword-belt, in which the Knight of the Leopard had fixed his hold, and, thus eluding his fatal grasp, mounted his horse, which seemed to watch his motions with the intelligence of a human being, and again rode off. But in the last encounter the Saracen had lost his sword and his quiver of arrows, both of which were attached to the girdle which he was obliged to abandon. He had also lost his turban in the struggle.

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

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

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

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

The Crusader felt that the confidence of the Moslem made him ashamed of his own doubts.
"By the cross of my sword," he said, laying his hand on the weapon as he spoke, "I will be true companion to thee, Saracen, while our fortune wills that we remain in company together."

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

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