

matters for consideration, "the deliverance of the Holy Land and the reform of the Church." For the reform of the Church no less than seventy canons were drawn up, while arrangements were made for a fresh Crusade. But before the Crusade could be begun, the great Pope had passed away.

On the death of the most powerful of the Popes, the real reign of the last of the great Emperors began. Frederick II., the ward of Innocent III., is one of the most interesting and at the same time one of the most puzzling characters in mediæval history. The son of an Italian mother, brought up among the half-Greek, half-Arabic civilisation of Sicily, he was, like Otto III. before him, absolutely non-German in character, sympathy and policy. Like Otto, too, he was somewhat of a mystic. His natural abilities were great, and had been improved by a careful education. He spoke Latin, Greek, German, Italian, French and Arabic; he took a keen interest in mathematics, logic, astrology, natural history and medicine. He founded the University of Naples and established zoological gardens for scientific purposes. Learned men from all over Europe flocked to his court. He encouraged literature and was himself a poet, writing in the Sicilian dialect. In fact he has been called "the father of Italian literature." He cared little for bodily exercises and feats of arms, and was not a great soldier, although his keen intellect delighted in the planning out of campaigns. It was in diplomacy rather than in warfare that he excelled.

His character was indeed full of contradictions, and thus stands out in striking contrast with the more simple characters of the typical men of the Middle

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ERICK II.
1215-1250