

THE CHILDREN'S CRUSADE



By CAPT. FREDERICK WHITTAKER

CHAPTER V.—(Continued.)

Big Peter, with a slight smile that he could not suppress, noticed that the old hermit did not attempt to control the young crusader, but permitted him to have his own way, as the trumpets sounded the advance, and the children resumed their march.

Hildebrand, like Peter the Hermit before him, as soon as the crusade was fairly on its way, assumed no authority, but followed in the ranks as one of the rest. The captain of the crusade was evidently as jealous of his authority as Nicholas had been; though he exercised it in a different way. He gave all the directions to the bodies of children to march and halt. Big Peter and Blanche, whom he permitted to accompany him, were treated with a distinction that did not extend to the hermit himself, save when he was present.

Thus they marched on for the rest of the day; and when night came, were within a few miles of Marseilles, the peasants from all the country around flocking to feed them, as had happened all through the journey.

As soon as camp was pitched, the young leader of the crusade told Big Peter to follow him, and called for a mule for Father Hildebrand, who accompanied them to the city of Marseilles. It was a fine, moonlight night and they could see their way plainly, while the population of the country round had brought torches and lanterns, and were turning night into day in the excitement which had accompanied the children's crusade wherever it went.

The old monk went with them because his services would be needed in dealing with outsiders. The children obeyed their leader well enough; but grown men would listen to the hermit where they would have hesitated to treat with a boy, even of Stephen's family. Hildebrand had found a merchant named Charles Marcel, who had promised that he would furnish shipping for the children to Palestine, and he agreed to perform his promise as soon as he heard that the crusade had arrived.

Then they rode back to the camp, and found it in a state of great excitement, for word had just come to them that Nicholas had refused to remain under the orders of Stephen any longer, and had turned the course of his march toward Italy, while they had been disputing with old Count Stephen. The crusade was breaking up.

CHAPTER VI.

This news proved true; and the children commanded by Nicholas separated from those under Stephen and marched toward Italy, the peasants on the way receiving them with all the demonstrations of welcome which had greeted the whole body wherever it had gone.

The old hermit, at first inclined to persuade Nicholas to come back, had encountered in Stephen, an unexpected obstacle. The young count had absolutely refused to be bound by the orders of the old man, and declared that he was captain of the crusade, and as long as he performed his vow he would take orders from his own conscience. He insisted that, the ships being ready to take the children, it would be a tempting of Providence to let go the opportunity that might never return; and the old hermit was compelled to acquiesce, and embarked on the evening of the second day after their arrival at Marseilles.

Then it was found that the crusade, which had already torn so many children from their parents, had been unable to keep them together, as the hermit had hoped. Thirty thousand children had come from Vendome with Nicholas; twenty-thousand of these had gone off with Nicholas on their way to Italy; and half of the rest dropped off at Marseilles, leaving five thousand only as the strength of the crusade that was to capture the seaport of the Turks.

The same number of grown men, picked warriors of Europe, would have been too feeble a force under the best general in the world; but such was the enthusiastic confidence of the age in its wild enterprise that half the population of Marseilles came down to see the children embark, and the ships sailed out of the harbor, the boy warriors singing the hymn of "Veni, Creator Spiritus," with the cheerful confidence that they had only to show themselves for all the Turks in the East to fall down and abjure their religion.

Still, there was something about this crusade, under the boy count, which makes it different from others of those ill-starred enterprises. Stephen, boy as he was, had a brain that was strong and sensible, though his romantic belief in the dreams of the old hermit had carried him away. He had but five thousand boys with him; but they were all armed, by the offerings of the pious, on the way; and had they been men of experience, might have rendered a good account of themselves. The youngest on board the fleet was sixteen, and the majority were as old as Stephen himself. Moreover, they were for the most part youths of noble families, who had been brought up to the exercises of arms, in a way with which we are unfamiliar to-day. They could all shoot the bow or cross-bow—the latter a weapon then being introduced in France, though not yet common. They all had armor of some sort, if only a helmet and buckler; and provisions were plenty on the fleet, thanks to the offerings of the pious people of Marseilles and Provence in general.

Besides the boys, who were the warriors of the expedition, there were nearly a hundred girls on the fleet, under the leadership of Isabel Durance, who had

been crowned Queen of the Crusade, with due solemnity, by Hildebrand, just before their departure from Marseilles.

Their duties were to wait on the sick and wounded, when such were to be found in the fleet, and among them Blanche de Vaux was the only one who did not wear the cross on her shoulder and obey the orders of the Queen of the Crusade.

In fact, it was easy to see that the same jealousy that had existed between Stephen and Nicholas, which had broken up the children's crusade into two bodies, was operating between Isabel and Blanche, but in a different way. Blanche did not like Isabel, who returned the compliment with interest, though both were evidently fond of Stephen, for they were always near him.

But likings and dislikes apart, the wind blew fair for the young crusaders and the skies were bright, and the boy count, as he stood on the lofty carved stern of the galley in which he led his fleet, wore an expression of rapt enthusiasm on his handsome young face as he said softly to Blanche:

"At last, my sister, we are on the way to the land which was once trod by the feet of our Lord. Dost thou not feel already the blessing of heaven rests upon us?"

Blanche sighed slightly. "Isabel, who was on the other side of the young leader, answered for her, in her usual impetuous way:

"The Lady Blanche is not with us, though she sails with us. But when we plant the banner of the cross on the towers of Jerusalem, then shall she wish that she had taken the cross herself."

"Not so," replied Blanche, steadily. "It is one thing to see Jerusalem and another to take the cross and kill men in the name of the God who said, 'thou shalt not kill.' We shall see Jerusalem, but the sight will make none better. What folly is this?"

"How sayest thou?" asked the young count, sharply; for the speech of his sister, in opposition to his dreams, always irritated him, dearly as he loved her. "We shall see Jerusalem, but the sight will make none better. What folly is this?"

Blanche turned her dark eyes on him with a strange, yearning look, that haunted him many a year after, as she replied:

"We shall see it; but not as conquerors. The time is coming, and that soon, when we shall all see whether God is with us or not."

The young count struck the bulwark of the galley impatiently with his gauntlet, as he cried:

"Now, by the cross on my shoulder, sister, if thou hadst thought that, thou shouldst never have come with us."

Big Peter, who was standing nigh them, behind his young lord, here coughed slightly, and Stephen, in the same angry manner as that with which he greeted his sister's words, turned on him fiercely, saying:

"And thou, too? Dost thou think we shall end in disaster?"

Big Peter compressed his lips, and after a short pause, said, in a tone of great gravity:

"What a man like me thinks will not alter the case, my lord. I came to follow my lord, and die for him if need be. A man can do that, and the angels will find him, whether he have a cross on his shoulder or not."

The impetuous but warm-hearted boy held out his hand to his faithful servant, saying:

"I was wrong to chide thee. Thee, at least, I can trust to fight, whether it be for the cross or for me. To-morrow will show us."

"Ay, ay, my lord," said Big Peter, slowly. "To-morrow will show; and it will be seen then whether the hermit Hildebrand be a prophet as he says or what my lady Blanche called him."

And this time neither the boy count nor Isabel said a word. The speech of the young vassal had cast a shade of thoughtfulness over them all, as they realized that they had gone too far to recede.

Still the heavens continued as fair and pleasant as could be desired, and the northerly breezes wafted on the little fleet. There were ten ships of burthen, equipped with sails only, very broad and blunt in shape, in which the majority of the boy crusaders had embarked. They were trading ships, not meant for battle; and to guard them in the fight, there were five gallies—long, low vessels, with rows of oars on either side, pulled by crews of slaves, whose dark faces showed that they were Arabs or Turks—which, in truth, they were. They had been taken captive in the previous crusades and were chained to the benches on which they sat, performing their tasks in silent suffering, under the lash of the masters set over them.

It was a remarkable thing that the Christians, who were so loud in their complaints of the cruelties of the Turks toward Christian slaves, practiced the same or greater cruelties on all the unfortunate Moslems who fell into their power. It was also remarkable that the young crusaders, whose youth should have made them tender-hearted naturally, showed toward their rowers in the gallies, on that memorable crusade, even more cruelty than the grown sailors who manned the fleet.

Blanche de Vaux and Big Peter, who wore no crosses on their shoulders, were the only people in the fleet who seemed to pity the unfortunate creatures in the last and soon after the conversion in which Big Peter had shown himself capable of rescuing the young count.

The first thoughts of Blanche, however, shown, the lady Blanche, followed by the faithful vassal, went forward, past the

benches of the rowers, and actually arrested a blow that was about to fall on the shoulders of one of the unhappy creatures, who had fallen half over his oar as if completely exhausted with fatigue or sickness.

"Shame on thee for one who calls himself a warrior of the cross!" she said, indignantly, to the boy who had raised his stick. "Is that the way to follow the cross? It is written: 'If thine enemy hunger, feed him! if he thirst, give him drink.' Is that the way thou followest the scriptures?"

The boy crusader curled his lip, though he did not dare to resist the sister of his young leader.

"We shall all be forgiven our sins if we reach the holy sepulcher," he said. "As for these Turks, they are misbelievers and they deserve death and stripes. One infidel the less will never be missed."

Then he went away forward and Blanche turned toward the young slave whose attitude of exhaustion had brought him on the correction. The poor young man—for he was barely twenty—had a dark but exceedingly handsome face, though it was thin and sickly looking. His large dark eyes were full of gentleness and appeal as he cast on the beautiful girl who had saved him a glance that told of his thankfulness. Something in that look stirred all the pity in Blanche's breast, as she inquired:

"What is thy name, friend? Art thou sick?"

The young slave bowed his head over his oar with a deep sigh as he answered in broken French:

"My name is forgotten among my people, lady. No one remembers the slave. If he be well they beat him; if sick, they beat him harder. But Saphadim will not forget the lady in the last day."

"In the last day?" echoed the girl, puzzled. "What meanest thou?"

Saphadim glanced up at Big Peter, who was looking at him in his usual stolid fashion, not showing much expression on his face. The girl understood the glance, and answered:

"Speak out. We have no cross on our shoulders, and will not harm thee."

The dark eyes of the young Turk blazed with a singular fire as he replied in a low voice, as if afraid of being overheard:

"In the last day, when the angel Azrael shall lead the true believers over the bridge Al Sirat, Saphadim, who has never yet omitted his prayers, will ask of the angel a boon to lead with him the lady who showed him pity, though a Christian. The rest shall be plunged in the fire that never dieth, where Eblis reigns forever."

Big Peter, with a slight smile to his mouth, responded, "I am sure you are the only one who can cure him."

"My lady sees that the Christians are not permitted to have all the cursing to themselves. This miscreant can curse as well as old Hildebrand; and the Turks have their own hell for us, it seems."

"But what is the bridge Al Sirat?" asked Blanche, curiously.

"It is the bridge over which all souls must pass at the last judgment," said the Turk, solemnly. "It is the edge of a sabre—a scimitar, or a razor, and beneath it are the fires of Eblis, or Shaitan. Into that fire will fall all who cannot call on the name of the prophet and hold the hand of the angel to guide them aright."

"And thou wilt ask the angel to let me come with thee?" asked the girl, curiously.

Saphadim bowed his head solemnly.

"I will, because thou art the only Christian that hath taken pity on a true believer, in his affliction."

Big Peter, with the same half-amused smile, asked, in turn:

"And where shall I go, friend Turk?"

Saphadim turned and eyed him narrowly, and then resumed his weary task at the oar, saying gruffly:

"Thou wilt go where it pleases God to take thee."

The big fellow laughed as he turned away, remarking to Blanche:

"'Tis the truest word spoken yet on this galley. That shall we all do, and it will be all the same in the end."

Then the two strolled away along the line of the rowers; the lady, by her presence, checking a great deal of the brutality that was shown to the unfortunate prisoners at the oars, till the evening came on, and the wind fell with it, when the ships of burden took down their sails in the cautious fashion of that day, and the whole fleet rested for the night, not daring to sail on, in the absence of the compass, which makes navigation so easy in our days.

(To be continued.)

BLOOD-FED ROSES.

They Bloom in Rare Beauty at the Vatican at Rome.

For years the gardens of the Vatican at Rome have been famous for roses, so deep a red that they are almost black, so rich in bloom, so rare in perfume that they rank first among all the roses of Europe. And now, somebody has found out that the Pope's gardeners are watering these famous flowers with blood.

But there is one rare and beautiful plant which only grows upon the graves of men, and only springs from a soil enriched with human blood. Such is the tradition attached to the Bloody Flower of Newmarket.

Newmarket course has long been famous for a very ancient and curious trench, said to have been dug as a defense in battle and to be full of human bones. This Devil's Ditch runs six miles from Reach to Dullingham, crossing the Newmarket race course. And here only, from the bones of the ancient dead, springs the bloody flower.

This large five-petaled kingcup, blood red to purple, with spiked leaves and a thick white sap, blooms in June and July in great big clumps along the ditch. The bloom is the size of a half-dollar. During the season the ditch is visited by many hundreds of people, who come to pick the flowers.

Indeed, the Vatican rose and the Bloody Flower of Newmarket are not the only plants which owe value and fame to the fertilizing of human remains. The Benedictine and Chartreuse liquors are both derived from grapes grown on ancient burial places.

The Army Mustache.

The mustache first became common in the British army at the beginning of the present century. The human adopted it and not long afterward the horses. It was not until the beginning of the Russian war that the infantry adopted the mustache.

The Army Mustache.

No matter how just the cause for a woman's anger, people always have a sympathetic feeling for her husband when they see her display her temper.

Real gratitude is never ashamed of humble benefactors.

AN INVINCIBLE HORSE-TAMER.

Early Achievements of an Ohioan Who Became World-Famous.

Lida Rose McCabe sketches in the St. Nicholas the life-story of an obscure country boy, whose love of horses "turned a leaf in civilization," and brought him, beyond any man of his time, into close social intimacy with the crowned sovereigns of the world. His name was John S. Rarey. Early in the century, his father, a Pennsylvania Dutch farmer—cleared a tract of forest land on the outskirts of Ohio's capital. On this virgin spot was built a log cabin, in which the future horse-tamer was born. The cabin in time became the beginning of the village of Groveport, known half a century ago to lovers of horses throughout the civilized world.

While a babe in his mother's arms, it was young Rarey's delight to watch the animal life on the farm. To pet the horses and cows was ever to the boy a keen pleasure. When he could make his way alone to the farm-yard, it was observed that the friskiest colts were docile under the caressing strokes of the child's hand. John was the youngest of seven children. At this period he was the only child at home. The Rarey farm was isolated. Many miles lay between neighbors. Having no youthful playmates, his warm little heart made friends of the chickens, the cows, and the colts. At the age of three years it was his delight to ride astride the plough-horses.

One significant incident in the childhood of the "invincible horse-tamer" was frequently related by his mother. It occurred in his fourth year. The family being at the dinner-table, one day, it was discovered that the chair of the youngest was vacant. A servant was sent in quest of the truant. The fields, the barns, the hay-mounds were searched in vain. A terrible scramble was heard, at length, in a gravel roadway near by. To the horror of the distracted household, Johnny Rarey was discovered upon the back of the wildest colt on the farm.

Expecting to see the child fall to the ground every moment, the father started to his rescue; but to the relief of the household, colt and rider soon relined up in safety at the barn door. When reproved for his conduct, the infant replied that he and the colt were the best of friends. To convince his father of his mastery of the colt, he mounted and dismounted, bridled and unbridled the animal, who, to the astonishment of the spectators, submitted to his young master's directions. His control of the colt was much talked of in the neighborhood. From that time the young horseman was in great demand to carry messages between the scattered farm-houses. Before his ninth year his reputation for horsemanship in that part of the country was unrivaled.

(To be continued.)

FAMOUS FOR CLEAN SHIRT.

Premier Who Went Home and Changed His Soiled Linen.

The point of the appended anecdote is, perhaps, suggestive of that trait of the ill-bred in this country who insist upon interlarding a conversation with the important fact that they "took a bath," and making it the chief exploit of their day's doings. This is from the British Australasia: The death of Parramatta, near Sydney, is announced by Rev. T. S. Forsyth, who, starting life as a ship's apprentice, became premier of New Zealand, and spent his last years as a Congregational minister in New South Wales. He had been premier for two days only, the government being defeated on an amendment to the address. His ministry is famous, besides its brevity, for the sobriquet which it obtained of "The Clean Shirt Ministry." Mr. Forsyth had been assisting his employer to unpack some drapery cases recently landed, whereby his clothing became very dusty.

On receiving the governor's demand to come and see him respecting the formation of a new ministry, he naturally went home first and changed his dusty garments. Later on, when making his ministerial statement, he narrated the simple incident, and this so tickled one of the Southern members as to wring from him the chaffing declaration that he gathered little more from the premier's "statement" than that the honorable gentleman had gone home and put on a clean shirt.—Pittsburgh Dispatch.

Torreador Earned \$60,000 a Year.

A successful torreador published his receipts a short time ago. During the corrida season he took part in sixty-five fights and killed 133 bulls. His net profit