



Aleppo: The Main Gateway to the Citadel

XVIII

THE RISE OF SALADIN

1169-1189

The reign of Saladin is more than an episode in the history of the crusades. It is one of those rare and dramatic moments in human history when cynicism and disillusion, born of long experience of the selfish ambitions of princes, are for a brief period dislodged by moral determination and unity of purpose. Without this foundation the Moslem armies could never have sustained the exhausting struggle of the Third Crusade. If that achievement is to be seen and understood in its historical setting, an attempt must be made to show how, using — as he had to use — the materials to his hand within the political circumstances of his age, Saladin triumphed over all obstacles to create a moral unity which, though never perfectly achieved, proved just strong enough to meet the challenge from the west.

The childhood of Ṣalāḥ-ad-Dīn Yūsuf ibn-Aiyūb (Righteousness of the Faith, Joseph son of Job) was spent in Baalbek, where his father Aiyūb was governor, first for Zengi and subsequently for the princes of Damascus. In 1152, at the age of fourteen, he joined his uncle Shīrkūh at Aleppo in the service of Nūr-ad-Dīn, and was allotted a fief; in 1156 he succeeded his elder brother Turan-Shāh as his uncle's deputy in the military governorship of Damascus, but relinquished the post after a short time in protest against the fraudulence of the chief accountant. He rejoined Nūr-ad-Dīn at

The fundamental source for this chapter is *Al-barq asb-Sba'mi* of Saladin's secretary 'Imād-ad-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī (only vols. III and V extant in MS.; the others summarized with other contemporary materials in *Ar-rauḍatain* ["The Two Gardens"] of abū-Shāmāh, partially translated in *RHC, Or.*, IV, V). Bahā'ad-Dīn's biography of Saladin (*RHC, Or.*, III) becomes a direct source only from 1186; for 1187 onwards 'Imād-ad-Dīn's earlier and shorter work *Al-fatḥ al-qussī* (ed. Leyden, 1888) is equally authoritative. Ibn-al-Athīr's narratives in his general history (*Al-kāmil*, vols. XI and XII, ed. Leyden, 1851-1853; extracts in *RHC, Or.*, I, II) are mostly derived from 'Imād-ad-Dīn. A desideratum is a corpus of the extant documents of al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil; there is an incomplete list in A. H. Helbig, *Al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil* (Leipzig, 1908). S. Lane-Poole's *Saladin and the Fall of the Kingdom of Jerusalem* (London and New York, 1898; new ed. by H. W. C. Davis, 1926) rests mainly on Ibn-al-Athīr and Bahā'ad-Dīn.

Aleppo and became one of his close associates, "never leaving him whether on the march or at court."¹ Later on he again held the office of deputy commandant of Damascus for an unspecified period. Apart from his skill at polo, inherited from his father, and an interest in religious studies, probably inspired by his admiring emulation of Nūr-ad-Dīn, almost nothing else is known of his early years.

During the first campaigns in Egypt Saladin had played a subordinate but not inglorious part under the command of Shīrkūh. When, for the third time, Shīrkūh was ordered into Egypt at the end of 1168, at the urgent entreaty of the Fāṭimid caliph al-ʿĀḍid, Saladin, on his own statement, submitted unwillingly to Nūr-ad-Dīn's command to accompany him. It seems evident that the occupation was intended to be a permanent one this time; according to Ibn-al-Athīr, the Fāṭimid caliph had even made provision for the allocation of fiefs to the Syrian officers. Saladin's first exploit on this occasion was the seizure of the intriguing vizir, Shavar, who had been responsible for calling in the Franks, and his execution on the caliph's orders. Shīrkūh was invested with the vizirate, and the administration was directed on his behalf by Saladin.

When Shīrkūh died suddenly nine weeks later, Saladin was thus his natural successor, although some of Nūr-ad-Dīn's Turkish officers resented his appointment and returned to Syria. The voluminous diploma of his investiture on March 26, 1169, with the official title of *al-malik an-nāṣir*, is still extant. It was composed by his devoted friend and counsellor the *qāḍī* al-Fāḍil, and among its grandiloquent periods there is one strikingly prophetic phrase: "As for the holy war [Arabic, *jihād*], thou art the nursling of its milk and the child of its bosom. Gird up therefore the shanks of spears to meet it and plunge on its service into a sea of sword-points. . . . until God give the victory which the Commander of the Faithful hopeth to be laid up for thy days and to be the witness for thee when thou shalt stand in his presence."

His first task was to meet the problems raised by his position in Egypt. In effect, though Saladin was officially designated vizir, he was "the sultan", and was generally called by that title, with al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil as his vizir. The apparent anomaly of a Sunnite vizir of a Fāṭimid caliph was no novelty; for nearly a century there had been Sunnite vizirs at intervals in Egypt. But until recently the ʿAbbāsīd caliphs had been the more or less passive instruments

¹ Ibn-abī-Ṭaiyī, quoted by abū-Shāmah, I, 100.

of the Selchükid sultans, the sworn enemies of the Fāṭimids, and adherence to the Sunnite sect did not necessarily imply political recognition of the 'Abbāsids. Now, however, the 'Abbāsids were reasserting their sovereignty against the Selchükids; and the jihad movement in Syria, born of a revival of Sunnite orthodoxy, had placed itself under their banner. There could be no effective union with Egypt except on these terms. Saladin was consequently bound by his own principles to restore Egypt to the 'Abbāsīd allegiance, but it was necessary to prepare the ground for the change.

The main danger lay in the Egyptian army, composed of several regiments of white cavalry and some 30,000 Sudanese infantry. Saladin immediately began to build up his own army at the expense of the Egyptian officers, and when a revolt of the blacks broke out he already had enough regular troops of his own to decimate them and to drive them out of Cairo into upper Egypt, where his brothers, in the course of the next five years, gradually crushed their resistance. The white troops made no move and seem to have coöperated with Saladin in repelling Amalric's attack on Damietta (1169), and in the raid on Gaza and the subsequent capture of Ailah in December 1170.² But Nūr-ad-Dīn was pressing him to take the decisive step of proclaiming the 'Abbāsīd caliphate in Egypt, and at length in June 1171 sent him a formal order to do so, at the same time notifying the 'Abbāsīd caliph himself of his action. The order was obeyed, with no immediate outward disturbances. On al-'Āḍid's death shortly afterwards the members of the Fāṭimid house were placed in honorable captivity and the sexes separated, so that it should die out in the natural course of time, and the immense treasures of their palaces were shared between Saladin's officers and Nūr-ad-Dīn.

The good relations which had subsisted up to this point between Nūr-ad-Dīn and Saladin, however, gradually grew strained. Some suspicion may have been aroused by Saladin's failure to assist his suzerain during the expedition to Krak de Montréal (ash-Shaubak) in October 1171, whatever good reasons he may have put forward for his withdrawal. In the following year his gift to Nūr-ad-Dīn from the Fāṭimid treasures was found insufficient. At bottom, the causes of the strain lay more probably in a divergence of political views. Nūr-ad-Dīn regarded Syria as the main battlefield against the crusaders, and looked to Egypt firstly as a source of revenue to meet the expenses of the jihad, and secondly as a source of

² On the Egyptian campaign of Amalric see above, chapter XVII, pp. 557-558.

additional manpower. Saladin, on the other hand, judging from the former competition for Egypt and the attempt on Damietta in 1169, and probably informed of the tenor of Amalric's negotiations with the Byzantine emperor in 1171, seems to have been convinced that for the time being, at least, the main point of danger lay in Egypt. He was more conscious also than Nūr-ad-Dīn could be of the dangers arising from the hostility of the former Fāṭimid troops and their readiness to join with the Franks. In his view, therefore, it was his first duty to build up a new army strong enough to hold Egypt in all contingencies, and to spend what resources he could command on this object.

It was also largely for reasons of internal security that he sent troops to occupy the hotbeds of Fāṭimid activity on the upper Nile and in the Yemen, although the ambition of his elder brother Turan-Shāh had some share in the second of these expeditions. How real the danger was to Saladin is shown by the fact that to the end of his life the defense of Egypt against sudden attack remained one of his constant preoccupations. Nevertheless, the continuous expansion of his influence and military power, which by 1171 already equalled, if it did not even exceed, the forces at Nūr-ad-Dīn's disposal, might well have made Nūr-ad-Dīn uneasy, and there was some talk of his intention to go down to Egypt himself. Saladin's good faith was, however, evidenced by an expedition against the bedouins of Kerak in 1173, in order to safeguard communications with Syria, and for the moment Nūr-ad-Dīn was content to send a controller to audit and report on Saladin's finances and military expenditure. Whatever further plans he may have had in view were cut short by his death on May 15, 1174.

The chief officers of Nūr-ad-Dīn's army at once entered into competition for the guardianship of his young son al-Malik aṣ-Ṣāliḥ. Saladin could not remain indifferent to this outbreak of rivalries, but for the time being took no action beyond acknowledging aṣ-Ṣāliḥ as his suzerain. In June Amalric laid siege to Banyas, but Saladin, having received warning from Constantinople to expect an attack by the Sicilian fleet, was unable to move. It was not until the end of July that the naval assault on Alexandria was made and beaten off, and in the meantime affairs in Syria had taken a grave turn. The emirs of Damascus had made a separate peace with Jerusalem on payment of tribute; Nūr-ad-Dīn's nephew at Mosul had invaded and annexed all his provinces beyond the Euphrates; and in August the eunuch Gümüshtigin, having secured the person of aṣ-Ṣāliḥ, established himself at

Aleppo and threw Nūr-ad-Dīn's lieutenants into his dungeons. The unity of Islam in face of the crusaders was disrupted. In reply to Saladin's remonstrances and hints of intervention, the emirs appealed to him to be loyal to the house that had raised him up. His answer was categorical: "In the interests of Islam and its people we put first and foremost whatever will combine their forces and unite them in one purpose; in the interests of the house of the atabeg we put first and foremost whatever will safeguard its root and its branch. Loyalty can only be the consequence of loyalty. We are in one valley and those who think ill of us are in another."

It was therefore with full consciousness of his mission as the true heir of Nūr-ad-Dīn that he set himself to rebuild the shattered edifice of his empire, and on an urgent appeal from the commandant at Damascus occupied it, almost without opposition, on October 28, 1174. Fully justified as Saladin's action was to himself and in the light of history, his contemporaries and rivals could not be expected to see it in the same light. In their eyes, naturally enough, he was only one of themselves and presumably inspired by the same motives of self-interest and lust for power, cloak them as he might by high-sounding appeals to the principles and interests of Islam. His occupation of Damascus seemed only a clever move to forestall them. When he appointed his brother Tughtigin as its governor, and himself pressed northwards in December with a small force to occupy Homs and Hamah and to demand that Aleppo should open its gates to him as the rightful guardian of aṣ-Ṣāliḥ, they concluded that he was bent upon nothing but the aggrandizement of his own house at the expense of the house of Zengi.

This is the view of Saladin which is presented by the Mosul chronicler, and it was the view of aṣ-Ṣāliḥ himself, who appealed to the population of Aleppo to protect him from his self-appointed deliverer. The emirs had recourse to the familiar expedients: the hiring of assassins (Arabic singular, *fidā'ī*) from Sinān, the "Old Man of the Mountain," to assassinate Saladin, an agreement with Raymond of Tripoli, the *bailli* of the kingdom of Jerusalem, that in return for favors past and to come he should execute a diversion by attacking Homs, and an appeal to Mosul in the name of family solidarity. The attempted assassination failed, but Saladin withdrew to defend Homs.³ Two months later, in face of the combined forces of Mosul and Aleppo, he consented to retrocede northern Syria and content himself with holding Damascus as the lieutenant

³ Cf. above, chapter IV, p. 123.

of aṣ-Ṣāliḥ. The allies tried to press their advantage, and on his refusal to yield further they attacked, only to be routed at the Horns of Hamah (Qurūn Ḥamāh), thanks to the timely arrival of the Egyptian regiments. When Saladin posted his forces round Aleppo for the second time, Gümüshtigin had no alternative but to accept his terms, which left Aleppo in the hands of aṣ-Ṣāliḥ on condition that the two armies should combine in operations against the Franks.

This was at the end of April 1175. A few days later, at Hamah, the envoys from the caliph brought his formal investiture with the governments of Egypt and Syria.⁴ For most princes of his time this was a mere formality, but for Saladin it was much more. If the war to which he had vowed himself against the crusaders was to be a real jihad, a true "holy war", it was imperative to conduct it with scrupulous observance of the revealed law of Islam. A government which sought to serve the cause of God in battle must not only be a lawful government, duly authorized by the supreme representative of the divine law, but must serve God with equal zeal in its administration and in its treatment of its subjects. Already, during his first years in Egypt, and following the example set by Nūr-ad-Dīn, he had abolished all forms of taxation which were contrary to Islamic law, and his first action in Damascus was to abolish them there. This was his invariable practice on each addition to his territories, and was formally stipulated in the diplomas issued to his vassals. It is true that they did not always observe the condition, but an offender was likely to find himself summarily dispossessed of his government in consequence. The sources vividly portray the repeated amazement of his officers and subjects that the personal acquisitions and exercise of power which were the first objects of most princes and governors, including those of his own house, were of no interest to him, and that wealth was a thing to be used in prosecution of the holy war or to be given to others. The fact was patent even to the crusaders. As early as 1175, when Raymond agreed to terms with Aleppo in order to draw off Saladin, William of Tyre observed that "any increase of Saladin's power was cause for suspicion in our eyes. . . . For he was a man wise in counsel, valiant in war, and generous beyond measure. It seemed wiser to us to lend aid to the boy king. . . not for his own sake, but to encourage him as an adversary against Saladin."⁵

⁴ There is no evidence that he was at any time formally invested by the caliph with the title of sultan (Arabic, *sulṭān*).

⁵ William of Tyre, XXI, 6.

No greater justification than this could well be found for the policy which Saladin had adopted. Eight years later he used the same argument in an outspoken despatch to the caliphate: "Your servant believes that there is no stratagem more fraught with mischief for the enemy and the infidel, no effort more effective against the misguided, no favor more profitable in stirring up to anger the leaders of heresy, than to enlarge your servant's power to increase his opportunity of service. For let it be considered, is there among all the rulers of Islam another one whose extension of power is a source of grief and affliction to the infidels?"

The facts were not so patent at Mosul, where the terms of the agreement with Aleppo, and probably also the diploma from the caliph, were received with incredulous anger. It was not only that a prince of the Zengid house was reduced virtually to being a vassal of one of his father's creatures. What was still more disagreeable was that the creature was a Kurd, who challenged the monopoly of sovereignty enjoyed by the Turks for a century and a half, and bestowed his conquests upon his own kinsmen. [To what extent, indeed, personal motives were mingled with Saladin's genuine devotion to the cause and the ideals of Islam is a question which it may never be possible to resolve. But in the circumstances of his time, however unselfregarding his motives were, the only way in which his object could be realized was by concentrating power in his own hands, and delegating it to persons on whose loyalty he could count with absolute assurance. The attitude of the Zengids drove him in the same direction, when events showed him the futility of relying upon alliances and confederations.

Before leaving northern Syria, Saladin retaliated against the Assassins by raiding the Ismā'īlite territories in Jabal as-Summāq, then withdrew to Damascus and made a truce with Jerusalem. An envoy had been sent to Mosul to ensure Saif-ad-Dīn's acceptance of the agreement, and had obtained satisfactory assurances. When, however, the envoy of Mosul in turn came to Damascus to swear Saladin to its terms, he presented in error a document which provided for an offensive alliance against him between Mosul and Aleppo. He was prepared, therefore, when in April 1176 the allies mustered their forces again. Marching northwards, he met them on the 22nd at Tall as-Sultān, fifteen miles from Aleppo, and drove them headlong from the field. Restraining his army from pursuit, he distributed among them the immense booty, released the captives, and sent back to Saif-ad-Dīn the

cages of doves, nightingales, and parrots found in his canteen with an ironical message to amuse himself with them and keep out of military adventures in the future. The disgusted sultan, says the contemporary Aleppo chronicler, "found the Mosul camp more like a tavern, with all its wines, guitars, lutes, bands, singers, and singing girls, and showing it to his troops prayed that they might be preserved from such an affliction."

In spite of Saladin's magnanimity Aleppo still held out. But when, after storming its protecting fortresses to east and north, Buzā'ah, Manbij, and 'Azāz, he again invested it on June 25, its defenders consented to a renewal of the arrangement made the year before. A general peace was signed a month later between Saladin, his brother Turan-Shāh (now "sultan" at Damascus), the princes of Aleppo and Mosul, and the Artukid vassals of Mosul (the princes of Ḥiṣn Kaifā and Mardin), all parties swearing to join together against any one of them who should break the agreement. Aṣ-Ṣāliḥ was given back 'Azāz on the intercession of his little sister, and undertook to furnish Saladin with the assistance of the army of Aleppo should he require it.

During the siege of 'Azāz, a second and more determined attempt had been made on Saladin's life by Assassin emissaries.⁶ On his return from Aleppo, therefore, he marched on Maṣyāf, the Syrian headquarters of the sect, and laid siege to it, while his troops ravaged the neighborhood. What followed is largely enveloped in legend; but Saladin withdrew to Damascus and dismissed his forces to their homes. All that is certain is that for the rest of his life he had nothing to fear from the Assassins.

After marrying at Damascus the widow of Nūr-ad-Dīn, Saladin returned to Egypt, which had been governed in his absence by his brother al-'Ādil Saif-ad-Dīn, and occupied himself for a year with internal affairs. His chief attention was directed to the construction of the citadel and the great walls of Cairo which he had begun in 1171 as a precaution against future Frankish invasions, together with the reorganization of the fleet. At the same time he was earnestly concerned to foster in Egypt the orthodox reform movement which Nūr-ad-Dīn had encouraged in Syria, and both he and al-'Ādil set the example of founding the new colleges from which it was diffused. Meanwhile, his nephew Taqī-ad-Dīn 'Umar, the most warlike and impetuous member of the family, who had watched with a jealous eye the distribution of kingdoms and governments to his relatives, was engaged in attempting to carve

⁶ Cf. above, chapter IV, pp. 123-124.

out a kingdom for himself in the west, an attempt which was ultimately to lead to a clash with the Muwaḥḥid (Almohad) sultan of Morocco. Saladin, so far as the evidence goes, took no hand in organizing these expeditions, but certainly connived at them, and even took credit for them in his despatches to Baghdad.

In August 1177 the news of the arrival in Palestine of Philip of Flanders gave the signal for fresh preparations for war. Whether or not he was informed of the proposals made to Philip to invade Egypt, it was a condition of the truce with the Franks that "if any king or great noble arrived they were free to give him assistance, and the armistice should be renewed on his withdrawal."⁷ As the crusaders, after attacking Hamah, moved up to besiege Ḥārim, Saladin planned a large-scale raid on Ascalon and Gaza. ʿImād-ad-Dīn gives a vivid picture of the light-hearted confidence of the Egyptian troops as they assembled at the advance base and dispersed on plundering raids over the countryside. Baldwin IV's well-timed surprise attack on the regiment of guards at Mont Gisard on November 25 threw the whole force into confusion, and the remnants straggled back to Egypt as best they could, harassed by the Franks and the bedouins, and by lack of both food and water. To Saladin himself, who owed his escape to the loyalty and foresight of al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil, it was a lesson that he never forgot.

So far from decisive was this defeat, however, that only four months later he was able to set out again with a refitted army, and yet leave sufficient forces behind to guard the security of Egypt. The expedition this time had the definite object of attacking the besiegers of Ḥārim, and although Saladin was forestalled in this by the raising of the siege on payment of an indemnity by the government of Aleppo, he pushed on to Homs and encamped there in readiness to take the field at the first opportunity. The withdrawal of the count of Flanders automatically brought the armistice into effect again; in addition, a bad year had brought severe scarcity in Syria. Yet Saladin was eager to resume the *jihād*, and although all the eloquence of al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil was exerted to persuade him to hold his hand until conditions were more favorable, he was already assuring the caliph's ministers that, if all went well and if the troops duly mustered, he would attack Jerusalem in the following year.

⁷ ʿImād-ad-Dīn, *Barq*, iii, f. 25^v (quoted by abū-Shāmah, I, 275). See also below, chapter XIX, p. 595.

In August the Franks broke the armistice by an attack on Hamah. It was driven off without much difficulty and the prisoners were brought to Saladin, who ordered their execution for breach of faith. A more serious breach occurred when Baldwin began to construct a fortress at Jacob's Ford, at the instance of the Templars, in October. Saladin was unable to intervene at once owing to a delicate situation which had arisen at Damascus. His brother Turan-Shāh had completely neglected his duties as governor, besides being on suspiciously good terms with aṣ-Ṣāliḥ at Aleppo. Saladin had accordingly appointed his nephew Farrukh-Shāh as military commandant at Damascus. Turan-Shāh now demanded that he should be given the fief of Baalbek, which was held by the former governor of Damascus, Ibn-al-Muqaddam. Very unwillingly, Saladin consented to the investment of Baalbek, and when Ibn-al-Muqaddam eventually surrendered he was given extensive fiefs in the north; the loyal relationship between him and Saladin remained unbroken, and on the death of Farrukh-Shāh in 1183 he was reappointed to the governorship of Damascus. The episode temporarily weakened Saladin's diplomatic position as against his rivals; but in the long run it was largely due to his firm, yet conciliatory, attitude towards Ibn-al-Muqaddam in this conflict that he had never again to take military measures against an insubordinate officer.

With this problem out of the way, Saladin was free to resume the offensive in the spring of 1179. He began by reorganizing the commands in the north, appointing Taqī-ad-Dīn to Hamah and Naṣīr-ad-Dīn ibn-Shīrkūh to Homs, to hold Raymond of Tripoli in check. A second winter without rains had created famine conditions in Syria; his troops were suffering severely and remonstrated with him, but he answered only "God will provide", and sent the most incapacitated back to Egypt with Turan-Shāh, asking al-ʿĀdil to send him 1500 picked men in return, along with supplies. Early in April, on receiving reports of a projected raid by Baldwin, he sent out Farrukh-Shāh with the Damascus regiment, numbering about 1000 slave troops (Arabic singular, *mamlūk*), with orders to shadow the Franks and send back information on their movements. Farrukh-Shāh, however, found himself engaged almost by accident near Belfort (Shaqīf Arnūn), and gained a brilliant success, the more welcome to the Moslems because the constable Humphrey of Toron was among the killed.

Shortly afterwards Saladin moved out to Banyas and, trusting to receive warning from his spies of any concentration of Frankish

troops, posted a guard at Tall al-Qāḍī and dispersed his forces to loot for forage and supplies. Bands of starving Arab tribesmen who had followed him up were dispatched into the districts of Sidon and Beirut to reap all the grain that they could find. In the plain of Marj 'Uyūn, he was surprised by the appearance of a large force under Baldwin, but hastily mounted all the available troops and turned an initial reverse into a notable victory. The date was June 10, 1179, and 'Imād-ad-Dīn, who drew up the register of the prisoners, relates that over two hundred and seventy knights were among them, exclusive of lower ranks.

Adequately supplied now for a major operation, Saladin enlisted large auxiliary forces of Turkomans and siege troops to supplement the Syrian regiments and the fresh Egyptian contingent, and on August 25 invested the newly-constructed castle at Jacob's Ford. The siege was prosecuted with unremitting vigor and resolution; on the sixth day, the castle was stormed, the seven hundred defenders were taken prisoner, and the Moslem captives were released. In spite of the heat and the stench of dead bodies, Saladin would not leave until the last stone had been razed, and made a series of forays into the territories of Jerusalem before returning to Damascus.

In all these operations, the Zengids of Aleppo and Mosul had shown no readiness to assist him in the reconquest of Palestine. The modest successes that he had been able to gain made it clear to him that the struggle with the crusaders could not be pressed to a conclusion with only the forces of Damascus and those which could be spared from the defense of Egypt. It was not merely that the 6000 troopers whom he could now maintain in the field at one time were insufficient for a decisive campaign. So long as the Nūriyah at Aleppo were under the command of others, they constituted a potentially hostile force on his flank. But even if they were securely brought over to his side, that very operation would only deepen the hostility of the Zengids of Mosul, who with their 6000 troops could still effectually neutralize him. The conclusion was inescapable: since he could not concentrate the forces of Syria and Egypt against the crusaders so long as he was endangered by flank or rear attacks from Mosul, the forces of Mosul too must be brought under his control and turned into auxiliaries in the jihad.

That this could not be accomplished without armed conflict must have been clear to him; but he was reluctant to take up arms against those who were to be his future allies. Persuasion and

diplomacy would yield better returns than conquest, and he knew himself to possess one powerful advantage. In the eyes of all Islam he had established his claim to the spiritual succession of Nūr-ad-Dīn, and those moral forces which had been fanned into life by Nūr-ad-Dīn were ranging themselves on his side. However much the interests of the Zengids might be supported by the narrower loyalties of local patriotism and military tradition, he enjoyed the sympathies of an increasingly powerful faction, not only at Aleppo, but also at Mosul. The rivalries and secret or overt communications of the Zengids with the Franks undermined their own cause, and it seems that even the doctrine of legal rights, so industriously pursued by Saladin, helped to turn the scale. He had only to repeat the tactics employed by Nūr-ad-Dīn himself against Damascus: to weaken the opposing party by encouraging defections and by organizing military demonstrations at appropriate moments, and at the same time to observe to the letter his treaty obligations and the sovereign rights of the caliph.

Saladin's history during the next six years, 1179 to 1185, is the record of his successive advances toward this aim. The complex tale of campaigns and negotiations with the minor princes of Mesopotamia, the Zengids of Mosul, and the envoys of the caliphate, though not difficult to unravel, is difficult to present without entering into a mass of detail. With this main thread in the narrative two others are interwoven: the continued warfare with Jerusalem, and the problems of internal administration and relations between his relatives and vassals. For the sake of clarity, we shall deal with these aspects separately.

During the campaigns of 1179 the Selchūkid sultan of Rūm, Kiliġ (or Kilich) Arslan II, who had in the previous year sent an envoy to assure Saladin of his friendship, suddenly demanded the cession of Raban, taken by Saladin in 1176 from aṣ-Ṣāliġ. Taqī-ad-Dīn, in whose command it lay, was dispatched to defend it, and by a stratagem routed the Selchūkid army with his small force of 1000 horsemen. Early in 1180 a quarrel broke out on a domestic issue between the Selchūkid sultan and the Artukid prince of Ḥiṣn Kaifā, Nūr-ad-Dīn. Although the latter was a vassal of Mosul he appealed to Saladin, presumably in virtue of the Aleppo treaty of 1176. This was just the kind of occasion for which Saladin was waiting. In order to establish his control over Mosul, the first step was to detach the great vassals of Mesopotamia and Diyār-Bakr, who furnished more than half of the effective forces of the Mosul army. The most powerful of these were

the Artukid princes of Ḥiṣn Kaifā and Mardin, who had never reconciled themselves to Zengid domination. Already in 1178 they had approached Saladin, to obtain his support against the aggressive designs of the Selchükid sultan, and, dubious as the present *casus belli* was, he was impelled to seize the opportunity, in order to gain their interest and display a *de facto* suzerainty over Diyār-Bakr. A truce signed with Baldwin in the spring left him free to lead his army to the borders of the Selchükid dominions, less for the purpose of military operations than to force Kiliġ Arslan to cease these provocations and accept his mediation. The plan achieved even greater success than he could have anticipated. The two sultans met on the river Sanġa (Gök-Su) in June and there, apparently, concluded the alliance which was to mean so much to Saladin in later years. Its first fruits were a short and successful campaign against Reuben (West Armenian, Roupēn) of Little Armenia, on the pretext of harsh treatment of the Turkoman tribes in his territories.

Bahā'-ad-Dīn relates that after this campaign a general peace was concluded, on the initiative of Kiliġ Arslan, between Saladin, the Selchükid sultan, Mosul, and the princes of Diyār-Bakr, at a meeting on the Sanġa, near Samosata, on October 2, 1180. There is no confirmation of this statement in any other contemporary source, and indeed the evidence is all against it. For on June 29 Saif-ad-Dīn of Mosul had died, and his brother 'Izz-ad-Dīn, setting aside Saif-ad-Dīn's nomination of his son Sanġar-Shāh, had succeeded him. On his accession 'Izz-ad-Dīn sent an envoy to Saladin to ask his agreement to the continuance of the suzerainty of Mosul over the Mesopotamian cities seized by Saif-ad-Dīn after Nūr-ad-Dīn's death in 1174. Saladin refused point-blank. These provinces, he said, were included in the general grant made to him by the caliph, and he had left them in Saif-ad-Dīn's possession only in return for his promise to assist Saladin with his troops. At the same time he sent a despatch to Baghdad, pointing out that he could not draw indefinitely on the Egyptian forces for his Syrian campaigns but needed the armies of those provinces, and asking for a confirmation of the grant, which was sent to him accordingly.

The breach with Mosul was consummated by the death of aṣ-Ṣāliġ at Aleppo on December 4, 1181. Saladin was in Egypt at the time, and on learning of aṣ-Ṣāliġ's illness had sent urgent orders to Farrukh-Shāh at Damascus and Taqī-ad-Dīn at Hamah to occupy the western Jazīra (Arabic, *jazīrah*: upper Mesopo-

tamia), and prevent the army of Mosul from crossing the Euphrates. But Farrukh-Shāh was engaged in countering Reginald's schemes of invading Arabia from Kerak (Krak des Moabites), and Taqī-ad-Dīn was unable to prevent 'Izz-ad-Dīn from entering Aleppo. There he appointed his brother 'Imād-ad-Dīn as governor of the city, in exchange for Sinjar, and after emptying the contents of its treasury and arsenal returned to Mosul. Saladin's intense anxiety over the situation is shown by the succession of letters addressed to the caliph's council (Arabic, *dīwān*), criticizing the conduct of the prince of Mosul in seizing a province which had been assigned to him while his own troops were in the very act of protecting the city of the prophet from the "infidel", complaining that the disputes between the Moslem princes were hindering the jihad, reasserting his claim to Aleppo on the basis of his diploma, and declaring that "if the Exalted Commands should ordain that the prince of Mosul be invested with the government of Aleppo, then it were better to invest him with all Syria and Egypt as well." The urgent tone of these letters is no doubt explained partly by the need to counteract the similar pressure of the partisans of Mosul at Baghdad, but though propaganda points may be difficult to disentangle from religious zeal there can be no doubt that Saladin was genuinely in earnest over the stalemate that would follow from a reunion of Aleppo with Mosul.

In May 1182 he left Cairo, accompanied by half of the newly reorganized army of Egypt, some 5000 troopers in all, and rejoined his lieutenants in Syria. After an unsuccessful *coup de main* against Beirut by sea and land, he marched on Aleppo, fortified in his purpose by the caliph's diploma. But before investing it, he was visited by Muẓaffar-ad-Dīn Gökböri, the governor of Harran, with an urgent invitation to cross the Euphrates and assurances that he would be welcomed on all sides. Accordingly, since he was, in fact, by virtue of the caliph's diploma, lawful ruler of the Euphrates and Khabur provinces, Saladin crossed the Euphrates at the end of September, and with only scattered opposition occupied the former possessions of Nūr-ad-Dīn in the Jazīra. 'Izz-ad-Dīn attempted to take the field against him, but was foiled by the opposition of his own officers and the open adhesion to Saladin of his chief vassal, the Artukid prince of Ḥiṣn Kaifā, Nūr-ad-Dīn ibn-Kara-Arslan. The sole result of his action was to supply Saladin with a valid pretext for advancing on Mosul itself, an action justified by him in a lengthy despatch to Baghdad, accusing the rulers of Mosul of paying the Franks to attack him, of op-

pression of their subjects, and finally of appealing to the sworn enemy of the caliphate, the Selchūkid atabeg in Persia. The last accusation is confirmed by the Mosul sources; in desperation 'Izz-ad-Dīn was seeking allies in every direction, and sent Bahā'-ad-Dīn himself to ask for the caliph's support against Saladin. In response to this appeal, the caliph sent a delegate, the *shaikh ash-shuyūkh*, to mediate between the parties, and for a month protracted negotiations went on while the siege continued.

It must be emphasized that the point at issue in these negotiations was not at any time Saladin's claim to the physical possession of Mosul, but the terms on which its prince would adhere to Saladin and send his armies to coöperate in the war against the Franks. On this first occasion the main object of the Zengid prince was to retain his suzerainty over Aleppo, and although Saladin, anxious to reach an agreement, yielded to all his demands short of this, he refused to ratify the terms. At the urgent intercession of the shaikh, Saladin agreed to withdraw from Mosul, but refused to continue the negotiations. The fact that they had been set on foot had severely strained the confidence of his new vassals in the Jazira, and in order to reassure them he announced to the diwan his firm determination not to leave the province until he had completed the conquest of it.

He began by besieging 'Izz-ad-Dīn's brother in Sinjar, with the assistance of the Artukid Nūr-ad-Dīn. It was surrendered on terms after fifteen days (December 30), and the garrison was evacuated to Mosul. After Dara also had been surrendered by its Artukid prince Bahrām, Saladin went into winter quarters at Harran. But that he had no intention of relaxing the pressure upon 'Izz-ad-Dīn is shown by the stream of correspondence addressed to the chief ministers at Baghdad and reiterated requests for his recognition as suzerain of Mosul. Though this was still withheld, his application to receive the caliph's diploma for Amida (modern Diyarbakır) was granted. In April 'Izz-ad-Dīn made an attempt to rally his remaining allies, but Saladin called up Taqī-ad-Dīn from Hamah, and on his approach the coalition dissolved. Without waiting for the remainder of his forces he at once laid siege to the all-but-impregnable fortress of Amida in Diyār-Bakr, in pursuance of a promise made to Nūr-ad-Dīn. Its surrender within three weeks set the seal on his reputation; and his quixotic generosity, both to the defeated governor and in handing it over with its immense military stores intact to Nūr-ad-Dīn, disproved once and for all his enemies' imputations of selfish ambition.

In his despatches to the caliphate after the capture of Amida Saladin pointed the moral. The caliph's authority to take and govern Amida had unlocked its gates to him; why was the patent for Mosul still denied? This alone stood in the way of the union of Islam and the recovery of Jerusalem. Let the commander of the faithful compare the conduct of his clients and judge which of them had most faithfully served the cause of Islam. If Saladin insists on the inclusion of Mesopotamia and Mosul in his dominions, it is because "this little Jazira [*i.e.* Mesopotamia] is the lever which will set in motion the great Jazira [*i.e.* the whole Arab east]; it is the point of division and center of resistance, and once it is set in its place in the chain of alliances, the whole armed might of Islam will be coördinated to engage the forces of unbelief."

The submission of Amida brought the remaining Artukids at Maiyafariqin and Mardin over to Saladin, and he now turned to settle his account with Aleppo, receiving on the way the surrender of the last of its outer fortresses, Tall Khālid and Aintab (Gaziantep). By May 21, 1183, he was already encamped before Aleppo, with a reasonable expectation of its early surrender. Saladin's secretary vividly portrays the complexity of the conflict; neither 'Imād-ad-Dīn Zengi nor Saladin was eager to fight, the former because he had set his heart on returning to Sinjar, the latter because the Nūrīyah, Nūr-ad-Dīn's old guard, were "the soldiers of the jihad, who had in the past done great service for Islam, and whose gallantry and courage had gained his admiration," whereas they for their part "stirred up the flames of war," and the younger and more ardent of Saladin's own troops plunged eagerly into the fray. After a few days he withdrew to the hill of Jaushan, overlooking the city, set his builders to construct a fortress there, and started to distribute the territories of Aleppo in fiefs to his own officers. 'Imād-ad-Dīn Zengi saw that the critical moment had come, and secretly arranged the exchange of Aleppo for Sinjar and the eastern Jazira, on condition of coöperating in the war with the Franks. On June 11 Saladin's yellow banner was hoisted on the citadel; the Nūrīyah in turn made their submission with what, from the external events, would seem surprising readiness, were received by Saladin as old comrades in arms, and were overwhelmed by his generosity. The governor of Ḥārim alone held out and attempted to gain support from Antioch, but was arrested by his own men, who surrendered the castle to Saladin in person on June 22.

A truce with Bohemond of Antioch having been arranged on condition of the liberation of Moslem prisoners, Saladin was now in a position to retaliate against the Franks of Jerusalem for their raiding expeditions during his absence in Mesopotamia, and more especially on Reginald of Kerak for his forays in Arabia and on the Red Sea. Announcing to the diwan at Baghdad his decision to prosecute the jihad, now that the main obstacles had been removed, he set out with the regular troops of Aleppo and the Jazira, together with the Turkoman cavalry and a large force of volunteers and auxiliaries. After a brief halt at Damascus he crossed the Jordan to Baisan on September 29, but failed to bring the main forces of the kingdom to battle.⁸ Returning to Damascus, he summoned al-‘Ādil to join him before Kerak with a body of the Egyptian troops, and laid siege to the castle in November. The Moslems were so confident of success that the failure of their mangonels to effect a breach produced a corresponding discouragement, and when news was received of the arrival of a relieving force at Wālā, they found excuses for putting off the attack, and Saladin withdrew to rest and refit his armies.

During this interval another attempt was made to solve the problem of Mosul by negotiation. The initiative came from ‘Izz-ad-Dīn, whose nephew Sanjar-Shāh at Jazīrat-Ibn-‘Umar, with Gökböri’s brother at Irbil and the governors of Takrīt and Ḥadīthah, had thrown themselves on the protection of Saladin and obtained from him a guarantee of support. ‘Izz-ad-Dīn appealed to the caliph to send the *shaikh ash-shuyūkh* once more to mediate with Saladin, “knowing,” as Saladin’s secretary wrote, “that our policy was one of strict obedience to the caliph’s commands.” An agreement was reached with the shaikh on the basis that ‘Izz-ad-Dīn’s rights in Mosul should be respected and that his former vassals should be left free to choose between Saladin and him, but it was rejected by the envoy from Mosul, and so matters remained as they were, or rather worse than they had been.

For his fresh assault on Kerak (August–September 1184) Saladin assembled the most powerful army that had yet operated in Syria, comprising the forces of Damascus, Aleppo, the Jazira and Sinjar, Ḥiṣn Kaifā and Mardin, and a contingent from Egypt. Again it failed, and the armies were dismissed after a raiding expedition through Samaria. Back at Damascus, he found the shaikh awaiting him with the caliph’s patents for his new provinces. This was followed by graver news. ‘Izz-ad-Dīn of Mosul

⁸ Cf. below, chapter XIX, pp. 599–600.

had accepted the offers of the atabeg of Persia, and had received a reinforcement of 3000 horsemen from the atabeg Kizil Arslan of Azerbaijan for an attack on Irbil. Although the attack was unsuccessful, the governor called on Saladin to honor his promise, and thus provided the occasion for Saladin's renewed assault on Mosul.

Before setting out in the following year, however, he had the good fortune to be invited by Raymond of Tripoli to agree to a truce for four years. With his rear thus protected, he assembled his forces at Aleppo in May 1185 and marched on Mosul, although he had been warned by the sultan Kilij Arslan that he would be opposed by a coalition of the "eastern princes". But Mosul was in fact left to its fate, and even the caliph refused to intervene further, presumably because — as Saladin lost no opportunity of reminding him — 'Izz-ad-Dīn had been forced to acknowledge the Selchūkid Tughrul as his suzerain. During the summer heat Saladin slackened the siege and, leaving part of his forces in front of Mosul, led the rest northwards to deal with a confused situation which had arisen there after the deaths of Nūr-ad-Dīn and the princes of Akhlat (or Khilat) and Mardin. Returning to Mosul in November, he prepared to continue the siege through the winter. In a last attempt to stave off the inevitable end, 'Izz-ad-Dīn appealed to Saladin's chivalry by sending out a delegation of the Zengid princesses to intercede. But the issue at stake was too serious, and Saladin could promise no more than to accept the mediation of 'Imād-ad-Dīn Zengi of Sinjar. What followed is not quite clear. Saladin suddenly fell ill, and "repenting of his rebuff to the envoys, sent to 'Imād-ad-Dīn to dispatch a mission to Mosul." Without waiting for the conclusion of the negotiations he left Mosul on December 25 for Harran and withdrew his troops to Nisibin. In the following February 'Izz-ad-Dīn sent the *qāḍī* Bahā'-ad-Dīn as his envoy to Harran with instructions to get a sworn agreement on the best terms that he could. Saladin restored to him the small district of Baina-n-Nahrain, between Nisibin and the Tigris, and on swearing to these conditions was recognized as suzerain of Mosul; 'Izz-ad-Dīn in return undertook to send his troops to assist in the reconquest of Palestine. The grand coalition was formed at last.

Throughout all these years, in which Saladin was devoting his chief attention to organizing the forces for the coming struggle, it was clearly to his advantage to avoid any major operations against the Franks. In 1180 he had willingly agreed to a truce with

Baldwin on both land and sea.⁹ Raymond of Tripoli had, it seems, refused to become a consenting party and was brought to reason only by a series of devastating raids as well as the seizure of the island of Ruad by the Egyptian fleet. One of the most important stipulations for Saladin was the freedom of trade, since the route between Egypt and Damascus was precariously exposed, and in times of warfare caravans had to be convoyed by bodies of troops. It was the violation of this condition by Reginald of Kerak which gave the signal for the reopening of hostilities. In the summer of 1181 he had made a raid on Taimā' in the northern Hejaz, from which he was recalled by an energetic counterattack on the Transjordan by Farrukh-Shāh from Damascus. This was bad enough, but Saladin made no move until Reginald seized a caravan on its way from Damascus to Mecca. After all efforts to right the wrong had failed, he took the field in the spring of 1182. Though his forces were not yet strong enough for a decisive blow, he no doubt hoped to inflict some further losses on the Franks. Baldwin's defensive tactics, however, prevented a major engagement but left the countryside open to the raids of Farrukh-Shāh's cavalry, with the booty from which the Moslem forces retired well-content to Damascus.

Saladin's next operation was of a more audacious kind. As early as 1177 he had begun to reorganize the Egyptian fleet, making it a separate and independent department under its own head, with power to take all the materials and impress all the men that it needed. By the middle of the same year, the fleets of Alexandria and Damietta were already engaged in raiding, and in 1179 they carried out a daring attack on Acre and the Syrian coast. The seizure of Ruad in 1180 has already been mentioned. In the general reorganization of the Egyptian forces which Saladin made in 1181 the fleet was still further strengthened. He now planned a combined land and sea operation against Beirut, in the hope of taking it by surprise. The plan was skillfully carried out (August 1182), but the garrison held off his assaults until Baldwin was ready to relieve them, when Saladin, who had come out with only light raiding equipment, reassembled his forces at Baalbek and marched northwards.

During the campaigns in Mesopotamia and the struggle for Aleppo, Farrukh-Shāh was left in Damascus with instructions to meet, as best he could with the troops at his disposal, the raids made by the Franks into Moslem territory. "While they knock

⁹ Cf. below, chapter XIX, p. 595.

down villages," Saladin is reported as saying on the news of Baldwin's raids into the Hauran, "we are taking cities." Much more serious was the news of Reginald's commerce-raiding in the Red Sea and penetration into the Hejaz in February 1183. Saladin's admiral, Husām-ad-Dīn Lu'lu', taught the raiders a drastic lesson, but not before the report of the exploit sent a thrill of consternation and horror round the Moslem world. This episode probably did as much as any other single event to enhance Saladin's reputation and strengthen his position.

The expeditions in the latter half of 1183, already mentioned, though inconclusive, served to throw the Franks back on the defensive. The equally unsuccessful siege of Kerak in August 1184 and subsequent raid on Palestine served nevertheless one useful purpose, in that they brought together for the first time most of the diverse contingents of Saladin's army and gave them some practice in joint operations. The Egyptian fleet also continued its activities in both of these years, although in less spectacular ways. Raymond of Tripoli and the barons were therefore ready enough to ask for the armistice which, in the spring of 1185, freed Saladin for his final campaign against Mosul.¹⁰

Saladin's military forces, though organized on the same lines as those of Nūr-ad-Dīn, differed in one important respect. The proportion of Kurds in his regiments was much greater, and the mamluk element less prominent. A common loyalty to him kept in check the rivalries that might otherwise have issued in conflicts between them, and in his selection of fiefholders and the lesser governors he seems to have held the balance fairly evenly. In the disposal of provinces, however, his own family had first claim. His viceroys and governors enjoyed uncontrolled authority, on condition of equitable treatment of their subjects, a contribution to the war-chest of the jihad, and maintenance of their regiments in good order and discipline, in readiness to take the field when they were called for. To all of them he gave his complete confidence, and expected of them equal loyalty in return. Himself indifferent to the material rewards of power, he seems to have been unaware of the corrupting influence of power and wealth on others, and only in flagrant cases of disregard of these conditions did he intervene. He had little patience with the perpetual and petty but necessary details of daily administration, and the lack of his personal supervision made itself felt in the provinces. With this weakness in the field of administration went also an imprudent gener-

¹⁰ Cf. below, chapter XIX, p. 604.

osity in the disposal of his revenues. Everything was given away without a thought to all who asked; "I used to blush," wrote Bahā'-ad-Dīn, "at the size of the demands made upon him." His campaigns were as much occasions of princely largesse as of military operations. His intendants saw to it that all present military needs were adequately met, but no reserves were accumulated, and this deficiency was to prove a serious embarrassment during the Third Crusade.

On the occupation of Aleppo in 1183 Saladin at first invested his ten-year-old son az-Zāhir Ghāzī "as sultan", with a number of trusted officers to support him, but this arrangement was challenged by al-Ādil, who asked that he might exchange the government of Egypt for that of Aleppo. Whatever Saladin's regrets at deposing his favorite son may have been, he agreed without demur, and the diploma of appointment, which was drawn up in terms of brotherly affection unusual for such formal documents, conferred on al-Ādil unrestricted authority, subject to the usual stipulations. On the advice of al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil he replaced al-Ādil in Egypt by Taqī-ad-Dīn 'Umar, but with a justified fear of his impetuosity reluctantly sent the qadī with him to exercise a moderating influence. During his grave illness several of his relatives, anticipating his death, began to make dispositions in their own interests. Partly because of this, partly because he was anxious to establish his sons, he redistributed the provinces in 1186. Al-Ādil, on his own suggestion, was reappointed to Egypt, not, however, in full possession but as guardian of Saladin's son al-'Azīz 'Uthmān. Taqī-ad-Dīn took his deposition in bad part, and for a moment threatened to go out west, taking a large part of the Egyptian army with him. At length, however, he obeyed Saladin's order to present himself in Damascus, and was reappointed to his fiefs in the north, together with Maiyafariqin in Diyār-Bakr. Aleppo was restored to az-Zāhir Ghāzī.

In any estimate of Saladin's career the chief place must be given to the efforts by which he built up the material power now about to be discharged upon the Franks with accumulated force. But there was another, less obvious, group of activities which were being prosecuted at the same time and to the same end. The extent to which Saladin's diplomacy was employed to isolate the Franks in Syria and to ensure that he should be, as far as possible, on terms of peace, if not of friendship, with every potential external antagonist before opening his decisive campaign, has not been sufficiently appreciated. His diplomacy was directed on two

fronts. The Moslems in Syria and Egypt were well aware of the large place that the trading interests of the Italian republics represented in the maintenance of the Latin states, and of the rivalries among Pisa, Genoa, and Venice. From the beginning of his government Saladin made efforts to attract their trade to Egypt, which would have the double advantage of increasing his own resources and diminishing the value of the Syrian trade, especially in view of his control of the Red Sea. The earliest treaty which has so far been attested was one with Pisa in 1173, and its utility was demonstrated in the following year, when the Pisans and other European merchants assisted the Egyptian forces against the Sicilians at Alexandria. Saladin's own letter to Baghdad on this occasion affirms the existence of treaties with Genoa and Venice as well: "There is not one of them but supplies our land with its materials of war..., and treaties of peaceful intercourse have been negotiated with them all." Three years later, a letter from al-Qādī al-Fāḍil to Saladin refers in passing to "the envoys of the different peoples" in Cairo, and there can be no doubt that this trade greatly assisted the reconstruction of the Egyptian fleet.

Still more effective for Saladin's purpose were the diplomatic negotiations with Constantinople. The efforts of the Greeks to persuade the Latins in Syria to cooperate in attacks on Egypt constituted a standing threat to its security. At the same time, it was difficult to reach agreement with them without turning the Selchükids of Anatolia against him. The disaster inflicted on Manuel's army by Kilij Arslan at Myriokephalon in 1176, however, ended for a time direct hostilities between them, and on Manuel's death in 1180 his successors took the initiative in opening relations with Saladin, which were affirmed by treaty in 1181. The growing hostility between Greeks and Latins increased the utility and frequency of these relations, which were maintained between Saladin and both Isaac Angelus at Constantinople and Isaac Comnenus in Cyprus. Such terms of friendship with the traditional foes of Islam were no doubt sufficiently justified in Saladin's eyes by their immediate advantage, but they gave him the further satisfaction of restoring, if only temporarily, the old institution of Moslem worship at Constantinople in the name of the 'Abbāsīd caliph.

By the end of 1186 everything was organized and ready for the signal. But Saladin was still bound by the terms of the treaty of 1185 and had to wait until he was furnished with a *casus belli*. A promising opening had been offered by the conflict between Ray-

mond of Tripoli and Guy, and the ensuing alliance between Raymond and the sultan.¹¹ Some of his troops were actually sent to reinforce the garrison of Tiberias; consequently, Guy's first intention, under Templar instigation, to attack Tiberias would have had the effect of setting the war in motion. Early in 1187 Reginald of Kerak made his fatal blunder of attacking a caravan from Cairo to Damascus, violating the truce, and refused to yield up his booty in response either to the threats of Saladin or the appeals of the king. The summonses went out to all Saladin's viceroys and vassals, while he himself set out with his guard on March 14 to protect a homeward-bound pilgrim-caravan. The Egyptian contingent, arriving after some delay, joined in ravaging the lands of Kerak and Montréal, and returned with him to Damascus two months later; meanwhile the contingents from Damascus, Aleppo, Mesopotamia, Mosul, and Diyār-Bakr assembled at Ra's al-Mā', and raided the county of Tiberias. At Şaffūriyah a body of Templars and Hospitallers, disregarding Raymond's instructions, engaged a powerful force making a demonstration raid on May 1, and were killed or captured almost to a man.

At the end of May Saladin reviewed the combined armies at al-'Ashtarā in the Hauran. The regular cavalry contingents mustered 12,000, with possibly as many again of auxiliary troops and irregulars. "To each emir he assigned his place on the left or right wing, from which he might not depart; no contingent must absent itself, nor a single man leave. From each company he picked out the advance guard of archers. . . , and said, 'When we enter the enemy's territory, this is the order of our forces and these the positions of our companies'."¹² On Friday, June 26, he set out for Palestine and after a halt of five days at al-Uḡḡwānah, at the south end of the lake, advanced into the hills above Tiberias. While the two armies lay opposite one another Saladin, whether by accident or design, led his guards and siege personnel to Tiberias on Thursday, July 2. Raymond's countess held the castle against his assault, but her appeal to Guy for help secured the opportunity that had been denied to him all these years, a set encounter in the field with the forces of the kingdom.

The overwhelming character of the victory at Hattin (July 4, 1187) was proved immediately by the tale of cities and fortresses that fell either to Saladin personally (Acre, Toron, Sidon, Beirut) or to separate contingents under their generals (Nazareth, Caesa-

¹¹ Cf. below, chapter XIX, p. 605.

¹² 'Imād-ad-Din, *Faḡḡ*, 19. On the battle of Hattin, see below, chapter XIX, pp. 608 ff.

rea, Nablus, etc.). Then, passing Tyre by for the time being, he joined forces with al-ʿĀdil, who had already stormed Jaffa, and besieged Ascalon, which was surrendered on September 5 on his promise to release Guy and the master of the Temple, a promise eventually fulfilled. The remaining castles in this region were captured either on the march to Ascalon or just after. Finally, reuniting his armies, Saladin marched to the goal of his ambitions, the capture of Jerusalem. After a siege of less than a fortnight the city surrendered on October 2 on terms which confirmed, if confirmation were needed, his reputation for limitless courtesy and generosity.¹³

The collapse of the kingdom encouraged Saladin to hope that Tyre too might be captured before the winter began, and he laid siege to it on November 13. The tenacious defense of Conrad of Montferrat disheartened the eastern contingents, who, now that winter was at hand, were eager to return home with their booty. The disastrous defeat of the Egyptian blockading fleet at the end of December strengthened their impatience, and in spite of Saladin's arguments for perseverance, supported by the commanders of the Aleppo contingent, the emirs took their men off and dispersed. On January 1 Saladin was compelled to relinquish the siege and retired to winter at Acre, where a succession of embassies brought him the congratulations of all the Moslem princes, including his former rivals in Azerbaijan and Persia.

Leaving Acre to be refortified under the charge of his trusted mamluk Bahāʾ-ad-Dīn Karakush, Saladin returned to Damascus in the spring, halting for a short time before the still unsubdued castle of Belvoir (Kaukab). On May 10 he marched north with his guard to join the Mesopotamian contingents under Gökböri and ʿImād-ad-Dīn of Sinjar, while al-ʿĀdil remained with the Egyptian regiments to guard the south and to deal with Kerak and Krak de Montréal. The Aleppo and Hamah troops were ordered to stand on guard at Tizīn against any movement on Bohemond's part. The remaining forces at his disposal were too light to undertake prolonged siege operations, but adequate for the capture of the isolated towns and castles of the principality, as far as its northern frontiers at Baghrās and Darbsāk. Although Antioch itself was not in any real danger, Bohemond in September asked for and was unwillingly granted an armistice of eight months, after the negotiation of which the Mesopotamian contingents returned to their homes and Saladin to Damascus. There he was rejoined by

¹³ Cf. below, chapter XIX, pp. 616-618.

al-ʿĀdil with his troops and at once besieged and captured the two remaining castles in Palestine, Safad and Belvoir. After the surrender of the latter on January 5 the rest of his forces dispersed, and Saladin made a tour of inspection of his coastal fortresses from Ascalon to Acre.¹⁴

The spectacular success of Saladin in reducing the holdings of the crusaders in Syria to three cities, Tyre, Tripoli, and Antioch, with a few outlying fortresses, within the short space of eighteen months, has led both Moslem and western historians to regard him primarily as a great and successful general, whose victories were due to the same military qualities as those of other successful commanders of armies. This is a complete misapprehension. Saladin possessed, indeed, personal military virtues of a high order; but his victories were due to his possession of moral qualities which have little in common with strategic gifts. He was a man inspired by an intense and unwavering ideal, the achievement of which involved him necessarily in a long series of military activities. Down to 1186 these activities were directed to imposing his will upon the prevailing feudal military system and shaping it into the instrument which his purpose required; and the preceding pages have shown that their military aspect was subordinate, in his own mind and to a large extent in practice, to uniting the political forces of western Asia "in one purpose" and imbuing them with something of his own tenacity and singleness of outlook. It was by these means, and not by superior strategic ability, that he succeeded in assembling the army that was to destroy the kingdom of Jerusalem. Even the striking campaigns of 1187 and 1188 cannot be held to prove that Saladin possessed outstanding generalship. The victory at Hattin owed as much to the mistakes of the Franks as to his strategy, even when every credit is given to the skill with which the opportunity was seized. The subsequent crumbling of the inner defenses of Jerusalem and Antioch demonstrate rather the fundamental weaknesses of the crusading states than the military genius of the conquerors, a point emphasized by the fact that many of them fell to small detached forces.

Furthermore, these very successes were due largely to the exercise of the qualities which most sharply distinguished him from his military contemporaries. Nothing is more remarkable in the sources than his reiterated appeal from the criticisms of his officers to the principles of honor, of good faith, and of a firm religious conviction. When the turn of the Christian cities and castles came,

¹⁴ For the campaigns of 1187-1189, see also below, chapter XIX, pp. 615-619.

it was chiefly because of his reputation for scrupulous observance of his plighted word and for uncalculating generosity that they surrendered so easily. Those critics who have found fault with him for allowing such numbers of knights and merchants to find a refuge in Tyre and so to build up a bridgehead there for the counterattack have generally failed to consider what the course of the Third Crusade might have been if on its arrival it had found Saladin still engaged in the task of reducing one by one the castles of the interior, without complete freedom of movement and complete security in his rear. That he did not in fact capture Tyre as well was the result partly of the accident of Conrad's arrival, and partly of the impatience and insubordination of the eastern regiments.

The second of these causes illustrates sharply the persisting defects of the forces with which he had to meet the later struggle with the crusaders. But this was still in the future, and it is unhistorical to imagine Saladin as preparing plans and disposing his forces to meet the forthcoming invasion from the west. His thought had from the beginning been concentrated upon offensive, not defensive, warfare; it was for this purpose that he had built up his armies, and it had now been largely, and brilliantly, fulfilled. Though he grieved over the lack of staying-power of his vassals before Tyre and again in 1188 before Antioch, he saw in these no more than temporary checks, and confidently expected to make up for them in later campaigns. The first hint of the coming invasion reached him from the Sicilian admiral Margarit at Latakia in the autumn of 1188, and so little disturbed was he by the report that he granted Bohemond a truce only until May 1189, and busied himself during the winter with preparations to attack Antioch and Tripoli.

In all probability, therefore, he was taken by surprise when the first convoys arrived and Guy's troops succeeded in marching to Acre and investing the city, on August 27, 1189. From that moment his role was transformed, and he was faced with a new and grimmer task which no Moslem commander, for centuries before him, had ever attempted: the task of holding an army in the field for three years, and that with every circumstance of discouragement. Had he been no more than a leader of armies, he could not have achieved it; his feudal troops would have melted away and left the field to the Franks. But it was in this wholly unexpected conjunction that the true greatness of Saladin and the inner strength of the instrument which he had created were

put to the test. He had a double conflict to wage: the external struggle with the crusaders, and the internal struggle with the fissiparous tendencies and the instability of the feudal armies. Military genius had but a small part in the combination of qualities by which he fought the crusade to a standstill. The long campaign was an almost unbroken succession of military reverses and disasters; his generals were openly critical, his troops often mutinous. It was by the sheer force of personality, by the undying flame of faith within him, and by his example of steadfast endurance, that he inspired the dogged resistance which finally wore down the invaders.