

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

DESTRUCTION OF ASCALON

HAVING placed a garrison in charge of Acre, Richard set out with his army along the coast, apparently with the intention of marching upon Jerusalem. The Sultan followed, and the two armies were within striking distance of each other for a long time, with the Moslems seeking to provoke a battle all along. From Saladin to the lowest private in the ranks they were in bitter mood.

Nothing shows more clearly the perfect discipline of Richard's army than the accounts of the Arab chroniclers of this march through the heat of the summer. Day after day the Arab cavalry pursued its tantalizing tactics of charging like the wind, letting fly a cloud of arrows, and disappearing as they had come. Yet the Franks pursued the even tenor of their way, doggedly keeping to their pace, the horsemen within the screen of foot soldiers, apparently indifferent to the assaults. Apparently, too, these did little damage, even the infantry being well protected by their thick gambesons and hauberks. The Cadi tells of seeing soldiers "with from one to ten arrows sticking in them" marching on, apparently not inconvenienced.