

THE TALISMAN



SIR WALTER SCOTT

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

THE "Tales of the Crusaders," of which "The Talisman" was to become the most famous, were first begun in the winter of 1824-5. It was a momentous time for Scott. Abbotsford was at last completed, and the top-stone set on the pinnacle which was so soon to fall. Before the end of 1825, the threatening of his catastrophe had made itself heard pretty significantly. But for the time being, all went, or seemed to go, well.

A description of the small chamber at Abbotsford, Scott's *sanctum*, in which a considerable part of "The Talisman" was written, may be quoted from Allan Cunningham's "Anniversary." It vividly pictures the familiar small scenery amid which the orient of Richard I. was prose-painted.

"Connected with this fine room, and fronting—which none of the other sitting-rooms do—to the south, is a smaller library, the *sanctum* of the Author. This room, which seems to be a crib of about twenty feet, contains, of what is properly called furniture, nothing but a small writing-table in the centre, a plain arm-chair covered with black leather—and a single chair besides; plain symptoms that this is no place for company. On either side of the fire-place there are shelves filled with books of reference, chiefly, of course, folios; but except these, there are no books save the contents of a light gallery which runs round three sides of the room, and is reached by a hanging stair of carved oak in one corner. There are only two portraits—an original of the beautiful and melancholy head of Claverhouse (Bonny Dundee), and a small full-length of Rob Roy. Various little antique cabinets stand round about, each having a bust on it. Stothard's Canterbury Pilgrims are over the mantel-piece; above them is a Highland target, with a star of claymores; and in one corner I saw a collection of really useful weapons—those of the forest-craft, to wit—axes and bills, and so forth, of every calibre.

"In one corner of the *sanctum* there is a little holy of holies, in the shape of a closet, which looks like the oratory of some dame of old romance, and opens into the gardens; and the tower which furnishes this below, forms above a private staircase accessible from the gallery, and leading to the upper regions.

"The view to the Tweed from all the principal apartments is beautiful. You look out from among bowers over a lawn of sweet

turf, upon the clearest of all streams, fringed with the wildest of birch woods, and backed with the green hills of Ettrick Forest."

Scott had laid aside his Welsh mediæval romance, "The Betrothed," with which James Ballantyne's criticism as it was being printed had left him dissatisfied, in order to take up a new and a stronger theme. To this characteristic determination to mend a very doubtful undertaking, we owe the writing of "The Talisman." The same frank critic in the printing-office on reading the early chapters of this new romance found them good. His satisfaction, says Lockhart, went on increasing "as the MS. flowed in upon him; and he at last pronounced 'The Talisman' such a masterpiece that 'The Betrothed' might venture abroad under its wing."

Eventually this auspicious forecast was justified to the letter. Early in June 1825, the first part of the "Tales of the Crusaders" was issued, and "The Betrothed" slipped into its place with some of the reflected glamour of its twin-story shining about it. Few of the Waverley Novels had "a more enthusiastic greeting; and Scott's literary plans were considerably modified in consequence of the new burst of applause which attended the brilliant procession of his Saladin and Cœur de Lion."

The following is a list of the works of Sir Walter Scott, 1771-1832—

Disputatio Juridica, etc., 1792 (Exercise on being called to the Bar); *The Chase*, and *William and Helen* (from German of Bürger), 1796; *Goetz of Berlichingen* (translation of Goethe's Tragedy); *Apology for Tales of Terror* (includes some of Author's ballads), privately printed, 1799; *The Eve of St. John: a Border Ballad*, 1800; Ballads in Lewis's *Tales of Wonder*, 1801; *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, 1802, 1803; *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, 1805; *Ballads and Lyrical Pieces*, 1806; *Marmion: a Tale of Flodden Field*, 1808; *Life of Dryden*; *The Lady of the Lake*, 1810; *Vision of Don Roderick*, 1811; *Rokeby*, 1813; *The Bridal of Triermain*, 1813; Abstract of *Eyrbiggia Saga*, in Jamieson's *Northern Antiquities*, 1814; *Waverley, or 'Tis Sixty Years Since*, 1814; *Life of Swift* (prefixed to works), 1814; *The Lord of the Isles*, 1815; *Guy Mannering*, 1815; *The Field of Waterloo*, 1815; *Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk*, 1815; *The Antiquary*, 1816; *Black Dwarf*, *Old Mortality* (*Tales of my Landlord*, first series), 1817 (1816); *Harold the Dauntless*, 1817; *The Search after Happiness, or the Quest of Sultan Solimaun*, 1817; *Rob Roy*, 1818; *Heart of Midlothian* (*Tales of my Landlord*, second series), 1818; *The Bride of Lammermoor*, *Legend of Montrose* (*Tales of my Landlord*, third series), 1819; *Description of the Regalia of Scotland*, 1819; *Ivanhoe*, 1820; *The Monastery*, 1820; *The Abbot*, 1820; *Kerilworth*, 1821; Biographies in Ballantyne's *Novelists*, 1821; *Account of the Coronation of George IV*, 1821; *The Pirate*, 1822; *Halidon Hill*, 1822; *Macduff's Cross* (Joanna Baillie's *Poetical Miscellanies*), 1822; *The Fortunes of Nigel*, 1822; *Peveril of the Peak*, 1822; *Quentin Durward*, 1823; *St. Ronan's Well*, 1824; *Redgauntlet*, 1824; *The Betrothed* The

Talisman (Tales of the Crusaders), 1825; *Woodstock, or the Cavaliers: a tale of 1651*, 1826; *Life of Napoleon Buonaparte*, 1827; *The Two Drovers*, *The Highland Widow*, *The Surgeon's Daughter* (*Chronicles of the Canongate*, first series), 1827; *Tales of a Grandfather*, First Series, 1828; Second Series, 1829; Third Series, 1830; Fourth Series, 1830; *St. Valentine's Day, or The Fair Maid of Perth* (*Chronicles of the Canongate*, second series), 1828; *My Aunt Margaret's Mirror*, *The Tapestryed Chamber*, *The Laird's Jock (Keepsake)*, 1828; *Religious Discourses by a Layman*, 1828; *Anne of Geierstein*, 1829; *History of Scotland* (*Lardner's Cabinet Cyclopaedia*), 1830; *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*, 1830; *House of Aspen (Keepsake)*, 1830; *Doom of Devorgoil; Auchindrane, or the Ayrshire Tragedy*, 1830; *Essays on Ballad Poetry*, 1830; *Count Robert of Paris, Castle Dangerous*, 1832 (*Tales of my Landlord*, fourth series).

Among works edited by Scott, and miscellaneous pieces: *Sir Tristrem, Metrical Romance of the thirteenth century* by Thomas of Ercildoune, called the Rhymer, 1804, fourth edition, 1819; *Original Memoirs written during the late Civil War*, 1806; *Works of Dryden*, with life of author, 18 vols., 1808; second edition, 1821; *Memoirs of Captain G. Carleton, etc.*, 1808; *Memoirs of Robert Carey*, and *Fragmenta Regalia*, 1808; *Memoirs of Sir R. Sadler*, with historical notes (to edition of his papers, etc.), 1809; *Poetical Works of Anne Seward*, with biographical preface, 3 vols., 1810; *Secret History of the Court of James I, etc.*, 2 vols., 1811; *Memoirs of the Reign of Charles I*, by Sir P. Warwick, 1813; *Works of Jonathan Swift*, 19 vols., 1814, second edition, 1824; *Memorials of the Somervilles*, 1815; *of the Haliburtons*, 1820; *Northern Memoirs, etc.*, with preface and notes, 1821; *Lays of the Lindsays*, 1821; *Novelists' Library*, with prefatory memoirs, 10 vols., 1821-4; *Military Memoirs of the Great Civil War, etc.*, 1822; *Provincial Antiquities and Picturesque Scenery of Scotland*, with descriptive illustration by W. S., 1826; *Memoirs of the Marchioness de la Rochejaquelein*, 1827; *Bannatyne Miscellany*, 1827; *Memorials of G. Bannatyne, 1545-1608*, with Memoir, 1829; *Beauties of Sterne*, with some account of his writings, 1836; *Ballad of Kinmont Willie*, with historical introduction, 1841; *Memoir and Life of Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury*, 1853; *Selections from Auchinleck Manuscript*, 1857; Notes and Introduction to *Memoirs of the Duke of Sully*, 1856, and to works of Daniel De Foe, 1854-6, also attributed to him.

Private Letters of the Seventeenth Century, a fictitious collection, was published anonymously by Scott in 1821. New edition, introduction by Douglas Grant, 1947.

Letters and Articles were contributed to *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Chivalry; Drama), 1814; *Provincial Antiquities of Scotland*, 1819-26; *Edinburgh Weekly Journal*, 1820, 1826; as well as frequent articles to the *Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviews*, and *Edinburgh Annual Register*.

COLLECTED POEMS: 1820, 1821, 1823, 1830 (with Author's Prefaces); 1834 (Lockhart); with biographical and critical memoir by F. T. Palgrave, 1866; with critical memoir by W. M. Rossetti, 1870 and later editions; with memoir by W. B. Scott, 1877 and later editions; with biographical and critical notice by W. Sharp, 2 vols. (*Canterbury Poets*), 1885-6; Edition, J. Logie Robertson (Oxford Miniature Edition), 5 vols., 1894; selected and edited by A. Lang (Dryburgh Edition), 1895.

COLLECTED NOVELS: 1820 (Novels and Tales); 1822 (Historical Romances); 1824 (Historical Romances), 26 vols. With Author's Notes, 1830-4, 48 vols. People's Edition, 1844-8; Abbotsford, 1842-7; Roxburgh, 1859-61; Dryburgh, 1892-4; Border (A. Lang), 1892-4; The Temple Edition (C. K. Shorter), 1897-9.

MISCELLANEOUS WORKS: Containing introductory remarks on popular poetry, etc., 1836.

LETTERS: *Letters to Editor and Others*, edited by R. Polwhele, 1832;

In Memoir of W. Taylor of Norwich, edited by J. W. Robberds, 1843; Letters exchanged with James Ellis, 1850; to Sir G. and Lady Beaumont (see W. A. Knight, *Memorials of Coleorton*), 1887; *Family Letters*, edited by D. Douglas, 1894; *Letters of Sir W. Scott and Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe to R. Chambers, 1821-45*, edited by C. E. S. Chambers, 1904.

LIFE: Autobiography (compiled from his introductions and notes to the editions of the Waverley Novels and Poetical Works published between 1827-31, 1831; W. Weir, 1832; D. Vedder, 1832; B. S. Nayler, 1833; G. Allan, 1834; J. Hogg, *Domestic Manners and Private Life of Sir W. Scott*, 1834, 1882, 1909; R. P. Gillies, *Recollections of*, 1837; J. G. Lockhart, 1837, and many later editions, 1906 (Everyman's Library); G. Grant, 1849; D. Macleod, 1852; G. Gilfillan, 1870, 1871; G. R. Gleig, 1871; J. Gibson, 1871; R. S. Mackenzie, 1871; C. S. M. Lockhart, *The Centenary Memorial*, 1871; R. Chambers with *Abbotsford Notanda*, 1871; R. H. Hutton (English Men of Letters), 1878; J. C. Watt (Great Novelists), 1880; C. D. Yonge (Great Writers), 1888; G. E. B. Saintsbury (Famous Scots Series), 1897; J. Hay, 1899; W. H. Hudson, 1901; W. S. Crockett and J. L. Caw (Bookman Biographies, No. 5), 1903; M. A. Hughes, *Letters and Recollections of Sir W. Scott*, 1904, 1910 (Nelson's Shilling Library); G. le G. Norgate, 1906; A. Lang, 1906 (Literary Lives); G. Wyndham, 1908; J. Skene (*The Skene Papers, Memories of Sir W. Scott*, etc.), 1909; O. Elton, 1924; John Buchan, 1933; H. J. C. Grierson, 1938.

SIR WALTER SCOTT, born at Edinburgh in 1771. Called to the Bar, 1792; Sheriff-depute of Selkirk, 1799; Principal Clerk of Session, 1812. Moved to Abbotsford in 1812, and died there on 21st September 1832. Ruined in 1826 by the failure of Messrs. Constable and Ballantyne, but he worked off the greater part of his indebtedness and his executors were able to settle the balance after his death. Created a baronet in 1820.

INTRODUCTION

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 play-bill, 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 Mahomedan 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 Cœur 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 personæ*.

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.—(Appendix, p. 6.)

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, periapts, 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 Cartland 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 dipt operated as a styptic, as a febrifuge, and possessed several other properties as a medical talisman.

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."—*History of Chivalry*.

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.

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 countreȝ,
For gold, ne silver, ne no monèy,
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 kingis wants were swyche,
To the steward he spake privyliche—
‘ Our lord the king sore is sick, I wis,
After porck he alonged 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 talènt,
When he has a good taste,
And eaten well a good repast,
And supped of the *brewis* 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,
 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* the bones,
 And drank well after for the nonce.
 And when he had eaten enough,
 His folk hem turned away, and *lough*.
 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 solàce.
 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* 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 intrusted, 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* 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* 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 caldron, 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 befor,
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 character 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 shoulde 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 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 Englishman,
 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 fare,
 And every day we shall eat
 All so many as we may get.
 To England will we nought gon,
 Till they be eaten every one.’ ”

ELLIS'S *Specimens of Early English*
Metrical Romances, vol. ii. p. 236.

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 consumption they heard of under the teeth of the *Thafurs*."¹

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.

¹ James's *History of Chivalry*, p. 178.