THE CRUSADE OF MCCCLXXXIII.: KNOWN AS THAT OF THE BISHOP OF NORWICH

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649434152

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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Trieste

S.N. from the author. 1915

THE CRUSADE OF

M CCC LXXXIII.,

KNOWN AS THAT OF

THE BISHOP OF NORWICH.

BY

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James Parker and Co.

6 SOUTHAMPTON-STREET, STRAND, LONDON;

AND 27 BROAD-STREET, OXFORD.

1892.

PRINTED BY JAMES PARKER AND CO.,
CROWN YARD, OXFORD.

PREFACE.

THE war-cry of the Crusades in their earlier and better days aroused the generous euthusiasm of thousands to rescue the Cross from its Eastern slavery. But the best impulses of mankind have usually been made the instruments of designing selfishness. The war-cry became in time a political tool, and lost its moral power. Many attempts were made to revive it, and in this little volume the story of one of these is told. The scene is not the distant and mysterious East, but commonplace Flanders; and the Cross is not arrayed against the Standard of the Prophet but against the Cross carried by schismatic hands. The material for the story is scattered, and when it is not scanty it is untrustworthy in its detail. While I have been working upon it a sceptical friend has said to me repeatedly, "We know nothing about the past." I am convinced that he is wrong. The scattered records are fragments broken from the great whole. A thick coating of mistake and passion often covers them, and it is difficult to separate the error from the truth; but sound historical science working from its knowledge of human nature which has remained unchanged, can recall with accuracy, if not with com-

pleteness, the vivid life of a past time if it has even scanty contemporary records.

The contents of this book were at first intended to form part of a larger work on the history of England in the latter part of the fourteenth century. Circumstances have made necessary the immediate publication of this portion of it. The notes are inserted as guaranty and proof of statements made. They are intended for the use of special students; others may safely ignore them.

OXFORD,
September 2, 1892.

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