CHAPTER XI - THE MEANING OF THE CRUSADE

There are three examples of Western work on the great eastern slope of the Mount of Olives; and they form a sort of triangle illustrating the truth about the different influences of the West on the East. At the foot of the hill is the garden kept by the Franciscans on the alleged site of Gethsemane, and containing the hoary olive that is supposed to be the terrible tree of the agony of Christ. Given the great age and slow growth of the olives, the tradition is not so unreasonable as some may suppose. But whether or not it is historically right, it is not artistically wrong. The instinct, if it was only an instinct, that made men fix upon this strange growth of grey and twisted wood, was a true imaginative instinct. One of the strange qualities of this strange Southern tree is its almost startling hardness; accidentally to strike the branch of an olive is like striking rock. With its stony surface, stunted stature, and strange holes and hollows, it is often more like a grotto than a tree. Hence it does not seem so unnatural that it should be treated as a holy grotto; or that this strange vegetation should claim to stand for ever like a sculptured monument. Even the shimmering or shivering silver foliage of the living olive might well have a legend like that of the aspen; as if it had grown grey with fear from the apocalyptic paradox of a divine vision of death. A child from one of the villages said to me, in broken English, that it was the place where God said his prayers. I for one could not ask for a finer or more defiant statement of all that separates the Christian from the Moslem or the Jew; credo quia impossibile.

Around this terrible spot the Franciscans have done something which will strike many good and thoughtful people as quite fantastically inadequate; and which strikes me as fantastically but precisely right. They have laid out the garden simply as a garden, in a way that is completely natural because it is completely artificial. They have made flower-beds in the shape of stars and moons, and coloured them with flowers like those in the backyard of a cottage. The combination of these bright patterns in the sunshine with the awful shadow in the centre is certainly an incongruity in the sense of a contrast. But it is a poetical contrast, like that of birds building in a temple or flowers growing on a tomb. The best way of suggesting what I for one feel about it would be something like this; suppose we imagine a company of children, such as those whom Christ blessed in Jerusalem, afterwards put permanently in charge of a field full of his sorrow; it is probable that, if they could do anything with it, they would do something like this. They might cut it up into quaint shapes and dot it with red daisies or yellow marigolds. I really do not know that there is anything better that grown up people could do, since anything that the greatest of them could do must be, must look quite as small. "Shall I, the gnat that dances in Thy ray, dare

to be reverent?" The Franciscans have not dared to be reverent; they have only dared to be cheerful. It may be too awful an adventure of the imagination to imagine Christ in that garden. But there is not the smallest difficulty about imagining St. Francis there; and that is something to say of an institution which is eight hundred years old.

Immediately above this little garden, overshadowing and almost overhanging it, is a gorgeous gilded building with golden domes and minarets glittering in the sun, and filling a splendid situation with almost shameless splendour; the Russian church built over the upper part of the garden, belonging to the Orthodox-Greeks. Here again many Western travellers will be troubled; and will think that golden building much too like a fairy palace in a pantomime. But here again I shall differ from them, though perhaps less strongly. It may be that the pleasure is childish rather than childlike; but I can imagine a child clapping his hands at the mere sight of those great domes like bubbles of gold against the blue sky. It is a little like Aladdin's Palace, but it has a place in art as Aladdin has a place in literature; especially since it is oriental literature. Those wise missionaries in China who were not afraid to depict the Twelve Apostles in the costume of Chinamen might have built such a church in a land of glittering mosques. And as it is said that the Russian has in him something of the child and something of the oriental, such a style may be quite sincere, and have even a certain simplicity in its splendour. It is genuine of its kind; it was built for those who like it; and those who do not like it can look at something else. This sort of thing may be called tawdry, but it is not what I call meretricious. What I call really meretricious can be found yet higher on the hill; towering to the sky and dominating all the valleys.

The nature of the difference, I think, is worth noting. The German Hospice, which served as a sort of palace for the German Emperor, is a very big building with a very high tower, planned I believe with great efficiency, solidity and comfort, and fitted with a thousand things that mark its modernity compared with the things around, with the quaint garden of the Franciscans or the fantastic temple of the Russians. It is what I can only describe as a handsome building; rather as the more vulgar of the Victorian wits used to talk about a fine woman. By calling it a handsome building I mean that from the top of its dizzy tower to the bottom of its deepest foundations there is not one line

or one tint of beauty. This negative fact, however, would be nothing; it might be honestly ugly and utilitarian like a factory or a prison; but it is not. It is as pretentious as the gilded dome below it; and it is pretentious in a wicked way where the other is pretentious in a good and innocent way. What annoys me about it is that it was not built by children, or even by savages, but by professors; and the professors could profess the art and could not practise it. The architects knew everything about a Romanesque building except how to build it. We feel

that they accumulated on that spot all the learning and organisation and information and wealth of the world, to do this one particular thing; and then did it wrong. They did it wrong, not through superstition, not through fanatical exaggeration, not through provincial ignorance, but through pure, profound, internal, intellectual incompetence; that intellectual incompetence which so often goes with intellectual pride. I will mention only one matter out of a hundred. All the columns in the Kaiser's Chapel are in one way very suitable to their place; every one of them has a swelled head. The column itself is slender but the capital is not only big but bulging; and it has the air of bulging downwards, as if pressing heavily on something too slender to support it. This is false, not to any of the particular schools of architecture about which professors can read in libraries, but to the inmost instinctive idea of architecture itself. A Norman capital can be heavy because the Norman column is thick, and the whole thing expresses an elephantine massiveness and repose. And a Gothic column can be slender, because its strength is energy; and is expressed in its line, which shoots upwards like the life of a tree, like the jet of a fountain or even like the rush of a rocket. But a slender thing beneath, obviously oppressed by a bloated thing above, suggests weakness by one of those miraculous mistakes that are as precisely wrong as masterpieces are precisely right. And to all this is added the intolerable intuition; that the Russians and the Franciscans, even if we credit them with fantastic ignorance, are at least looking up at the sky; and we know how the learned Germans would look down upon them, from their monstrous tower upon the hill.

And this is as true of the moral as of the artistic elements in the modern Jerusalem. To show that I am not unjustly partisan, I will say frankly that I see little to complain of in that common subject of complaint; the mosaic portrait of the Emperor on the ceiling of the chapel. It is but one among many figures; and it is not an unknown practice to include a figure of the founder in such church decorations. The real example of that startling moral stupidity which marked the barbaric imperialism can be found in another figure of which, curiously enough, considerably less notice seems to have been taken. It is the more remarkable because it is but an artistic shadow of the actual fact; and merely records in outline and relief the temporary masquerade in which the man walked about in broad daylight. I mean the really astounding trick of dressing himself up as a Crusader. That was, under the circumstances, far more ludicrous and lunatic a proceeding than if he had filled the whole ceiling with cherub heads with his own features, or festooned all the walls with one ornamental pattern of his moustaches.

The German Emperor came to Jerusalem under the escort of the Turks, as the ally of the Turks, and solely because of the victory and supremacy of the Turks. In other words, he came to Jerusalem solely because the Crusaders had lost

Jerusalem; he came there solely because the Crusaders had been routed, ruined, butchered before and after the disaster of Hattin: because the Cross had gone down in blood before the Crescent, under which alone he could ride in with safety. Under those circumstances to dress up as a Crusader, as if for a fancy dress ball, was a mixture of madness and vulgarity which literally stops the breath. There is no need whatever to blame him for being in alliance with the Turks; hundreds of people have been in alliance with the Turks; the English especially have been far too much in alliance with them. But if any one wants to appreciate the true difference, distinct from all the cant of newspaper nationality, between the English and the Germans (who were classed together by the same newspapers a little time before the war) let him take this single incident as a test. Lord Palmerston, for instance, was a firm friend of the Turks. Imagine Lord Palmerston appearing in chain mail and the shield of a Red Cross Knight.

It is obvious enough that Palmerston would have said that he cared no more for the Crusade than for the Siege of Troy; that his diplomacy was directed by practical patriotic considerations of the moment; and that he regarded the religious wars of the twelfth century as a rubbish heap of remote superstitions. In this he would be quite wrong, but quite intelligible and quite sincere; an English aristocrat of the nineteenth century inheriting from the English aristocrats of the eighteenth century; whose views were simply those of Voltaire. And these things are something of an allegory. For the Voltairian version of the Crusades is still by far the most reasonable of all merely hostile views of the Crusades. If they were not a creative movement of religion, then they were simply a destructive movement of superstition; and whether we agree with Voltaire in calling it superstition or with Villehardouin in calling it religion, at least both these very clear-headed Frenchmen would agree that the motive did exist and did explain the facts. But just as there is a clumsy German building with statues that at once patronise and parody the Crusaders, so there is a clumsy German theory that at once patronises and minimises the Crusades. According to this theory the essential truth about a Crusade was that it was not a Crusade. It was something that the professors, in the old days before the war, used to call a Teutonic Folk-Wandering. Godfrey and St. Louis were not, as Villehardouin would say, fighting for the truth; they were not even, as Voltaire would say, fighting for what they thought was the truth; this was only what they thought they thought, and they were really thinking of something entirely different. They were not moved either by piety or priestcraft, but by a new and unexpected nomadism. They were not inspired either by faith or fanaticism, but by an unusually aimless taste for foreign travel. This theory that the war of the two great religions could be explained by "Wanderlust" was current about twenty years ago among the historical professors of Germany, and with many of their other views, was often accepted by the historical professors of England. It was swallowed by an earthquake, along with other rubbish, in the year 1914.

Since then, so far as I know, the only person who has been patient enough to dig it up again is Mr. Ezra Pound. He is well known as an American poet; and he is, I believe, a man of great talent and information. His attempt to recover the old Teutonic theory of the Folk-Wandering of Peter the Hermit was expressed, however, in prose; in an article in the New Age. I have no reason to doubt that he was to be counted among the most loyal of our allies; but he is evidently one of those who, quite without being Pro-German, still manage to be German. The Teutonic theory was very Teutonic; like the German Hospice on the hill it was put together with great care and knowledge and it is rotten from top to bottom. I do not understand, for that matter, why that alliance which we enjoy with Mr. Pound should not be treated in the same way as the other historical event; or why the war should not be an example of the Wanderlust. Surely the American Army in France must have drifted eastward merely through the same vague nomadic need as the Christian Army in Palestine. Surely Pershing as well as Peter the Hermit was merely a rather restless gentleman who found his health improved by frequent change of scene. The Americans said, and perhaps thought, that they were fighting for democracy; and the Crusaders said, and perhaps thought, that they were fighting for Christianity. But as we know what the Crusaders meant better than they did themselves, I cannot quite understand why we do not enjoy the same valuable omniscience about the Americans. Indeed I do not see why we should not enjoy it (for it would be very enjoyable) about any individual American. Surely it was this vague vagabond spirit that moved Mr. Pound, not only to come to England, but in a fashion to come to Fleet Street. A dim tribal tendency, vast and invisible as the wind, carried him and his article like an autumn leaf to alight on the New Age doorstep. Or a blind aboriginal impulse, wholly without rational motive, led him one day to put on his hat, and go out with his article in an envelope and put it in a pillar-box. It is vain to correct by cold logic the power of such primitive appetites; nature herself was behind the seemingly random thoughtlessness of the deed. And now that it is irrevocably done, he can look back on it and trace the large lines of an awful law of averages; wherein it is ruled by a ruthless necessity that a certain number of such Americans should write a certain number of such articles, as the leaves fall or the flowers return.

In plain words, this sort of theory is a blasphemy against the intellectual dignity of man. It is a blunder as well as a blasphemy; for it goes miles out of its way to find a bestial explanation when there is obviously a human explanation. It is as if a man told me that a dim survival of the instincts of a quadruped was the reason of my sitting on a chair with four legs. I answer that I do it because I foresee that there may be grave disadvantages in sitting on a chair with one leg. Or it is as if I were told that I liked to swim in the sea, solely because some early forms of amphibian life came out of the sea on to the shore. I answer that I know why I swim in the sea; and it is because the divine gift of reason tells me that it would

be unsatisfactory to swim on the land. In short this sort of vague evolutionary theorising simply amounts to finding an unconvincing explanation of something that needs no explanation. And the case is really quite as simple with great political and religious movements by which man has from time to time changed the world in this or that respect in which he happened to think it would be the better for a change. The Crusade was a religious movement, but it was also a perfectly rational movement; one might almost say a rationalist movement. I could quite understand Mr. Pound saying that such a campaign for a creed was immoral; and indeed it often has been, and now perhaps generally is, quite horribly immoral. But when he implies that it is irrational he has selected exactly the thing which it is not.

It is not enlightenment, on the contrary it is ignorance and insularity, which causes most of us to miss this fact. But it certainly is the fact that religious war is in itself much more rational than patriotic war. I for one have often defended and even encouraged patriotic war, and should always be ready to defend and encourage patriotic passion. But it cannot be denied that there is more of mere passion, of mere preference and prejudice, in short of mere personal accident, in fighting another nation than in fighting another faith. The Crusader is in every sense more rational than the modern conscript or professional soldier. He is more rational in his object, which is the intelligent and intelligible object of conversion; where the modern militarist has an object much more confused by momentary vanity and one-sided satisfaction. The Crusader wished to make Jerusalem a Christian town; but the Englishman does not wish to make Berlin an English town. He has only a healthy hatred of it as a Prussian town. The Moslem wished to make the Christian a Moslem; but even the Prussian did not wish to make the Frenchman a Prussian. He only wished to make the Frenchman admire a Prussian; and not only were the means he adopted somewhat ill-considered for this purpose, but the purpose itself is looser and more irrational. The object of all war is peace; but the object of religious war is mental as well as material peace; it is agreement. In short religious war aims ultimately at equality, where national war aims relatively at superiority. Conversion is the one sort of conquest in which the conquered must rejoice.

In that sense alone it is foolish for us in the West to sneer at those who kill men when a foot is set in a holy place, when we ourselves kill hundreds of thousands when a foot is put across a frontier. It is absurd for us to despise those who shed blood for a relic when we have shed rivers of blood for a rag. But above all the Crusade, or, for that matter, the Jehad, is by far the most philosophical sort of fighting, not only in its conception of ending the difference, but in its mere act of recognising the difference, as the deepest kind of difference. It is to reverse all reason to suggest that a man's politics matter and his religion does not matter. It is to say he is affected by the town he lives in, but not by the world he lives in. It

is to say that he is altered when he is a fellow-citizen walking under new lamp-posts, but not altered when he is another creature walking under strange stars. It is exactly as if we were to say that two people ought to live in the same house, but it need not be in the same town. It is exactly as if we said that so long as the address included York it did not matter whether it was New York; or that so long as a man is in Essex we do not care whether he is in England.

Christendom would have been entirely justified in the abstract in being alarmed or suspicious at the mere rise of a great power that was not Christian. Nobody nowadays would think it odd to express regret at the rise of a power because it was Militarist or Socialist or even Protectionist. But it is far more natural to be conscious of a difference, not about the order of battle but the battle of life; not about our definable enjoyment of possessions, but about our much more doubtful possession of enjoyment; not about the fiscal divisions between us and foreigners but about the spiritual divisions even between us and friends. These are the things that differ profoundly with differing views of the ultimate nature of the universe. For the things of our country are often distant; but the things of our cosmos are always near; we can shut our doors upon the wheeled traffic of our native town; but in our own inmost chamber we hear the sound that never ceases; that wheel which Dante and a popular proverb have dared to christen as the love that makes the world go round. For this is the great paradox of life; that there are not only wheels within wheels, but the larger wheels within the smaller. When a whole community rests on one conception of life and death and the origin of things, it is quite entitled to watch the rise of another community founded on another conception as the rise of something certain to be different and likely to be hostile. Indeed, as I have pointed out touching certain political theories, we already admit this truth in its small and questionable examples. We only deny the large and obvious examples.

Christendom might quite reasonably have been alarmed if it had not been attacked. But as a matter of history it had been attacked. The Crusader would have been quite justified in suspecting the Moslem even if the Moslem had merely been a new stranger; but as a matter of history he was already an old enemy. The critic of the Crusade talks as if it had sought out some inoffensive tribe or temple in the interior of Thibet, which was never discovered until it was invaded. They seem entirely to forget that long before the Crusaders had dreamed of riding to Jerusalem, the Moslems had almost ridden into Paris. They seem to forget that if the Crusaders nearly conquered Palestine, it was but a return upon the Moslems who had nearly conquered Europe. There was no need for them to argue by an appeal to reason, as I have argued above, that a religious division must make a difference; it had already made a difference. The difference stared them in the face in the startling transformation of Roman Barbary and of Roman Spain. In short it was something which must happen in theory and which did

happen in practice; all expectation suggested that it would be so and all experience said it was so. Having thought it out theoretically and experienced it practically, they proceeded to deal with it equally practically. The first division involved every principle of the science of thought; and the last developments followed out every principle of the science of war. The Crusade was the counter-attack. It was the defensive army taking the offensive in its turn, and driving back the enemy to his base. And it is this process, reasonable from its first axiom to its last act, that Mr. Pound actually selects as a sort of automatic wandering of an animal. But a man so intelligent would not have made a mistake so extraordinary but for another error which it is here very essential to consider. To suggest that men engaged, rightly or wrongly, in so logical a military and political operation were only migrating like birds or swarming like bees is as ridiculous as to say that the Prohibition campaign in America was only an animal reversion towards lapping as the dog lappeth, or Rowland Hill's introduction of postage stamps an animal taste for licking as the cat licks. Why should we provide other people with a remote reason for their own actions, when they themselves are ready to tell us the reason, and it is a perfectly reasonable reason?

I have compared this pompous imposture of scientific history to the pompous and clumsy building of the scientific Germans on the Mount of Olives, because it substitutes in the same way a modern stupidity for the medieval simplicity. But just as the German Hospice after all stands on a fine site, and might have been a fine building, so there is after all another truth, somewhat analogous, which the German historians of the Folk-Wanderings might possibly have meant, as distinct from all that they have actually said. There is indeed one respect in which the case of the Crusade does differ very much from modern political cases like prohibition or the penny post. I do not refer to such incidental peculiarities as the fact that Prohibition could only have succeeded through the enormous power of modern plutocracy, or that even the convenience of the postage goes along with an extreme coercion by the police. It is a somewhat deeper difference that I mean; and it may possibly be what these critics mean. But the difference is not in the evolutionary, but rather the revolutionary spirit.

The First Crusade was not a racial migration; it was something much more intellectual and dignified; a riot. In order to understand this religious war we must class it, not so much with the wars of history as with the revolutions of history. As I shall try to show briefly on a later page, it not only had all the peculiar good and the peculiar evil of things like the French Revolution or the Russian Revolution, but it was a more purely popular revolution than either of them. The truly modern mind will of course regard the contention that it was popular as tantamount to a confession that it was animal. In these days when papers and speeches are full of words like democracy and self-determination, anything really resembling the movement of a mass of angry men is regarded as

no better than a stampede of bulls or a scurry of rats. The new sociologists call it the herd instinct, just as the old reactionaries called it the many-headed beast. But both agree in implying that it is hardly worth while to count how many head there are of such cattle. In face of such fashionable comparisons it will seem comparatively mild to talk of migration as it occurs among birds or insects. Nevertheless we may venture to state with some confidence that both the sociologists and the reactionaries are wrong. It does not follow that human beings become less than human because their ideas appeal to more and more of humanity. Nor can we deduce that men are mindless solely from the fact that they are all of one mind. In plain fact the virtues of a mob cannot be found in a herd of bulls or a pack of wolves, any more than the crimes of a mob can be committed by a flock of sheep or a shoal of herrings. Birds have never been known to besiege and capture an empty cage of an aviary, on a point of principle, merely because it had kept a few other birds in captivity, as the mob besieged and captured the almost empty Bastille, merely because it was the fortress of a historic tyranny. And rats have never been known to die by thousands merely in order to visit a particular trap in which a particular rat had perished, as the poor peasants of the First Crusade died in thousands for a far-off sight of the Sepulchre or a fragment of the true cross. In this sense indeed the Crusade was not rationalistic, if the rat is the only rationalist. But it will seem more truly rational to point out that the inspiration of such a crowd is not in such instincts as we share with the animals, but precisely in such ideas as the animals never (with all their virtues) understand.

What is peculiar about the First Crusade is that it was in quite a new and abnormal sense a popular movement. I might almost say it was the only popular movement there ever was in the world. For it was not a thing which the populace followed; it was actually a thing which the populace led. It was not only essentially a revolution, but it was the only revolution I know of in which the masses began by acting alone, and practically without any support from any of the classes. When they had acted, the classes came in; and it is perfectly true, and indeed only natural, that the masses alone failed where the two together succeeded. But it was the uneducated who educated the educated. The case of the Crusade is emphatically not a case in which certain ideas were first suggested by a few philosophers, and then preached by demagogues to the democracy. This was to a great extent true of the French Revolution; it was probably yet more true of the Russian Revolution; and we need not here pause upon the fine shade of difference that Rousseau was right and Karl Marx was wrong. In the First Crusade it was the ordinary man who was right or wrong. He came out in a fury at the insult to his own little images or private prayers, as if he had come out to fight with his own domestic poker or private carving-knife. He was not armed with new weapons of wit and logic served round from the arsenal of an academy. There was any amount of wit and logic in the academies of the Middle Ages; but the

typical leader of the Crusade was not Abelard or Aquinas but Peter the Hermit, who can hardly be called even a popular leader, but rather a popular flag. And it was his army, or rather his enormous rabble, that first marched across the world to die for the deliverance of Jerusalem.

Historians say that in that huge host of thousands there were only nine knights. To any one who knows even a little of medieval war the fact seems astounding. It is indeed a long exploded fallacy to regard medievalism as identical with feudalism. There were countless democratic institutions, such as the guilds; sometimes as many as twenty guilds in one small town. But it is really true that the military organization of the Middle Ages was almost entirely feudal; indeed we might rather say that feudalism was the name of their military organisation. That so vast a military mass should have attempted to move at all, with only nine of the natural military leaders, seems to me a prodigy of popular initiative. It is as if a parliament were elected at the next general election, in which only two men could afford to read a daily newspaper.

This mob marched against the military discipline of the Moslems and was massacred; or, might I so mystically express it, martyred. Many of the great kings and knights who followed in their tracks did not so clearly deserve any haloes for the simplicity and purity of their motives. The canonisation of such a crowd might be impossible, and would certainly be resisted in modern opinion; chiefly because they indulged their democratic violence on the way by killing various usurers; a course which naturally fills modern society with an anger verging on alarm. A perversity leads me to weep rather more over the many slaughtered peasants than over the few slaughtered usurers; but in any case the peasants certainly were not slaughtered in vain. The common conscience of all classes, in a time when all had a common creed, was aroused, and a new army followed of a very different type of skill and training; led by most of the ablest captains and by some of the most chivalrous gentlemen of the age. For curiously enough, the host contained more than one cultured gentleman who was as simple a Christian as any peasant, and as recklessly ready to be butchered or tortured for the mere name of Christ.

It is a tag of the materialists that the truth about history rubs away the romance of history. It is dear to the modern mind because it is depressing; but it does not happen to be true. Nothing emerges more clearly from a study that is truly realistic, than the curious fact that romantic people were really romantic. It is rather the historical novels that will lead a modern man vaguely to expect to find the leader of the new knights, Godfrey de Bouillon, to have been merely a brutal baron. The historical facts are all in favour of his having been much more like a knight of the Round Table. In fact he was a far better man than most of the knights of the Round Table, in whose characters the fabulist, knowing that he

was writing a fable, was tactful enough to introduce a larger admixture of vice. Truth is not only stranger than fiction, but often saintlier than fiction. For truth is real, while fiction is bound to be realistic. Curiously enough Godfrey seems to have been heroic even in those admirable accidents which are generally and perhaps rightly regarded as the trappings of fiction. Thus he was of heroic stature, a handsome red-bearded man of great personal strength and daring; and he was himself the first man over the wall of Jerusalem, like any boy hero in a boy's adventure story. But he was also, the realist will be surprised to hear, a perfectly honest man, and a perfectly genuine practiser of the theoretical magnanimity of knighthood. Everything about him suggests it; from his first conversion from the imperial to the papal (and popular) cause, to his great refusal of the kinghood of the city he had taken; "I will not wear a crown of gold where my Master wore a crown of thorns." He was a just ruler, and the laws he made were full of the plainest public spirit. But even if we dismiss all that was written of him by Christian chroniclers because they might be his friends (which would be a pathetic and exaggerated compliment to the harmonious unity of Crusaders and of Christians) he would still remain sufficiently assoiled and crowned with the words of his enemies. For a Saracen chronicler wrote of him, with a fine simplicity, that if all truth and honour had otherwise withered off the earth, there would still remain enough of them so long as Duke Godfrey was alive.

Allied with Godfrey were Tancred the Italian, Raymond of Toulouse with the southern French and Robert of Normandy, the adventurous son of the Conqueror, with the Normans and the English. But it would be an error, I think, and one tending to make the whole subsequent story a thing not so much misunderstood as unintelligible, to suppose that the whole crusading movement had been suddenly and unnaturally stiffened with the highest chivalric discipline. Unless I am much mistaken, a great mass of that army was still very much of a mob. It is probable a priori, since the great popular movement was still profoundly popular. It is supported by a thousand things in the story of the campaign; the extraordinary emotionalism that made throngs of men weep and wail together, the importance of the demagogue, Peter the Hermit, in spite of his unmilitary character, and the wide differences between the designs of the leaders and the actions of the rank and file. It was a crowd of rude and simple men that cast themselves on the sacred dust at the first sight of the little mountain town which they had tramped for two thousand miles to see. Tancred saw it first from the slope by the village of Bethlehem, which had opened its gates willingly to his hundred Italian knights; for Bethlehem then as now was an island of Christendom in the sea of Islam. Meanwhile Godfrey came up the road from Jaffa, and crossing the mountain ridge, saw also with his living eyes his vision of the world's desire. But the poorest men about him probably felt the same as he; all ranks knelt together in the dust, and the whole story is one wave of numberless and nameless men. It was a mob that had risen like a man for the

faith. It was a mob that had truly been tortured like a man for the faith. It was already transfigured by pain as well as passion. Those that know war in those deserts through the summer months, even with modern supplies and appliances and modern maps and calculations, know that it could only be described as a hell full of heroes. What it must have been to those little local serfs and peasants from the Northern villages, who had never dreamed in nightmares of such landscapes or such a sun, who knew not how men lived at all in such a furnace and could neither guess the alleviations nor get them, is beyond the imagination of man. They arrived dying with thirst, dropping with weariness, lamenting the loss of the dead that rotted along their road; they arrived shrivelled to rags or already raving with fever and they did what they had come to do.

Above all, it is clear that they had the vices as well as the virtues of a mob. The shocking massacre in which they indulged in the sudden relaxation of success is quite obviously a massacre by a mob. It is all the more profoundly revolutionary because it must have been for the most part a French mob. It was of the same order as the Massacre of September, and it is but a part of the same truth that the First Crusade was as revolutionary as the French Revolution. It was of the same order as the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, which was also a piece of purely popular fanaticism, directed against what was also regarded as an anti-national aristocracy. It is practically self-evident that the Christian commanders were opposed to it, and tried to stop it. Tancred promised their lives to the Moslems in the mosque, but the mob clearly disregarded him. Raymond of Toulouse himself saved those in the Tower of David, and managed to send them safely with their property to Ascalon. But revolution with all its evil as well as its good was loose and raging in the streets of the Holy City. And in nothing do we see that spirit of revolution more clearly than in the sight of all those peasants and serfs and vassals, in that one wild moment in revolt, not only against the conquered lords of Islam, but even against the conquering lords of Christendom.

The whole strain of the siege indeed had been one of high and even horrible excitement. Those who tell us to-day about the psychology of the crowd will agree that men who have so suffered and so succeeded are not normal; that their brains are in a dreadful balance which may turn either way. They entered the city at last in a mood in which they might all have become monks; and instead they all became murderers. A brilliant general, who played a decisive part in our own recent Palestinian campaign, told me with a sort of grim humour that he hardly wondered at the story; for he himself had entered Jerusalem in a sort of fury of disappointment; "We went through such a hell to get there, and now it's spoilt for all of us." Such is the heavy irony that hangs over our human nature, making it enter the Holy City as if it were the Heavenly City, and more than any earthly city can be. But the struggle which led to the scaling of Jerusalem in the First Crusade was something much wilder and more incalculable than anything

that can be conceived in modern war. We can hardly wonder that the crusading crowd saw the town in front of them as a sort of tower full of demons, and the hills around them as an enchanted and accursed land. For in one very real sense it really was so; for all the elements and expedients were alike unknown qualities. All their enemies' methods were secrets sprung upon them. All their own methods were new things made out of nothing. They wondered alike what would be done on the other side and what could be done on their own side; every movement against them was a stab out of the darkness and every movement they made was a leap in the dark. First, on the one side, we have Tancred trying to take the whole fortified city by climbing up a single slender ladder, as if a man tried to lasso the peak of a mountain. Then we have the flinging from the turrets of a strange and frightful fiery rain, as if water itself had caught fire. It was afterwards known as the Greek Fire and was probably petroleum; but to those who had never seen (or felt) it before it may well have seemed the flaming oil of witchcraft. Then Godfrey and the wiser of the warriors set about to build wooden siege-towers and found they had next to no wood to build them. There was scarcely anything in that rocky waste but the dwarf trees of olive; a poetic fantasy woven about that war in after ages described them as hindered even in their wood-cutting by the demons of that weird place. And indeed the fancy had an essential truth, for the very nature of the land fought against them; and each of those dwarf trees, hard and hollow and twisted, may well have seemed like a grinning goblin. It is said that they found timbers by accident in a cavern; they tore down the beams from ruined houses; at last they got into touch with some craftsmen from Genoa who went to work more successfully; skinning the cattle, who had died in heaps, and covering the timbers. They built three high towers on rollers, and men and beasts dragged them heavily against the high towers of the city. The catapults of the city answered them, the cataracts of devouring fire came down; the wooden towers swayed and tottered, and two of them suddenly stuck motionless and useless. And as the darkness fell a great flare must have told them that the third and last was in flames.

All that night Godfrey was toiling to retrieve the disaster. He took down the whole tower from where it stood and raised it again on the high ground to the north of the city which is now marked by the pine tree that grows outside Herod's gate. And all the time he toiled, it was said, sinister sorcerers sat upon the battlements, working unknown marvels for the undoing of the labour of man. If the great knight had a touch of such symbolism on his own side, he might have seen in his own strife with the solid timber something of the craft that had surrounded the birth of his creed, and the sacred trade of the carpenter. And indeed the very pattern of all carpentry is cruciform, and there is something more than an accident in the allegory. The transverse position of the timber does indeed involve many of those mathematical that are analogous to moral truths and almost every structural shape has the shadow of the mystic rood, as the

three dimensions have a shadow of the Trinity. Here is the true mystery of equality; since the longer beam might lengthen itself to infinity, and never be nearer to the symbolic shape without the help of the shorter. Here is that war and wedding between two contrary forces, resisting and supporting each other; the meeting-place of contraries which we, by a sort of pietistic pun, still call the crux of the question. Here is our angular and defiant answer to the self-devouring circle of Asia. It may be improbable, though it is far from impossible (for the age was philosophical enough) that a man like Godfrey thus extended the mystical to the metaphysical; but the writer of a real romance about him would be well within his rights in making him see the symbolism of his own tower, a tower rising above him through the clouds of night as if taking hold on the heaven or showing its network of beams black against the daybreak; scaling the skies and open to all the winds, a ladder and a labyrinth, repeating till it was lost in the twilight the pattern of the sign of the cross.

When dawn was come all those starving peasants may well have stood before the high impregnable walls in the broad daylight of despair. Even their nightmares during the night, of unearthly necromancers looking down at them from the battlements and with signs and spells paralysing all their potential toils, may well have been a sort of pessimistic consolation, anticipating and accounting for failure. The Holy City had become for them a fortress full of fiends, when Godfrey de Bouillon again set himself sword in hand upon the wooden tower and gave the order once more to drag it tottering towards the towers on either side of the postern gate. So they crawled again across the fosse full of the slain, dragging their huge house of timber behind them, and all the blast and din of war broke again about their heads. A hail of bolts hammered such shields as covered them for a canopy, stones and rocks fell on them and crushed them like flies in the mire, and from the engines of the Greek Fire all the torrents of their torment came down on them like red rivers of hell. For indeed the souls of those peasants must have been sickened with something of the topsy-turvydom felt by too many peasants of our own time under the frightful flying batteries of scientific war; a blasphemy of inverted battle in which hell itself has occupied heaven. Something of the vapours vomited by such cruel chemistry may have mingled with the dust of battle, and darkened such light as showed where shattering rocks were rending a roof of shields, to men bowed and blinded as they are by such labour of dragging and such a hailstorm of death. They may have heard through all the racket of nameless noises the high minaret cries of Moslem triumph rising shriller like a wind in shrill pipes, and known little else of what was happening above or beyond them. It was most likely that they laboured and strove in that lower darkness, not knowing that high over their heads, and up above the cloud of battle, the tower of timber and the tower of stone had touched and met in mid-heaven; and great Godfrey, alone and alive, had leapt upon the wall of Jerusalem.