The crusade of 1239-1240 was a joint enterprise of the houses of Capet, Dreux, and Champagne. King Louis, moved by a combination of religious ardor and desire to see Peter and Thibaut far from France, contributed a strong contingent of troops under the command of the chief military officer of the crown, Amaury, count of Montfort and constable of France. Count Amaury was a professional crusader who had spent his life and his family fortune fighting the Albigensian heretics. In 1239 he was a noted soldier and a pauper—a brave, reckless baron devoted to the service of king and pope. He alone of the leaders of this crusade was a true successor of Godfrey of Bouillon and his paladins. Amaury's two colleagues were far less suited to their rôle. While Peter had a due regard for his spiritual balance sheet, it is unlikely that he was consumed with desire to rescue the Holy Land from the infidel. A crusade also offered unique opportunities to win the fame and glory which were sought by all chivalrous knights, but there is no evidence that Peter was devoted to the ideals of chivalry. In the absence of any indication that he was a patron and frequenter of tourneys as his father Count Robert II had been, one must assume that he had no particular enthusiasm for knightly deeds. Peter enjoyed a good fight—when the chances for profit seemed promising. If he gained his plenary indulgence and had a skirmish or two with the Turks, Peter's crusade would satisfy him completely. King Thibaut's ambitions were even more modest. Before leaving France the Chansonnier deluged the land with poems which explained why he had turned crusader. Knights who refused to take the

1 Aubri de Trois-Fontaines, Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptores, XXIII, 946.
cross were almost certain to go to hell and could hardly expect to enjoy much esteem while they lived. “Blind is the man who does not once in his life lend succor to God and for so little loses the praise of the world.” A clear passage to heaven and a reputation as a man of worth and valor were what Thibaut sought. But even within the limits set by his motives Thibaut could not be called an enthusiastic crusader. In a poem of farewell to his lady he asks “God! Why have you made the land beyond the sea which will separate so many lovers.” He goes on to suggest that God certainly owes him a magnificent reward for taking so much trouble for His cause. In short Thibaut felt that since the confounded Holy Land was there, it was necessary to make one crusade to assure future bliss and present popular esteem. He was no warrior but a composer of pleasant songs. Such were the three barons who were to govern the destinies of the crusading host.

The army embarked at Marseilles and set sail for Acre. Unfortunately the winds seemed to prefer Mahomet to Christ. As the fleet came within two days sail of its destination, a storm arose which dispersed it to the most distant shores of the Mediterranean. Eventually the ships found their way back to their course, and early in September 1239 the crusaders reached Acre. As soon as they had established their camp on shore, the crusading barons met in council to elect a commander-in-chief and to agree on a plan of campaign. After a long debate they decided to move down the coast and to fortify the town of Ascalon in preparation for an attack on Damascus. There can have been no real question as to whom to choose as their chief. No king could be expected to serve under one of lesser rank. Hence Thibaut was promptly elected caput et dux of the host, and all the crusaders vowed to obey

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his orders. This was little more than a pleasant formality for nothing under heaven could curb the sublime individualism of feudal barons. A king of France or England who could seize the fiefs of the disobedient, or a legate who could condemn their souls could make some pretense of ruling a crusading army, but the king of Navarre was bound to be a mere figurehead. Even the chroniclers who mention Thibaut's election continue to assume that he and Peter were joint leaders. Had the latter chosen to set an example of scrupulous obedience to King Thibaut's orders, some discipline might have been maintained in the army, but Peter was to be the first to allow a personal whim to lead him into independent action.

No one could charge the leader of this crusade with undue haste. For two whole months the army lay peacefully at Acre before commencing its march toward Ascalon. The count of Montfort and the poor knights who had mortgaged all they possessed for a chance to fight the infidel might fret and fume at the delay, but Thibaut was in no hurry. He was a crusader because it was fashionable. Since Acre was in the Holy Land, he saw no point in rushing off to seek Turks. Instead he composed plaintive songs to tell his lady what hardships he was undergoing for the sake of Christ. Even Peter who was no ardent crusader must have grown impatient—he at least had the instincts of a soldier. Be that as it may, it was November 1 before the army set out from Acre. Some ten days later it pitched camp near Jaffa. There appear to have been in the host about four thousand knights over half of whom belonged to the contingents supplied by the barons of the kingdom of Jerusalem. Like most crusading armies they were desperately short of horses and provisions. Hence when Peter learned one day that a large convoy of edible animals bound for the Turkish stronghold of Damascus was passing within striking distance of his camp at Jaffa, he was sorely tempted to try to

* Chansons de croisade, no. 20, lines 3-7; no. 21, lines 31-40.
* Ibid., no. 18.
* Aubri de Trois-Fontaines, Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptores, XXIII, 946. Rothelin Eracles, pp. 531-532.
PLENARY INDULGENCE

intercept it. As he was unwilling to waste valuable time in
debate with the cautious King Thibaut and far from anxious to
share any booty to be gained, Peter decided to act independently
with his own contingent. Late one evening he left the camp
with a force of two hundred knights and mounted serjeants.
The only man of baronial rank known to have been in the party
was the noted trouvère Ralph de Nesle, a younger brother
of Count John of Soissons, who had journeyed to Palestine as
a member of Peter’s military household. While it seems likely
that André of Vitré, Ralph of Fougères, Guiomar of Léon,
Henry of Avagor, and the other Bretons who took part in this
crusade followed the banner of their former duke in this raid
from Jaffa, the chronicler neglected to record their names. At
dawn Peter and his men reached the castle in which the convoy
had spent the night. Since there were two possible routes
which the Turks could take on their way to Damascus, Peter
divided his small army. One division under Ralph de Nesle
was placed in ambush on one road while the count himself
with the rest of the troop watched the other. At sunrise the
Turks left their stronghold and started along the path held
by Peter’s party. When their leader found himself faced with
a force inferior to his own, he decided to give battle rather
than risk the loss of his convoy by retiring to the castle where
he had spent the night. Peter had chosen his ground well.
The greatest asset of the Turks in their battles with the cru­
saders was the speed with which their lightly-armed horsemen
could maneuver. If they had plenty of space, they could easily
avoid the lumbering charge and ferocious hand-to-hand combat
which were the tactical mainstays of the European warriors.
Peter had taken his stand just beyond a place where the road
passed through a narrow defile in which his heavy cavalry
would have an enormous advantage. In the hope of holding
off the crusaders until he could get his convoy past this danger­
ous spot the Turkish leader sent forward his archers to attack
Peter’s men. But the French knights charged with such vigor
that they drove the archers back on the main Turkish force
before it could clear the defile. Then Peter and his followers
went to work earnestly with sword and mace. Although the
Turks were caught in a place where they could not escape from
their heavily-armed opponents and were seriously hampered by the animals they were guarding, they fought so well that the outcome of the battle was long in doubt. In fact the crusaders might well have been defeated had not Peter sounded his horn to call in his other division. The arrival of Ralph de Nesle with his fresh troops was decisive. The Turks deserted their animals and escaped as best they could to the castle. As soon as Peter had collected his prisoners and booty, he returned triumphantly to Jaffa.10

Peter's raid was not only a worthy knightly exploit which brought the army desperately needed provisions, but it was to be the sole military triumph of the whole crusade. Unfortunately it is impossible to say with any certainty whether its success was the result of Peter's skill as a captain or of blind luck. If Peter had definite and reasonably reliable information as to the strength of the Turkish party, his plan of campaign was soundly conceived and ably executed. If on the other hand he lacked this knowledge, the raid was a reckless adventure and the division of his small force into two parties pure insanity. As Peter's career in general shows no tendency on his part to engage in hazardous and uncertain enterprises where much was at stake for small possible gain, I am inclined to believe that he knew what he was about in this raid from Jaffa. In that case he showed himself a highly competent tactician. But this expedition which demonstrated Peter's worth as a captain made clear his utter lack of comprehension of the obligations incumbent on one of the leaders of a joint enterprise. His independent action without the knowledge of the chosen commander of the host set a bad example for his fellow barons. Worse yet his success filled them with envy. The counts of Montfort and Bar and the duke of Burgundy promptly decided to win some renown for themselves. A strong Turkish force was known to be at Gaza which lay some distance beyond Ascalon. The three barons planned to leave Jaffa ahead of the main body of the army, attack the enemy at Gaza, and rejoin the host at Ascalon. Thibaut, Peter, and the

10 The fullest and most circumstantial account of Peter's raid is in the Rothelin Eracles, pp. 533-536. The stories contained in the other chronicles seem based on letters such as that in Matthew Paris, Chronica maiora, IV, 25.
masters of the Templars and the Hospitallers tried to dissuade them. King Thibaut recalled the oaths of obedience they had sworn when they chose him leader at Acre. No argument had any effect. Amaury of Montfort, constable of France and lifelong captain in the service of the Holy Church, was the idol of the rank and file of the host. He could not allow Peter to monopolize the military glory of the crusade. Followed by six hundred knights of whom seventy bore banners the three barons set out for Gaza. The worst fears of Thibaut and Peter were soon fully realized. The count of Bar was slain, Amaury of Montfort was captured, and only a tiny remnant of their followers under the duke of Burgundy escaped to join the host at Ascalon. The loss was so severe that the whole crusading army was completely discouraged. The leaders promptly abandoned their very modest plan of campaign and hastily led their men back to Acre. Peter's own courage and skill had won him renown, but his defiance of discipline was largely responsible for the ignominious failure of the crusade. Still it would be unfair to blame him very severely. Discipline had no place in the traditional ideals of feudal chivalry, and Peter had acted as most of his contemporaries would have in the same circumstances.

Although Peter and his companions remained in the Holy Land for nearly a year after the débâcle before Gaza, their military activities were at an end. Most of the time the army lay in peaceful idleness in Acre. One wild goose chase into the county of Tripoli and several moves to find forage for their horses consumed the energies of the crusaders. The leaders did, however, attempt to gain by negotiation what they had failed to secure by force. The Turkish sultan who ruled in Damascus was at odds with the master of Egypt who controlled southern Palestine. Thibaut and Peter entered into negotiations with the lord of Damascus, and eventually a treaty was concluded. The sultan was to restore all the Christian fiefs and castles to the west of the river Jordan in return for the support of the crusaders against his Egyptian rival. The barons

11 Rothelin Eracles, pp. 538-540 and letter mentioned above.
12 Le livre d’Eracles, Recueil des historiens des croisades, Historiens Occidentaux, II, 415-416. This will be referred to as Eracles.
swore to make no peace nor truce with the sultan of Egypt without their ally's consent.\textsuperscript{13} The principal difficulty with this arrangement was that the sultan of Damascus was in a very weak position and seemed unlikely to be able to hold his own for very long. Then too it was the sultan of Egypt who held the knights who had been captured at Gaza, and the treaty with Damascus seemed to doom them to indefinite imprisonment. Hence before very long Thibaut and Peter cheerfully forgot their plighted word and began to negotiate with Egypt.\textsuperscript{14}

There were a number of reasons for this sudden change in policy. Undoubtedly the strongest of these was the demand in the army and in fact throughout Christendom that something be done to obtain the release of Amaury of Montfort and his fellow prisoners. But Peter and Thibaut had a less worthy and more personal motive. Earl Richard of Cornwall was approaching Acre at the head of a powerful army of English crusaders. As the French barons were fully aware that they had won no immortal fame as warriors, they were most anxious to prevent Richard from accomplishing anything. When Thibaut and Peter heard that the earl of Cornwall had landed at Acre, they hastened to come to terms with the sultan of Egypt. There was to be a ten-year truce during which the Christians were to hold the lands already ceded to them by the agreement with Damascus. The prisoners taken at Gaza were to be released. Then without waiting to see the agreement executed, Peter and Thibaut took ship for home.\textsuperscript{15} Richard of Cornwall was left to see to the execution of the treaty and to amuse himself with such inglorious pursuits as completing the fortifications of Ascalon. Not even the masterly hand of Matthew Paris was able to throw any great aura of glory about Earl Richard's crusade.

Peter and Thibaut probably felt fairly well pleased with themselves as they sailed homeward. They had accomplished nothing by force of arms, but few crusades did. Their treaties had considerably extended the boundaries of the kingdom of

\textsuperscript{14} Eracles, p. 419.
Jerusalem, and the ten-year truce would effectually prevent Earl Richard from winning fame through successful military exploits. Then in all probability these two gay barons had enjoyed their long days at Acre. Certainly the poor knights in the host believed that life there was far too pleasant for the great lords. Peter had even found a good berth for his friend Ralph de Nesle. Before the crusaders set out for home he was married to Alix of Cyprus and was in her right enjoying the highly lucrative post of custodian of the kingdom of Jerusalem for young Conrad of Hohenstaufen. There was only one grave flaw in Peter's satisfaction with his expedition—his brother Count John of Macon had died of disease and his brother-in-law Count Henry of Bar-le-duc had been slain at Gaza. As both John and Henry had always loyally supported Peter in his various enterprises, one may presume that he mourned their loss. For the rest Peter's first crusade to the Holy Land must have been a thoroughly enjoyable affair.

Slippery Elder Statesman

When Peter arrived in France early in 1241, he found the prospects for a peaceful and quiet life anything but promising. His nephews, the sons of Count Henry of Bar-le-duc, were engaged in a fierce controversy over the division of their patrimony. Having been asked to arbitrate the dispute, Peter summoned the contestants to his castle of Fère-en-Tardenois and there divided his late brother-in-law's estate among the quarrelling heirs. Then he turned his steps toward his lands in Poitou where more troubles awaited him. The church of Nantes still hoped to collect damages for the injuries which Peter had inflicted on it when he was duke of Brittany. The clergy had been obliged to let their case rest in suspense while Peter was absent on his crusade, but on his return they were determined to press it vigorously. Still Peter must have been too well accustomed to suits in the ecclesiastical courts to allow

11 Plenary Indulgence

18 Chansons de croisade, no. 21.
16 Layettes, III, no. 3846.
this one to worry him much. Far more disturbing were prospective changes in the political organization of Poitou. King Louis' younger brother Alphonse was approaching his majority, and his appanage was to be the county of Poitou. Instead of a distant master ruling through seneschals the barons of Poitou were to have as their lord a royal prince resident in their midst. For the first time since the days of Count Richard Plantagenet the turbulent feudality of the region was to be subject to a strong government. Hugh of Lusignan saw himself faced with the loss of the independence for which he had struggled all his life. Peter's worries were even more acute. If his wife were to die, he would have no rightful claim to her lands. By feudal custom the property which she held as dowry from her first husband would revert to the viscount of Thouars and her own estates would pass to her kinsman and heir, the lord of Commequiers. Thus Peter would lose the most considerable part of his possessions. Now there is no doubt that Peter had every intention of retaining these lands by force if he should survive his wife. His chances of success in such frank usurpation would depend almost entirely on the attitude of the new count of Poitou.

On June 24, 1241, King Louis knighted his brother Alphonse and gave him formal possession of his appanage. The festivities included a magnificent feast held in the great hall of the castle of Saumur. At the royal table sat Alphonse, Peter's nephew Count John of Dreux, Hugh of Lusignan, and Peter himself. King Thibaut of Navarre sat at a separate table. Before him carved the young hereditary seneschal of Champagne, John, lord of Joinville, whose eager eyes drank in the courtly scene which was to find a place in his famous Histoire de St. Louis. King Louis was attended by men of higher rank. His brother Robert of Artois served while Count John of Soissons carved the royal meat. Near the king's table stood a guard of honor of thirty knights and many sergeants headed by Humbert of Beaujeu and the lords of Coucy and Bourbon. Another table held Queen Blanche and her ladies while still a fourth gave seats to twenty bishops. It was a noble scene of...
feudal splendor, and Peter had his due place in it—below the actual counts but above all other laymen. Moreover he was keeping his hand close to the pulse of Poitevin politics.

Peter soon found that he had been wise to seek the benevolence of the new count of Poitou. As soon as Guy, viscount of Thouars, had done homage to Alphonse, he addressed to him a formal demand for the redress of a long list of grievances. After requesting the restoration of the seneschalship of Poitou which his father had held in fee and possession of his wife's patrimony, the barony of Talmont, the viscount presented his complaints against the former duke of Brittany. Peter had refused to do homage and perform feudal service for the baronies of La Garnache and Montaigu which were fiefs held of the viscountcy of Thouars. In fact he had had the impudence to announce that his refusal was the result of the aid which the viscount had given King Louis when Peter was in revolt against the crown. Then the viscount complained that Peter and Margaret had retained the castle of Mareuil-sur-Lay which was a demesne of the house of Thouars. How could Guy perform the services which he owed to Alphonse if his most powerful vassal refused to fulfill his obligations to him and usurped the viscount's demesne estates? He begged the count of Poitou to force Peter to mend his ways. There is no reason for believing that this piteous plea had any effect whatever. Not only had Peter himself succeeded in winning the favor of Alphonse, but the new count of Poitou could ill afford to offend his mighty neighbor to the north, John, duke of Brittany. Alphonse well knew that the barons of Poitou resented his suzerainty and would soon be intriguing with England. When the time came for open war, Peter and his son would be invaluable allies.

By the end of 1241 the situation in Poitou was drawing rapidly toward a crisis. Urged on by his imperious wife, the count of La Marche raised the standard of revolt. About him rallied the Poitevin barons who had for years been accustomed to follow the leadership of the house of Lusignan. Henry III and even Alphonse's father-in-law, Raymond of Toulouse,
promised the rebels their support. Count Hugh also approached the barons who had been his associates in the earlier leagues against the crown. Thibaut of Navarre and Hugh of Burgundy lent willing ears to his schemes, but Peter refused to become involved. One chronicler asserts that he went so far as to inform King Louis of the baronial plot. Meanwhile the king had decided that the time had come to subdue Poitou thoroughly. Too often had the Capetian monarchs bought the Lusignans only to have them resell themselves to the English a few months later. Hence Louis summoned his host to muster at Chinon toward the end of April 1242 for an expedition against the Poitevin rebels and their allies. The king of Navarre and the duke of Burgundy failed to appear, but Peter was on hand to play his part in the campaign against his former ally. For the first time since 1226 he was to march behind rather than against the royal standard of King Louis.

Peter's adherence was of great strategic value to the royal cause because it made inevitable the prompt submission of the house of Thouars. The viscount and his relatives ruled the most important strongholds of northern Poitou and their inclinations were decidedly pro-English. If they supported the Lusignan masters of central and southern Poitou, Louis could not hope to make much progress before Henry III arrived with his English troops. But the barons of the Thouars family could not contemplate with equanimity the prospect of simultaneous attacks on their lands by the royal army and the formidable lord of Montaigu. Late in April the viscount, his brother, and his nephew hastened to Chinon, did homage to count Alphonse, and surrendered their castles for the duration of the war.

Their submission cleared King Louis' path to the northernmost line of Lusignan strongholds. On May 9 Montreuil-Bonnin opened its gates to the royal host, and by July 20 Louis had captured all the hostile castles north of the river Charente except the great fortress of Lusignan. Meanwhile Henry III

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24 Layettes, II, no. 2972.
had arrived in Poitou and was watching the crossings over the Charente. On July 21 King Louis routed the English army at Taillebourg and a few days later he occupied Saintes.25 Hugh of Lusignan was completely discouraged. He had seen his proud castles fall with astounding rapidity and his stepson driven ignominiously out of Poitou. He sent a messenger to Peter, "one traitor to another," as Matthew Paris kindly remarked, to ask him to intercede for him with King Louis. Peter and the bishop of Saintes had an interview with the king and learned the terms on which Louis would accept the submission of Count Hugh. These terms were extremely severe. All the castles, demesnes, and fees which had been occupied by the royal army during the war were to remain in the possession of Count Alphonse. Matthew Paris, who had a profound dislike for Peter, accused him of being an unfaithful emissary. According to his story Peter publicly begged Louis to be merciful to Hugh, but privately urged the king to be as severe as possible.26 While Matthew's animus against Peter and his love for scandal-mongering make his testimony unreliable, his account may be true. As Peter's wife had died in the previous autumn, he was peculiarly anxious to secure the good will of Louis and Alphonse.27 If he believed that his Poitevin fiefs were at stake, a little disloyalty toward Hugh would not have troubled Peter's conscience unduly. Still Louis was convinced of the necessity for breaking the power of the Lusignans, and he probably required no urging to deal harshly with the defeated head of that house. Hugh of Lusignan accepted the king's terms and made his submission. Then he and Peter led a royal army against Hugh's recent ally, Count Raymond of Toulouse,28 Peter's loyalty and good service to Louis and Alphonse received their anticipated reward. For the rest of his life he held the lands of Margaret of Montaigu in defiance of the rights of the viscount of Thouars and the lord of Com-

26 Matthew Paris, Chronica maiora, IV, 214-216. Matthew considered that Peter had betrayed Henry III in 1234 and had behaved very badly toward Richard of Cornwall in Palestine.
27 Morice, Preuves, I, 921.
mequiers. He also remained on excellent terms with his son-in-law, the younger Hugh of Lusignan. Clearly Peter had not lost his ability to keep friends in all possible camps.

Soon after the restoration of peace in Poitou Peter found himself faced with a renewal of his old controversy with the church of Nantes. In 1240 his bitter enemy, Bishop Robert, had been elevated to the patriarchate of Jerusalem. Robert's successor, Galeran, came into office determined to force Peter and John to make restitution for the injuries which they had inflicted on the see of Nantes. As soon as Peter returned from his crusade, the bishop secured the appointment of a papal commission headed by the archbishop of Bourges. On August 16, 1241, two Breton abbots were ordered to summon Peter to appear at Bourges on September 19. But fortune smiled on the lord of Montaigu. On August 22, 1241, Pope Gregory IX died, and Peter could easily ignore the summons to Bourges. Even more helpful was the fact that the papal throne stood vacant, except for the one month's reign of Celestine IV, until June 1243. In March 1244 the new pope, Innocent IV, ordered the bishop of Angers to investigate the grievances of the bishop of Nantes. Peter and John were summoned to appear before the pope's delegate in the cathedral of Nantes on June 9. In all probability Peter followed his usual custom of ignoring such citations. At any rate the controversy went merrily on.

Peter had always been inclined to answer the attacks of the church with spirited counter-offensives, and he was now in a most favorable position for carrying out such a maneuver. In his previous conflicts with the clergy he had been continually hampered by political considerations, but now he was essentially retired from feudal politics. Moreover in October 1245 he took the cross in company with King Louis and a large part of the chivalry of France and thus was clothed once more in the protecting mantle of a crusader. Soon Peter's fertile brain evolved a brilliant scheme for baiting his lifelong foes. In

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30 Morice, Preuves, I, 921.
31 Ibid., columns 923-924.
November 1246 a group of barons issued a remarkable manifesto. They had banded themselves together to defend their rights against the usurpations of the clergy. The activities of the league were to be directed by an executive committee consisting of the duke of Burgundy, Peter, and the counts of Angoulême and St. Pol. The members of the association swore to take such common action as this committee should suggest. Each member would contribute one per cent of his annual revenue to a common fund which would be used by the committee to further the ends of the association. Unfortunately we do not know the names of the nineteen men who affixed their seals to this declaration, but the composition of the executive committee shows that Peter was the dominant figure. The duke of Burgundy had married his niece and had always been his close ally. The count of Angoulême was his son-in-law, the younger Hugh of Lusignan, who had inherited the county of Angoulême at his mother’s death. The count of St. Pol was Peter’s kinsman and long-time associate, Hugh of Châtillon. In short Peter sought allies and a war chest for his current struggle with the church. As a matter of fact the league probably disappointed its founder. The manifesto was prepared to receive some four times as many seals as were actually attached to it. Still if Peter’s purpose was to alarm and annoy the pope, he was eminently successful. A blast of papal missives demanded the denunciation and excommunication of all men in any way connected with this league against the church. Nothing is known of the history of this child of Peter’s ingenious brain. In all probability it fell to pieces before the papal fury, but Peter may well have gained the pope’s agreement to a favorable compromise in the controversy with the bishop of Nantes as the price for abandoning his anti-clerical league.

During the summer of 1248 the long-standing quarrel between the dukes of Brittany and the church of Nantes was settled for the time being. Innocent IV decreed that Peter was to pay certain damages, but many other items in the bishop’s

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list of grievances were disallowed. As the bishop won most of the political questions at issue, the papal decision must have been a severe blow to John of Brittany, but Peter came off very easily. Moreover it is most unlikely that he ever paid any of the damages assessed against him. When the final decision was rendered, Peter was preparing to follow King Louis to the Holy Land, and no one expected a prospective crusader to pay money to anyone. Certainly the church could not gracefully demand payment from resources which were pledged to the sacred cause.

_Last Adventure_

Little more is known about Peter’s activities during the years between his two crusades. While the castle of La Garnache remained his official seat, he appears to have spent most of his time on his estates near Paris. Once his wife had died and Poitou had been reduced to order by the firm hand of Count Alphonse, there was no longer any need for Peter to reside in his baronies of Montaigu and La Garnache. He was a Frenchman in the narrow contemporary sense of the word, a native of the Ile-de-France and a scion of the Capetian lords of Paris. He had passed his best years as an exile in Brittany and La Vendée, but now in his old age he could return to the pleasant land of his youth. Moreover Peter’s love of power and prestige drew him toward the royal court and the seats of his relatives. In Poitou he was a mere rear-vassal of Count Alphonse, but in France he was the king’s kinsman and the senior member of the great house of Dreux. Now that Peter was politically innocuous King Louis could and did accord due honor to this senior prince of the Capetian blood who had known and served his father and grandfather. Throughout the pages of Joinville’s memoirs Peter appears as a man of high influence whose counsel competed in the royal ear with that of the king’s own brothers. His status during this period is most clearly shown by the titles which were used to designate him. In his own charters he modestly called himself Peter of Braine, knight, but his contemporaries were unwilling to apply to him so

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85 Morice, _Preuves_, I, 935-939.
humble an appellation. The royal and papal chanceries addressed him as Peter, former count of Brittany, and in ordinary usage he was simply Count Peter of Brittany. Although he was actually a minor baron, Peter was considered a count or at least a count emeritus.

According to mediæval convention the principal concern of a man who was approaching his sixtieth year should be to secure a sure passage into heaven. Peter had never been one to do things by halves. Whereas Thibaut of Champagne was convinced that one crusade to the Orient would assure him of eternal bliss, Peter made two such expeditions during the last ten years of his life. While it is true that his formation of the league against the clergy was a slight deviation from his path to salvation, when he undertook that enterprise he was already vowed to the crusade and assured of the plenary indulgence which was the reward of the crusader. Only sudden death before the crusade started could seriously endanger Peter's soul. But before he departed on his second eastern adventure, he took a precaution that no wise Christian could neglect—he made his testament. Although the document itself has been lost, the names of Peter's executors and some of his bequests are known from other sources. The men whom he chose to carry out his last wishes give a clear indication of the concentration of Peter's interests in the Paris region during his last years. Instead of the Breton ecclesiastics who had been his confidants in former years, he selected Reginald, bishop of Paris, and Walter, prior of St. Giles-under-Chilly. The priory of St. Giles was a daughter house of the Parisian monastery of St. Catherine of the Vale of Scholars which had been founded by Philip Augustus in gratitude for the victory of Bouvines. The priory had been established in the valley between Peter's villages of Chilly and Longjumeau by his brother Count John of Macon. Shortly before Peter departed on his last crusade he gave it £40 a year to be paid from the revenues of Chilly.

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87 Gallia Christiana, VII, Instrumenta, p. 280.
88 Ibid., pp. 863-865.
Prior Walter was clearly in high favor with Peter and was probably the active executor. The function of the bishop of Paris was to support Peter's last wishes with the full authority of the church. Unfortunately only four of Peter's bequests are known. The monastery of St. Catherine, the mother house of Walter's priory of St. Giles, received £1,000 of Paris and another establishment a similar sum in the money of Tours. The cathedral church of Paris was given a bequest sufficient to produce a revenue of £100 of Paris a year to purchase masses for the donor's soul on each anniversary of his death. The abbey of St. Victor received £50 of Tours. Thus Peter made sure that these churches would resound annually with masses for the welfare of his soul. All these establishments were in the neighborhood of Paris, but it is by no means certain that Peter made no other bequests. The publication of the Obituaires for the province of Tours might well reveal additional benefactions. One can merely say that Peter's executors were prelates of the Ile-de-France and his known bequests were to houses in that region. Incidentally the size of the gifts shows that Peter was far from poverty-stricken. When one considers that during the coming crusade he was to loan King Louis £8,000, it is possible to form a vague idea of the size of Peter's fortune.

Our knowledge of Peter's part in the crusade of 1248-1251 is confined to a few episodes. An elderly baron of no feudal importance was bound to be in a subordinate position in an army which was led by King Louis and his brothers, and mediaeval chroniclers had little interest in subordinates. Fortunately young John of Joinville liked and admired the former duke of Brittany, and here and there in his charming, rambling, and garrulous memoirs one catches a brief glimpse of Peter. His blood, age, and prestige as a soldier gave him a place in the councils of the crusading chieftains, but he could not exert much influence on the arrogant and reckless royal princes. In battle Peter was simply one minor captain among many who followed where Louis and his brothers led.

Obituaires de la province de Sens, Recueil des historiens de la France, Obituaires, 1, 142, 566, 651, 687.
On August 28, 1258, the crusading fleet sailed from Aigues-mortes, and on September 17 it arrived at the island of Cyprus where the crusaders were to spend the winter. While they were resting on that peaceful isle, the leaders decided to make an expedition against Cairo, the capital of the Turkish sultan who ruled over Palestine. But as medieival armies were never in a hurry and the fleet was at the mercy of capricious winds, it was the end of May before the crusaders left Cyprus for the Egyptian coast. There an astounding success awaited them—the great city of Damietta, caught unprepared, fell without serious resistance. King Louis was delighted, but he was rather at a loss as to how to use his victory. The delta of the Nile was absolutely impassable in summer when the waters were high, and Count Alphonse of Poitou had not yet joined the host. Hence the army sat idly in Damietta from early June to late November while the enemy prepared to resist its march toward Cairo.

When Count Alphonse finally arrived, King Louis held a council of war. Peter and many of his fellow barons were opposed to a march against Cairo from Damietta. A glance at a map will show that they had good grounds for this opinion. Damietta was in the center of the coast of the Nile’s delta, and a march to Cairo would involve crossing at least three major and many minor branches of the great river. Each of these streams would form an almost impregnable line of defense for the Turks. To an experienced and careful soldier like Peter the project must have seemed utterly insane. He advised the king to sail along the coast and lay siege to Alexandria. As that city was on the extreme western edge of the delta, a march from it to Cairo would not be hampered by the branches of the Nile. As a matter of fact, however, Peter probably had no enthusiasm for going to Cairo by any route. Alexandria was certain to offer a stubborn resistance, and the crusaders could spend the rest of the season in a pleasant siege within reach of their ships. Why march into the interior of Egypt to fight the

41 Joinville, p. 64.
infidel when he could be found on the coast? Peter was no fanatic who burned to rescue the Holy Land. He sought adventure and his soul’s salvation, but he preferred to find them as comfortably and safely as possible.

Peter’s counsel passed unheeded. King Louis accepted the advice of his reckless young brother, Count Robert of Artois, and started the army on its almost hopeless march toward Cairo. This is no place to retell the well-known and tragic story of King Louis’ Egyptian campaign. At the battle of Mansourah Peter was attached to the first division which was commanded by the count of Artois. In complete defiance of his brother’s express orders and all the requirements of sound strategy Count Robert refused to wait for the other divisions and led his troops headlong into the town of Mansourah where they were overwhelmed by the immensely superior numbers of the enemy. Robert of Artois, the master of the Templars, and Ralph of Coucy were killed, but Peter and the count of Soissons managed to cut their way out. Joinville furnishes a delightful glimpse of Peter as he retreated from Mansourah.

Straight toward us who guarded the little bridge came Count Peter of Brittany who came from the direction of Mansourah, and he was wounded with a sword cut across his face so that the blood fell into his mouth. He sat a handsome and well-equipped war horse. His reins had been dropped onto the pommel of his saddle, and he clasped the pommel with both hands in order that his men who were behind him and who pressed him greatly might not unseat him. He certainly seemed to value them little, for as he spat the blood from his mouth he said very often ”Look! By the head of God, have you seen such a rabble? "  

Peter passed on presumably to join the division commanded by King Louis. His prowess had enabled him to escape the Turkish swords, but his respite from death was to be a short one. Soon after the battle of Mansourah he fell prisoner to the Turks with King Louis and most of the crusading barons. Weakened by wounds and advanced years, Peter found the hardships of imprisonment too much for him. When the captives were finally released, he was desperately sick. The counts

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* Ibid., p. 84.
of Flanders and Soissons placed him on a ship and set sail for home, but Peter died before they reached France. Perhaps this was the chief triumph of his career. Death on a crusade was a sure guarantee of salvation. Peter had spent a large part of his life under excommunication and yet succeeded in dying in the odor of sanctity. The "Scourge of the Clergy" would pass serenely into heaven.

\[44 \text{ Joinville, p. 134.}\]