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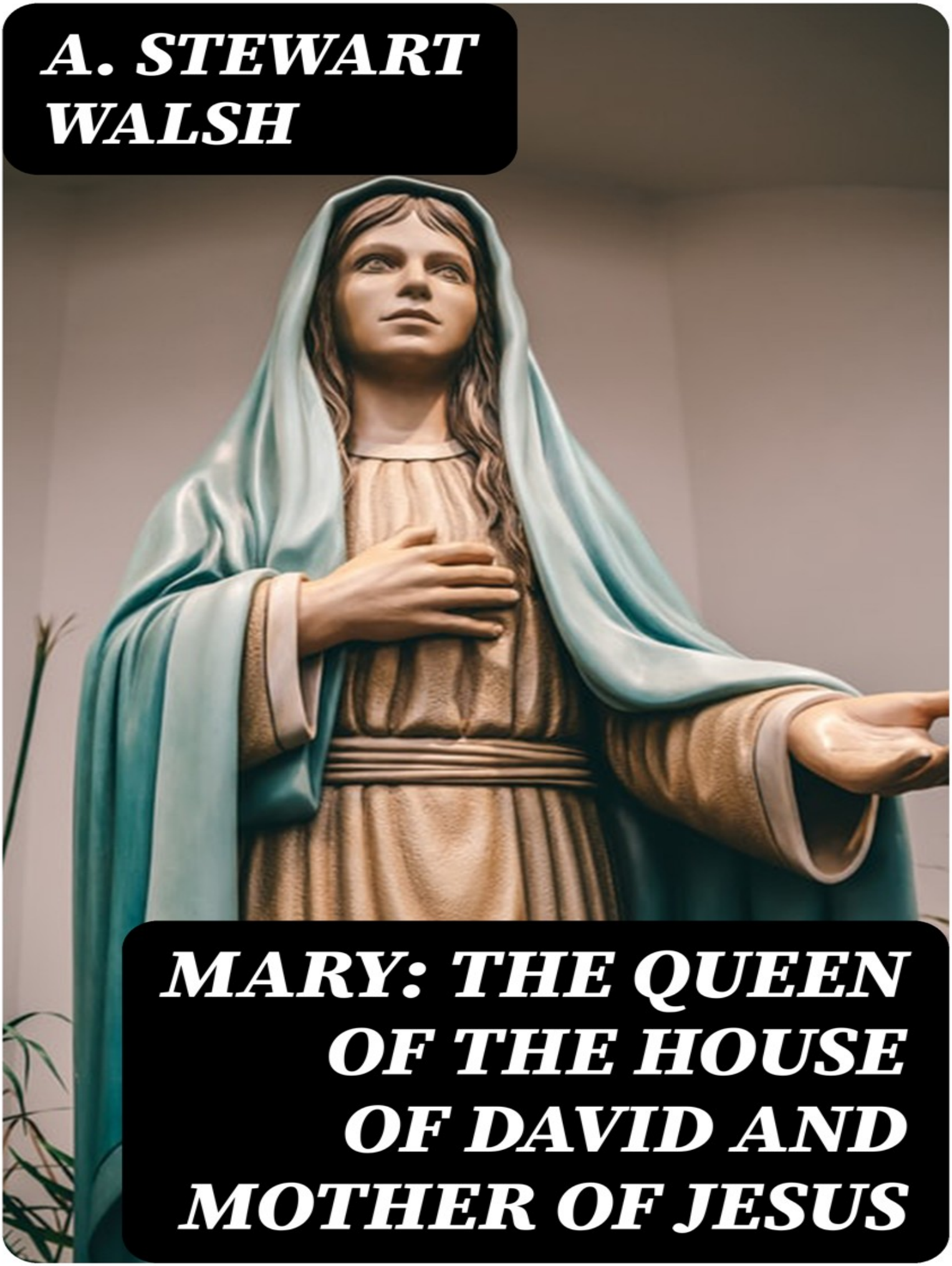

MARY: THE QUEEN OF THE HOUSE OF DAVID AND MOTHER OF JESUS

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The Story of Her Life

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CHAPTER I.
THE QUEEN’S PORTRAIT.

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“And breaking as from distant gloom,
A face comes painted on the air;
A presence walks the haunted room,
Or sits within the vacant chair.
And every object that I feel
Seems charged by some enchanter’s wand.
And keen the dizzy senses thrill,
As with the touch of spirit hand.
A form beloved comes again,
A voice beside me seems to start,
While eager fancies fill the brain,
And eager passions hold the heart.”

Master, we would see a sign from Thee, was the cunning challenge of the Scribes and Pharisees. They were certain that, in this at least, the hearts of the people would be with them. A sign, a scene, a symbol, were the constant demand and quest of the olden times, as of all times. Even Jehovah led forth to victory and trust, as necessity was upon Him in leading human followers, “with an *outstretched arm*, and with *signs* and with *wonders*.” The Jews, seemingly so doubtful and so querulous, after all articulated the longings of the universal humanity. The longing stimulated the effort to gratify it, and forthwith the artist became the teacher of the people. Presentments of Mary, as she might have been, and as she was imagined to

have been by those most devout, were multiplied. Piety sought to express its regard for her by making her more real to faith through the instrumentality of the speaking canvas, but beyond this there was the desire to embody certain charms and virtues of character dear to all pure and devout ones. These were expressed by pictured faces, ideally perfect. They called each such “Mary”; and if there had never been a real Mary, still these handiworks would have had no small value. Who can say that those consecrated artists were in no degree moved by the Spirit which guided David when “he opened dark sayings on the harp,” and rapturously extolled that other Beloved of God, the Church? Music and painting—twin sisters—equal in merit, and both from Him who displays form, color and harmony as among the chief rewards and glories of His upper kingdom. These also meet a want in human nature as God created it. The artists did not beget this desire for presentments through form and color of the woman deemed most blessed; the desire rather begot the artists. Stately theology has never ceased truly to proclaim from the day Christ cried “*It is finished!*” that “*in Him all fullness dwells*;” but no theology, has been able to silence the cry of woman’s heart in woman and woman’s nature in man which pleads through the long years, “*Show us the mother and it sufficeth us*.” It has happened sometimes that gross minds have strayed from the ideal or spiritual imports of Mary’s life and fallen into idolizing her effigies. That was their fault, and must not be taken as full proof that nothing but evil came from the portrayings of our queen. The facts are conclusively otherwise. The painters that made glorious ideals shine

forth from the canvas unconsciously painted the shadows largely out of the conditions of all women. Before this second advent of the Virgin, the paganish idea that women were the “weaker sex,” the inferiors of men, at best only useful, handsome animals, prevailed. The renaissance of Mary, as the ideal woman, was an event seeded with the germs of revolutionary impulses socially. Like sunrise it began in the East, at first dimly manifest, then it became effulgent and quickly coursed westward along the pathways of Christianity’s conquests. Like sweet, grateful light then there came to the hearts of men the braver true persuasion, that the woman who not only bore the Christ but won His reverent love must have been morally beautiful and great. In the track of this persuasion, and as its sequence, there came the conviction that the sex, of which Mary was one, had within it possibilities beyond what its sturdier companions had dreamed. After this it came about that the painters, often the interpreters of human feelings, began to represent all goodness under the form of a Madonna. Not knowing the contour of Mary’s face they began gathering here and there, from the women they knew, features of beauty. They combined these in one harmonious presentment. They set out to represent the ideal woman, but had to go to women to find her parts. It became a tribute to womankind to do this. It was like a voyage of discovery, and the artist voyagers depicted not only the best things in womankind, but by putting these things together illustrated what woman could be and should be at her best.

It was thus that Guido produced a picture of the Madonna which enravished all that beheld it. Once he had said, “I wish I’d the wings of an angel to behold the beatified spirits, which I might have copied.” After, here and there, he picked out fragments of color and form on earth; then put them into one ideal composition. It was a heart-expanding work; the work of a prophet, since it told of what might be in woman wholly at her best. Then he said, “the beautiful and pure idea must be in the head” of the artist. It was a deep saying. Given the ideal, and the worker will need only proper ambition to present a grand composition, whether on canvas or in the patternings of the inner life. The presentments of the Virgin rose in fineness when priests turned from their exegesis to kneel and paint for men. The great Saint Augustine, held in high honor by Christians of every name, redeemed from a youth of darkest sinning, revered as his guiding star two lovely women, Monica, his mother, and Mary, the mother of Jesus. He argues, in stalwart polemics, that through the acknowledgment of Mary’s pre-eminence all womankind was elevated. Her presentment, so as to be fully comprehended, was in the beginning a blessing to every soul in being an inspiration to purer, sweeter living. So far as such presentment now conserves the same results the work is worthy and profitable. In all times the representations of the Virgin, whether by the historian or the master of the studio, varied; but the piety they awakened always seemed to be of one type, and that lofty. Thus we have “the stern, awful quietude of the old Mosaics, the hard lifelessness of the degenerate Greeks, the pensive sentiment of the Siena, the stately

elegance of the Florentine Madonnas, the intellectual Milanese, with their large foreheads and thoughtful eyes, the tender, refined mysticism of the Umbrian, the sumptuous loveliness of the Venetian; the quaint, characteristic simplicity of the early German, so stamped with their nationality that I never looked round me in a room full of German girls without thinking of Albert Durer's Virgins; the intense, life-like feeling of the Spanish, the prosaic, portrait-like nature of the Flemish schools, and so on." Each time and place produced its own ideal, but all tried to express the one thought uppermost; pious regard for the Queen and model. All seemed to feel that in this devotion there was somehow comfort and exaltation—and there generally were both.

The writer of the foregoing quotation, a woman of widest culture and admirable good sense, attested the need that many feel by her own rapturous description of the Madonna of Raphael in the Dresden Gallery. "I have seen my own ideal once where Raphael—inspired, if ever painter was inspired—projected on the space before him that wonderful creation." "There she stands, the transfigured woman; at once completely human and completely divine, an abstraction of power, purity and love; poised on the empurpled air, and requiring no other support; with melancholy, loving mouth, her slightly dilated sibylline eyes looking out quite through the universe to the end and consummation of all things; sad, as if she beheld afar off the visionary sword that was to reach her heart through HIM, now resting as enthroned on that heart; yet already exalted through the homage of the redeemed generations who were

to salute her as blessed. Is it so indeed? Is she so divine? or does not rather the imagination lend a grace that is not there? I have stood before it and confessed that there is more in that form and face than I have ever yet conceived. The *Madonna di San Sisto* is an abstract of *all* the attributes of Mary."

The foregoing representation marked a step forward in things spiritual. Before Raphael, painters numberless, under the influence of the luxurious and vicious Medici, had filled the churches of Florence with painted presentments of the Virgin, characterized by an alluring beauty which seemed next door to blasphemy. Then came that Luther of his times, Savonarola. He thundered for purity, simplicity and reform; aiming his blows at the depraving, sensuous conceptions of the grosser artists. He made a bonfire in the Piazza of Florence, there consuming these false madonnas. He was, for this, persecuted to death by the Borgia family. They could not bear his trumpet call to Florentines, "Your sins make me a prophet; I have been a Jonah warning Nineveh; I shall be a Jeremiah weeping over the ruins; for God will renew His church and that will not take place without blood —" Art heard his voice, the painters became disgusted with their meaner handiwork, the rude, the obscene, the mischievous was obliterated; finer, more spiritual and loftier concepts of the Virgin appeared as proof of a reformation of morals. And Raphael, later on, seeing these productions, felt the influence that begot them, and then produced that masterpiece. Tradition says Saint Luke painted a picture of the Virgin from life. The picture, reputed to have been so painted, was found by the Turks in Constantinople when that

city fell into their conquering hands. They despoiled it of its princely jewel-decorations, then tramped it contemptuously beneath their feet. The latter act was typical, and the Turk still lives to trample in contempt on honest efforts to portray with amplitude and finished details this splendid character, whose outlines alone are presented by the Gospels. But though the Vandal spirit survives, there survives also the strong yearning for the representation of that woman beyond compare, and some will still revel amid the ideals of painters, and some will be gladdened still more by truth’s complete presentment which words alone can make.

CHAPTER II.
THE PILGRIM, CRUSADER AND VIRGIN.

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“There is a fire—
And motion of the soul which will not dwell,
In its own narrow being, but aspire
Beyond the fitting medium of desire;
And but once kindled, quenchless ever more,
Preys upon high adventure, nor can tire
Of aught but rest.”

—“*Childe Harold.*”

There is something very fascinating about the contemplation of life as a continuous pilgrimage, and the fascination grows on one as the conviction of the truth of the conception is deepened by study of it. The course of our race has been a series of processions from continent to continent, from age to age, from barbarism to refinement, from darkness toward light. Whether measuring the little arcs of individuals from birth to dust, or following along the mighty marches of our universe with all its grouping hosts of whirling constellations, we have before us ever this constant truth; man moves willingly or unwillingly onward, as a pilgrim amid pilgrims. “Move on” is the constant mandate and necessity of being. Man’s course is mapped; onward from the swaddling clothes to the shroud, from life to dust; then onward again; while all the mighty planet fleets of which the earth-ship is but one, move along

their courses, over trackless oceans, toward destinations, all unknown, yet concededly in a grand as well as in an inexorable pilgrimage. Partly because the motions of his earth-ship makes him restless, partly because he is a being that hopes and so comes to try to find by distant quests hope's fruitions, and more largely because he is of a religious nature, which impels him to seek things beyond himself, the man becomes a pilgrim. He that is content as and where he is, always, is regarded as a fool playing with the toys of a child, by wise men; by religionists, lack of holy restlessness is ever adjudged to be a sign of depravity. Hence almost all religions, whether false or true, have given birth to the pilgrim spirit. The zeal to express and to utilize this spirit has been often pitiful to behold. Multitudes, failing to grasp the fact that life itself is a pilgrimage, have invented other pilgrimages and gone aside to useless, needless miseries. But all the time they attested human nature seeking something beyond itself, better than its present. So the tribes that lived in the lowlands nourished traditions of descent from gods or ancestors who abode on the mountains, and they inaugurated pilgrimages to seek inspiration or a golden age "on high places, far away." The chosen people of God thus constantly were allured from the worship of the Everywhere and One Jehovah by the enthusiasm of the heathen devotees who flocked to the mountain fanes. Turn which way one will in the night of the ages and the spectacle of the pilgrim is before him. Ancient Hinduism, followed by that of to-day, witnessed annually, pilgrims counted by hundreds of thousands to the temple of murderous Juggernaut, the Ganga Sagor, or isle of Sacred

Ganges. The Buddhists journey to Adam's Peak in Ceylon, and the Lamaists of Thibet travel adoringly to their Lha-Isa; the Japanese have their pilgrim shrines amid perilous approaches at Istje, while the Chinese, who claim to be sons of the mountains, clamber with naked knees the rugged sides of Kicou-hou-chan. The pilgrimages of the Jews occupy many chapters of Holy Writ, for all their ancient worthies "*not having received the promises, but seeing them afar off ... confessed that they were pilgrims and strangers*." Christ confronted the pilgrim spirit perverted in the person of the woman of Samaria, at the eastern foot of Gerezim. She and her people rested their hopes in pilgrimages to their supposed to be sacred places, but the Saviour declared to her by Jacob's well, truths, both grand and revolutionary, in these words: "The hour ... now is when the true worshiper shall worship the Father in spirit ... not in this mountain nor in Jerusalem." "Go call thy husband and come hither. Whosoever drinketh the water I shall give shall never thirst." There were volumes in the golden sentences and they plainly said no need to travel far to find the Everywhere God Who ever comes where men are to satisfy their every thirst. "Go call thy husband." Go to thy home and find the water of life through doing God's will; it is better to be a missionary than a pilgrim unless the pilgrim be also missioner. But the truths of that hour have found tardy acceptance among many. The children of Jacob are pilgrims throughout the earth, and the disciples of Christ, since His departure, have gone pilgriming often, as did their fathers before them. Constantine, the Roman emperor, and his mother, Helena, by example and precept, urged Christendom to re-embark in

such pious journeys, and at the end of the first thousand years of its existence, Christianity had hosts of disciples actuated by the same old passion that sent religionists everywhere to seek shrines, fanes and blessings. Then the belief began to be held everywhere among Christians that the millennial period was at hand. Multitudes abandoned friends, sold or gave away their possessions, and hastened toward the Holy Land, where they believed Jesus Christ was to appear to judge the world. Here two pilgrim tides, utterly opposed to each other, met; the Christian and the Mohammedan. The followers of the False Prophet, like other men, were imbued with the pilgrim spirit. Some of these thought perfection could be attained only within the precincts of Babylon or Bagdad, and others sincerely believed that they could find peculiar nearness to heaven about the stone-walled Kaaba of Mecca. It was held to be not only a privilege but a duty, incumbent upon all, to take these religious journeys; hence men and women, young and old, undertook them. Even the decrepit were under the obligation, and they must either undertake the work, though failure by death were certain, or hire a proxy to go in their behalf. So was rolled up stupendously the numbers of pilgrim graves which have marked this earth of ours. The Christian pilgrims for a time thronged toward Palestine, first as a small stream, then as a torrent. Europe at large was aroused, and all impulses converged toward the Holy Sepulcher. The soldiers of the Cross soon added swords to their equipments; the flashing of spears outshone the altar lights, and almost before they realized it the priests and pious pilgrims were transformed to mailed knights. There

was a root to the impulse, and that the universally felt need of ideals, patterns, personages of heroic mold in all goodness, to show men how to live. The pilgrims turned their eyes to the worthies of the past, and soon came to believe that they could best imbibe their spirit amid their tombs and former abodes. Like most religionists they grew to believe God their especial friend, and they therefore soon came to feel that, against all odds, He would help them to victory. Then they easily grew to believe that death in their crusades would merit the martyr's crown. Their courage was unbounded, for many went out with a passion to die in the cause they had embraced. The following crusades were marked by conflicts between Moslem and Christian, filled with fanatical and merciless fury, though both the opposing hosts claimed to be doing all they did in God's name and under his especial direction. "*Deus vult*," "God wills it," was the war-cry of a mighty army, each of which bore on his banner and on his breast the sign of the Cross, the emblem eternally exalted by the Prince of Peace, who willingly died that others might live; but these soldiers were bent on slaying those they could not convert. They were in a transitional state, passing from being pilgrims to being missionaries, but the course was a bloody one. They promoted their self-complacency by persuading themselves that it was a heaven-offending wrong to continue to suffer heretics to occupy the places made sacred by the Saviour when in the world. Then multitudes of Christian priests taught that the pious needed free course to visit the holy places of the East, that they might upbuild their faith and their grasp of theological abstractions by beholding objects

associated with the tenets they had adopted. The Moslems had no interest in these proceedings beyond a desire to thwart them. The Christians, to be sure, had the moral disadvantage of being invaders, but then censure of them is mitigated by the fact that Syria was stolen property to the Turk. The latter held it by the stern title deed of the sword. The reader of this summary will be chiefly advantaged by remembering that this conflict was one of the mightiest efforts in the direction of missionary work ever attempted by man, and that being attempted by force it failed utterly. Now the Crusaders were believers in Christ and devoted to Mary. These facts awaken questions as to how, since the spirits of these twain are finally to conquer all hearts, their champions were so defeated? The Crusaders desired to promote the glory of the Man of men and the woman of women, but sought it by aims only weakly worthy, and means often atrocious. It never matters to Christ’s kingdom who possesses His grave if He only possesses all hearts. The Crusaders, beginning with a warm sentiment of respect for the Virgin, suffered their sentimentality to run mad, and mad sentiment is ripe for folly and defilement. An opal, they say, will change its color when its wearer is sick; so a man wearing a priceless virtue on the sleeve of his creed, will find its luster bedimmed when evil sickens his heart. The Crusaders had grand banners, mottoes, war-cries and ideals, but they did not know how to honestly and truly apply them. Their efforts and results well serve to emphasize the truth that moral advances are made with grander forces than those of the sword; that in the end the heroes and heroines of the world’s regeneration will appear

potent and regnant solely in the sweetness, truth and exaltation of personal character. Crusader and Moslem, at heart, were each desirous of making the world better, but they each, in fact for a time made it fearfully worse. Probably the followers of the Cross and the followers of the Crescent would have been glad to have bestowed all kindness each on the other, if only the one would have accepted the creed of the other. But the humanity and charity of each were as to the other eclipsed utterly by a zeal for theories. There was need to both that there arise a harmonizing ideal. It would seem as if Providence suffered these opposing pilgrims to peel each other until each in sheer disgust was driven to seek some better way. An able historian affirms that the Crusades did not “change the fate of a single dynasty, nor the boundaries and relative strength of a nation”—but they did leave a history, the contemplation of which affords rare thought-food. The conflict ended in the utter route and flight of the Christians. The tragedy ended at Acre, but there were left some things that took shape in men’s thinking, and the world was made thereby better. The populations and properties of Christian Europe had been squandered to a startling degree in these religious wars, and it was fitting that there be some return to compensate. The result of all others, that grew out of the Crusades, and was indeed also a leading cause of their vigor, was the rising of the spirit of chivalry. The dawn of chivalry first begat brave fighting, but in time the chivalrous discovered a theater for their activity amid the amenities of peace. Chivalry was a rebound from the rugged, barbarous belief of the semi-civilized, whose trust was in brute force and whose

constant *dictum* was, “Might makes right.” Men became impressed with a spirit of tenderness, and, little by little the duty and beauty of the strong’s helping the weak dawned upon humanity. To be chivalrous, by the unwritten laws of custom, became the obligation of every man who sought popular respect. Chivalry was in the creed of the noble and brave, and men delighted to become the companions of lone pilgrims, patrons of beggars, protectors of children and defenders of women. Toward the gentler sex, the spirit of chivalry finely expressed itself by not only defending helpless females amid physical perils, but by according to womankind distinguished courtesy, refined politeness, and all those proper respects that so appropriately garnish and ornament the social intercourse of the sexes in properly cultivated societies. Before the advent of this chivalric time, women had been deemed as generally every way inferior to men; chiefly desirable as ministers to the necessities or appetites of their lords; useful as mothers, but worthy of very little respect, confidence or lasting admiration. The dawn of this new and fine gallantry was a step toward woman’s disinthrallment. Chivalry tried to express itself in the Crusades; defeated, its ardor still burned, and Europe felt its beneficent glow long after the conflict for Syrian sepulchers had ceased. And here it is of the utmost importance that the reader forget not the key fact, that before the advent of the attractive spirit of chivalry, men’s minds in Christian communities were profoundly penetrated and wondrously incited by a deep and new regard for the *Queenly woman Mary, the mother of Jesus*! She had been almost rediscovered. By a common consent, Christian

pulpits had begun sounding her praises, as the ideal woman; a woman worthy of the veneration and emulation of all. The various religious communities vied with each other in doing her honor. The Cistercians declared her purity by wearing white, the Servi wore black to commemorate her touching sorrows, and other bodies elected as their distinguishing badges, various garbs or signs solely to proclaim their allegiance to their ideal woman. A popular moral coronation of Mary resulted. The Crusaders outran all others in their adulation of, and committal to, the wondrous woman. They were the first to call her “Our Lady.” She was THE Lady of the hearts of all. These chivalrous soldiers to her spoke their pious vows, from her besought holy favors, and in her name, with sacred oaths, committed their all to effort to wrest all Palestine from the enemies of Mary’s Son.[1] Now these millions of men were not mad, nor in pursuit of a phantom. It was all very real to them. They desired to express a long pent-up natural feeling, and they found an object all satisfactory in Mary. The Crusaders returned finally and for good from battling with Moslem; they returned thoroughly, disastrously defeated: but with their love for Mary all aglow. When they first called her “Our Lady,” there may have been an admixture of irreverence and dilettante in the thought of many; they were purged of these in the hurricane of battle and in the terrors of that inhospitable land of their pilgrimages. Amid trials, far away from his home, often in severe want, frequently confronting slavery and death, the Christian knight while adding “*Ave Marie*” to his “*Patre Nostre*,” learned to think of the Madonna as his mother. Missing the latter keenly, worshiping the other

unfeignedly, woman took a high throne in his esteem. Sword conquest began to seem to the war-wearied soldier very insignificant as compared to a ministry of comfort, peace and good will. The defeated Crusaders returned to scatter through all Europe a new gospel of humanity. They exalted the Queen of David's line and forgot to recount the fortunes of war in the East in expounding the dawning beauties of the woman that entranced them and the queenship this ideal had gained over their minds. So they prepared multitudes of the sterner sex for a lasting belief in the worthfulness of true womanhood at its best. The Christian world was ripe for such a revival, when the priests began to thunder "On to Jerusalem!" but men needed not so much war as conversion; not so much relics and tombs as loving principles exemplified. It is wonderful how conversion womanizes some men. That is a triumph of the spiritual over the sensual, the beautiful over the gross. It will make a man of brutal, selfish fiber, in time, as tender as a mother toward her child and as self-denying as a maid toward her lover. The Crusaders started out to rescue the tomb of the dead Saviour from unbelievers and failed, but they returned to herald the renaissance of Mary, the disenslaving of woman; to call the state, the home and individuals to all the refinements which the exaltation of such an ideal of necessity offered. Toward this advening the rising spirit of chivalry was bending the finest hearts when the clarions of war, sounded from altar and baptistry, summoned all to raise the red banner against the Moslem. Right here it is worthy of notice that God's providence presented other, though allied, principles in the conflict against the Orientals.

Two pilgrim hosts, thinking to choose their own ways, were wisely led to better goals than they knew. The Turk presented the throng of the harem as his family; the Christian was committed to the union of only two in holy wedlock. One party presented a banner with a Cross, forever the emblem of self-sacrifice; the other the Crescent, emblem of youthfulness increasing, a hint ever of the hope of endless lust, whether borne of the master of a harem or by the heathen follower of the ancient moon-horned Astarte. The last at Acre, by the Syrian border of the Mediterranean Sea, the Saracen hugged victory and the Cross-bearers were utterly routed. So reads human history, but in truth the defeat was only apparent and local. The followers of the Crescent, holding the creed of lust and making pleasure of sense their end came surely toward their destruction when successes encouraged them in their courses; the followers of the Cross, on the other hand, had within some germs of truth, life-giving in themselves and too beautiful to be suffered to die from the earth. Trial and defeat watered these germs and the knightly hosts returned to Europe by thousands to proclaim finer doctrines than those by which the priest had incited them to war. The returning soldiers were transformed from pilgrims to missionaries, from being taught to teaching, from restorers of Palestine's graves to restorers of European society. Of the "Teutonic Knights of Saint Mary," a fine and representative order, an impartial historian writes: "They defended Christianity against the barbarians of Eastern Europe." "After many bloody encounters introduced German manners, language and morals." Of the Knighthood, as a whole, says another, "the

institution that could breed such characters as these, obviously rendered an enduring service to humanity. Its spirit lives on, offering examples which the young still welcome in their joyous, dreamy days. The ideal still remains, purified by time, freed from its frailties, and aids in fashioning modern sentiment to the conception and admiration of the Christian gentleman.”

CHAPTER III.
ARMAGEDDON; THE KEY AND SICKLE.

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“From the moist regions of the western star,
The wandering hermits wake the storm of war;
Their limbs all iron, their souls all flame;
A countless host the Red Cross warriors came.”

—Reginald Heber.

As a traveler climbs the mountain to see the sunrise, so he that would overlook the past or present must needs clamber to some lofty point of vision in a significant era or historic location. There are two plains in Syria; one lying along the Mediterranean, the other jutting out from the base of the former toward Jordan; the two together, in shape very like a sickle, have witnessed events wonderfully instructive and determinate to the student of the philosophy of time’s course. These two plains are known respectively as Esdrælon and Acre. The sea and the mountains give these plains their sickle shape, and the geographical outlines are constantly suggestively before the mind as one remembers these plateaus not only as the highways but the battle-fields of the ancient nations. For while, as one says, “the face of nature smiles”—“no spot on earth more fertile,” he also says “no field on earth was so fattened by the blood of the slain.” There the Philistines, the Ptolemys, Antiochus, the Maccabees, Herod, Baldwin, King of Jerusalem, Salah-ed-din, Cœur-de-Lion, Melek-Seruf and

Napoleon, each in turn, put their ambitions and their beliefs to the stern arbitrament of swords. There the kingdom of the House of David struggled for life; there the splendid dream of the Crusaders ended as a nightmare.

As a jewel in the haft of the sickle, at the northerly end of the plain by the sea, sits the city of Acre. This city compels the attention of the preacher and student of history and gives theme to him who blends symbol into song. Acre gave its name to its adjacent country round about, and though both city and plain witnessed many a change of master in the past, those changing masters, to gratify their whims or strengthen their policies from time to time, giving the places various names. The Knights of Saint John made it their elect city, honoring it as Saint Jean de Acre, the martyr maid of France. From the city itself one may look out over the sea-highway of nations; from the drear and lofty mountains of its surrounding country one may look over many memorable places. Acre was often called the “Key of Palestine” by the soldier strategists and by the chroniclers of events. To their testimony is added that of the inspired writers and prophets who made it their key and mountain of outlook frequently.

These plains, dotted all about by sacred places, memorable for two great victories; Barak over the Canaanites and Gideon over the Midianites; and two great disasters, the death of Saul and the death of Josiah, became to the Jews the symbol of the conflict of right and wrong. Prophetically, and in the serene hope that righteousness at last would prevail, the plain was called Armageddon, “the Mountain of the Gospel.” We hear the rapt Zechariah thus descanting: “The Lord also shall save the glory of the house

of David and the house of David shall be as God." "And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born."

The prophet looked forth to the Pentecostal day of salvation and the assured victories of David's great successor. Following this ancient seer, John the beloved, in the Visions of the Apocalypse repeats, these oracles. During the wars of the Crusaders, Acre was sometimes in their possession and sometimes held by their Turkish foes. In the year 1191 Richard the Lion Heart wrested it from the infidel leader Salah-ed-din. The Christians held it firmly until 1291, the time when the last wave of the Crusader advance ebbed, in bloody defeat, from the shores of the Holy Land. For two hundred years the believer of the West and the Moslem grappled with each other in deadly conflict; war's fortunes often changing, but the awful price in human misery and human blood was inexorably exacted at every stage of the conflict. Acre was the focus toward which the eddying tides ever and anon moved; therefore it saw not only the end but the worst of the Crusades.

Our story begins A. D. 1291 at Acre, the Key of Palestine, in Armageddon, "the mountain of the Gospel." The situation may be briefly depicted: Acre was filled with a mixed and un-homogeneous population. There were the ubiquitous

Galilean traders, without politics; shrewd to the last degree in traffic and courtly as a Parisian; there some secret, sullen, silent enemies of the Christian invaders, awaiting the coming end; there hundreds of those camp-following nondescript “good lord and good devil” characters, and there the remnants of the Crusader armies. The latter were not only diminished as to numbers but greatly degraded in moral tone. Their warfare had been belittled to a defense and a retreat. The adventurers were uppermost; courts-martial, intrigues and fanfaronade were their occupation daily. Prince Edward, the Christian leader, had made a sworn treaty with the Moslems long before this time; but his pious followers had quickly, wickedly violated it. Thereupon the Sultan, Kha-tel, had made an irrevocable treaty with himself, sealed with the most awful oath he could register, that he would never tire until he had exterminated the last of the Western invaders now circumscribed and besieged in Acre. With 200,000 dusky followers the Sultan besieged the last stronghold of the Crusaders. The hearts of the defenders sank within them, and scores sought safety in homeward flight, loading down every vessel bound for Europe. Among the first fugitives was the chief leader, Hugh de Lusignan, who wore the phantom title, “King of Jerusalem.” He preferred the safety of distant Cyprus to the doubtful regality which was overshadowed with nearing death. Only 12,000 were left to represent the Crusade cause which once mustered millions. May 18, 1291, the devoted city was stormed by the Turks; an entrance was effected and a murderous carnage, heaping the streets with the dead, and redding the foam of the moaning sea, followed. But there

was no easy victory to the Moslem, for the steady, vigorous, brilliant, desperate fighting of the knights, laying low piles of their foes for every one of themselves that fell, compelled the respect of the Sultan’s host. The Turks attempted to gain a surrender by offering bribes; these failing, terms were offered. The latter, which included permission for the Crusade remnant to depart the country in peace, were accepted. But the Sultan, taught, if he needed the lesson, by the perfidy of Prince Edward’s Christian truce-breakers, quickly broke his promise of safe conduct. Though the retreating band was in no way party to the wrong he sought to avenge, they were mercilessly ambuscaded. There followed another struggle to the death, a handful against a host and but few succeeded in cutting their way through the cordon of death. History has often recounted the preceding events up to the point; from this point it is proposed to lead the reader along the career of a fragment tossed out of the foregoing whirlpool of disaster.

CHAPTER IV.
SIR CHARLEROY; THE SOLDIER OF FORTUNE AND KNIGHT OF SAINT MARY.

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“’Tis quickly seen,
Whate’er he be, ’twas not what he had been;
That brow in furrowed lines had fixed at last,
And spoke of passion but of passion past.”

...

“Chained to excess, the slave of each extreme,
How woke he from the wildness of his dream?
Alas! he told not, but he did awake,
To curse the withered heart that would not break.”

—“*Lara.*”

The course of the knights fleeing from Acre was turned toward Nazareth. There being but one way open to them, they took that way quickly and with one accord. The fugitives from Acre represented various knightly orders, but they were disorganized, without any definite destination and without an authorized leader. Among them was Sir Charleroy de Griffin, a knight famed for valor, a central and commanding personage; one that would have attracted attention in almost any assembly of men. As he went, so went the rest of the fleeing Christians, and when he reined in his panting steed, after a time, at the top of a fir-crested knoll not far from Nazareth, the knights

following him did likewise. Then they drew around him in a semi-circle, without command, and simultaneously, as if to solicit his direction. They had followed the course he took because he took it, and now with one accord they halted because he had done so. There is to some a subtile influence that makes them leaders of men; so the disorganized Crusaders, by an unvoiced but fully expressed concession, admitted the leadership of this dashing horseman. Some may designate this a triumph of personal magnetism, but be that as it may, it was a fact that Sir Charleroy was chief. Sir Charleroy, just at the time of the foregoing incident, presented an admirable study for the philosopher or painter. From his saddle he was able to overlook leagues of bright landscape, but he could not claim the protection of a foot of it; for the first time in his life he yearned for home, now a spreading sea, and a wall of death shut it out from him apparently for ever; by circumstances absolute sovereign almost of the men about him, but doubt and danger were confounding all his ability to give commands. He fell into a train of thought, leaving his comrades to converse with their pawing steeds and to questionings within themselves as to the future. Sir Charleroy had reached an eminence in life, one of those points of out-look where a man’s past meets him and demands review, that it may explain the present. He believed that he had reached very nearly the end of his career, and in that belief he began to weigh it for what it was worth. In imagination he saw one writing the story of his life. Sir Charleroy, the refugee, began faithfully to review Sir Charleroy, the wayward youth, pleasure-seeker and