

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE SULTAN'S MANY DUTIES

LIKE Malek Shah, Saladin found the Sultanship a position of many and exacting duties. But, with the former, the country was united and the problem of first importance was the wise administration of its affairs. Saladin, with a great many indifferent or openly inimical emirs to bring into line, and with the purpose of driving out the Crusaders as his greatest ambition, which called for repeated and sometimes prolonged absences from the seat of government, had an even greater and more complicated problem to solve. Moreover, while he had able aids and counselors, some of whom, like the Sultan's brother, Melek el-Adel, his councillor, el-Fadil, and his Secretary of State, Imad ed-din of Sapahan, could be trusted to administer the government in able manner, yet there was no Nizam ul Mulk, whose genius equalled if it did not exceed that of his illustrious master. By his tact, his diplomacy, his compelling personality and his ability to inspire both confidence and respect in his subjects, Saladin stood alone. Which meant, in effect, that things went best when he was on hand to control them, and that