

CHAPTER XI

THE CRUSADES

OF all the enterprises to which the religious enthusiasm and restless activity of the Middle Ages gave birth, none has made a greater impression on the imagination of succeeding ages than the great movement of the Crusades, which originated at the end of the eleventh century, and lasted more or less continuously for two hundred years. All through the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the ideals of the Crusading movement influenced the minds of Western Europe, and owing to the Crusades there was a constant passing to and fro of warriors and merchants between Europe and Palestine.

ARAB
CIVILISA-
TION To understand the causes from which the Crusades arose it is necessary to go back to the time of the break up of the Caliphate. Throughout the vast dominions of the Arabs a highly developed civilisation had spread. From the Greeks and Persians these early Moham- medan conquerors had learned much; and what they had learned they had developed. They had an admirably organised system of government. They studied science, medicine, and mathematics—inventing algebra, and improving arithmetic by the introduction of the decimal notation. They were the founders of magnificent cities, and were great builders of mosques and palaces, developing their own style of architecture, characterised by the dome, the minaret, and the horse-