

# CHAPTER FOURTEEN

## SALADIN THE MUNIFICENT

WITH all the fearful cruelties developed by the conflicts and rancors of the time there were also outstanding incidents of extraordinary magnanimity — most of them, it must be admitted, on the part of the Moslems. When Baldwin III, King of Jerusalem, died, and the resulting confusion gave Nur ed-din an excellent opportunity to invade Palestine, he replied scornfully to those emirs who advised this course:

“It would be inhuman to profit by the grief of a people which mourns its master, and a blemish on my reputation to attack the unfortunates not in condition to defend themselves.”

If the Crusaders ever were inspired to equally generous impulse, history is silent on the subject. Yet it well may have happened, though it surely died at birth, and the explanation is that the influence of the church was always present to check it.

Of all the Moslem rulers Saladin carried this tendency to the extreme. Ignoring, except in rare and extreme instances, the repeated breaches of faith and downright violations of solemn promises, he never departed from his word, and over and over again he is