

The Book of The Wanderings of Brother Felix Fabri.

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INTRODUCTION.

IN his Epistle Dedicatory, dated 1484, Brother Felix Fabri, after his return for the second time from the Holy Land, describes how he twice journeyed thither, and how he strove during his travels to fulfil the promise which he had made to his brethren of the Dominican Convent of Ulm to keep an exact record of all that he saw and of all that befel him on his journey.

‘ Besides this,’ he continues, ‘ I also, in some cases, took great pains to write an exact account of some of the holy places to which I never went, but never without adding, “ I did not go to this place, but have heard or read about it.” ’

He speaks of himself in this preface as one who had visited all the three parts of the then known world. Writing as he does about ten years before the discovery of America, it is interesting to read his allusions to the Spice Islands, and to the famed Cipango, to reach which by a shorter route was the main object of Columbus’s voyage. He also excuses his Latin style, which, as his German editor, Professor C. D. Hassler remarks, is somewhat of the pattern of that ridiculed in the ‘ *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum* ’ ; and says that should his book fall into the hands of those priests who neglect the Gospels and prophets to read Virgil and the Latin poets and rhetoricians, he will not escape their sneers : for such men love Pagan Rome better than Christian Jerusalem. ‘ If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my tongue cleave unto the roof of my mouth,’ etc.

He describes at length his desire to behold the Holy Land, and quotes St. Jerome’s preface to the Book of Chronicles to the effect that as he who has sailed from the Troad to Sicily will be better enabled thereby to understand the third book of Virgil’s *Aeneid*, even so he who has beheld Judaea with his eyes will gain a clearer insight into Holy Scripture. ‘ Wherefore,’ continues St. Jerome, ‘ I also underwent the toil of wandering throughout the whole of this province, in the company of the most learned Hebrews.’ ‘ Now if,’ continues Fabri, ‘ the great St. Jerome, a man of the highest intelligence and learning, thought it right that he should visit the holy places, that he might better understand the Holy Scriptures, what wonder is there if I and the like of me, who are dull-minded and slow of understanding, should try by the same means to gain some little knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. Indeed, we see with our own eyes at the present day that mere laymen, with no knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, after they have made a pilgrimage to the holy places and have returned from thence, argue about the Gospel and the prophets, talk upon theological subjects, and sometimes overcome and set right learned divines in their interpretation of difficult passages of Holy Scripture, because no Catholic returns from thence without having become more learned ? Since, then, unlearned laymen return theologians from the holy places, there can be no doubt that clerks in orders and men of some small learning will return learned to no small degree. For this reason, and for many others, which are set forth in my preceding encomium on the Holy Land, and for some others which it is unnecessary for me to state, I “ steadfastly set my face to go to Jerusalem,” as it is said of the Lord Jesus in Luke ix. 51, and, as far as it is permitted to a monk to do so, I bound myself by an oath to accomplish it. I call God to witness that for many years I was in such a fever of longing to perform that pilgrimage that whether I was asleep or awake I hardly ever had any other subject before my mind. And I may say with truth that while engaged in these thoughts I lay awake for more than a thousand hours of the night and time of rest.

‘ Moreover, it was a serious matter for me to ask for leave for so long and so unusual a wandering, and it appeared to be almost impossible for me to obtain it. Nor could I form any idea of how I should raise the money for such an expensive journey. Nevertheless. I did not remain quiet, and asked advice of many ; but found no means to avoid staying at home. At last, however, I betook me to the illustrious Prince Count Eberhard the elder, of Wurtemberg, who had long ago been at the holy places, and who had been bound by the vows of a knight and had received the insignia of the knightly office in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which is in Jerusalem. I asked his Magnificence’s advice as to how I was to accomplish the pilgrimage which I had undertaken, for I was alarmed, and feared for my life ; and I dreaded the sea, which I had never yet seen, and of which I had heard much, and the other perils of that pilgrimage, about which I had already read a great deal ; and therefore I ran hither and thither more than I need have done, to obtain advice. The noble count, after he had heard me, answered me familiarly : “ There are three acts in a man’s life which no one ought either to advise another to do or not to do. The first is to contract matrimony, the second is to go to the wars, the third is to visit the Holy Sepulchre, I say that these three acts are good in themselves, but they may easily turn out ill ; and when this is so, he who gave the advice comes to be blamed as if he were the cause of its turning out ill.” But the wise count went on to say that the pilgrimage about which I was asking his advice was an act which might be virtuous, holy, praiseworthy, and exceeding useful, yet only to those who undertook it with a view to the praise of God, while it would be full indeed of peril to those who made it out of frivolity or curiosity, having as their object the pomps of this world, or any other empty and transitory vanities.

‘ I also visited another noble and aged knight, who likewise had many years ago received his knighthood at the Holy Sepulchre, and I asked him what he would advise me in this matter. He out of the fulness of his heart straightway exclaimed, “ My brother, be well assured that were I not thus bowed down by old age, no one would hold me back from returning to perform a second pilgrimage ; for nowhere have I received the grace of God in so large a measure as I did at the places where our redemption was wrought. For whenever I betook myself to prayer, me-thought I saw the heavens opened, and divine sweetness and consolation was poured into my soul as it was nowhere else.”

‘ After this I departed to a certain convent of nuns, and begged leave of the prioress to converse with a certain maiden of the sisterhood, of well-known devotion, and, as many thought, of exceptional holiness, with whom I had often previously conversed for my own edification, but whose face I had never beheld. To this maiden I unfolded my plan, and she, with an unusual cheerfulness, replied, “ Quickly, quickly perform your intended journey, and on no account stay here any longer, and may God be your companion on your way.” I received these words of the maiden as though they had come from heaven, and straightway began to prepare for my wanderings. There was at that time at Rome in the convent of our order which stands above the Temple of Minerva, [1] a certain brother from our country, a friend and acquaintance of mine, to whom I wrote telling him of my intention, and begging that he would obtain a license for me from our most holy father Pope Sixtus IV., and also from the most reverend general of our order, Father Leonard de Mansuetis, of Perusium, without whose leave being first granted no one in my country would have granted me a license to travel. This brother, like a good friend, did not delay, but quickly obtained what I asked, and sent me a testimonial letter from the general of our order, wherein he warned all men that no one of inferior rank to himself should presume to hinder me from making this pilgrimage.

‘ On the receipt of this letter I repaired with it to the Reverend Father the Provincial of our District, and to the Reverend Doctor of Divinity, Ludwig Fuchs, Prior of the Convent of Ulm, and showed them my license from our lord the pope, and from the master of our order,

begging that they likewise would benevolently give their consent. Seeing my intense wish to go they not only gave me their consent, but also bestowed upon me money and help for my journey ; and thus it came to pass that within the space of a few days I was excellently supplied with all that I required for so great a journey, and was ready to set out. Now when this came to the ears of a certain noble and valiant knight, the Lord Apollinaris von Stein, who at that time was Governor of Upper Bavaria, and resided in the town of Gundelfingen, he ordered me to be brought to him, and entrusted to my care his son, Master George von Stein, whom he had determined to send to Jerusalem to receive knighthood there, promising me repayment of my expenses and contributions towards them, and his favour in the future if I would agree to take his son as the companion of my journey.

‘ I willingly gave my consent to this nobleman, and appointed a day with Master George, on which he might find me in the town of Memmingen, on which day and from which place we might start on our journey. Having made these arrangements I returned to Ulm.’

A Brief Description Of Brother Felix Fabri’s First Journey To The Holy Land.

AT the time of the celebration of Easter, in the year of our Lord 1480, on the ninth day of the month of April, which was the Sunday in the octave of Easter on which ‘ Quasi Modo,’ etc., is sung in churches, and whereon also is celebrated the feast of the dedication of the church of the Dominicans in Ulm, on that same day after dinner, as is the custom, I ascended the pulpit, and preached to the people who were present in great numbers, both to hear the sermon and to obtain indulgences. When I had finished my sermon, before the general confession made by the people on such occasions, I told them all of the pilgrimage which I was on the point of beginning, bidding them, and beseeching them, to importune God with prayers for my safe return, at the present time to sing with me in gladness the hymn of the Lord’s Resurrection, which the people are wont to sing, together with the hymn for pilgrims by sea. When I had said this I began in a loud voice, ‘ Christ is risen,’ etc., and when that hymn was finished I again chanted, ‘ In Gottes Nahmen fahren wir, seiner Gnaden,’ etc. [2]

All the people then sang after me the hymns which I had begun with loud and pleasant voices, and repeated them many times over ; nor did they refrain from tears, and some broke out into sobs instead of into song. For many persons of both sexes were anxious and alarmed, fearing, even as I myself feared, that I should perish among such terrible dangers. When the singing was over, I commended them to God by bestowing upon them the general absolution, and, strengthening them by the sign of the cross, I bade them farewell, and descended from the pulpit.

Now, on the fourteenth day of April, early in the morning, after I had received the blessing which is given to those who travel, and after I had kissed and embraced my brethren, we mounted our horses, I and the reverend Master Ludwig, with a servant from the city of Ulm, and rode to Memmingen, where, according to my appointment, I met the Lord Apollinaris von Stein, with his son George, and with many men-at-arms ; and straightway on the morrow we prepared to depart, and the noble youth bade farewell to his father and to all his retainers, and mounted his horse not without sorrow and fear. I also rushed into the arms of my most kind and beloved spiritual father, begging his leave to depart and his paternal blessing, not without deep grief and sorrow, as was shown by the abundant tears and sobs of us both ; nor was there anything to wonder at in this, for the forced parting of son from his father, and of a true man from his sincere friend, is naturally grievous. During my embraces and sobs I heard my most beloved father’s last words of advice, that I was not to forget him in the Holy Land, but that, should a messenger present himself, I was to send a letter from the sea telling how I

was, and to be sure to return soon. And so he sorrowfully left me, and returned with his servant to Ulm to his children, my brethren. After my father's departure, a great and almost irresistible temptation assailed me, for the delightful eagerness to see Jerusalem and the holy places, with which I had until that time been glowing, altogether died within me, and I felt a loathing for travel ; and the pilgrimage, which had appeared so sweet and virtuous, now seemed wearisome, bitter, useless, empty, and sinful. I was angry with myself for having undertaken it, and all those who had dissuaded me from it I now thought to be the wisest of counsellors and the truest of friends ; while I considered that those who had encouraged me were enemies of my life. I had more pleasure in beholding Suabia than the land of Canaan, and Ulm appeared to me pleasanter than Jerusalem. Moreover, the fear of the sea increased within me, and I conceived so many objections to that pilgrimage that, had I not been ashamed, I would have run after Master Ludwig and re-entered Ulm with him, and I should have had the greatest delight in doing so. This accursed temptation remained present with me throughout the whole voyage, and was most troublesome to me, because it took away all the delight and joy and zeal wherewith a pilgrim supports his labours and is urged to persist in his work, and caused me to be dull and stupid both in viewing places of note by sea and land, and also in writing accounts of them. What I have written was done against the grain, but I sometimes succeeded in conquering my dulness by hard work.

So young Master George and I, with one servant whom he had chosen from his father's household, set forth from Memmingen, and in a few hours he began to make my acquaintance and I began to make his, and we and our several dispositions agreed very well together, which is a great comfort for those who are making that pilgrimage together. For if a man has a comrade with whom he cannot agree, woe betide them both during their pilgrimage. So thus we entered the Alps with joy as far as Innspruck, and after leaving that place, rode hurriedly forward, in order that we might arrive the sooner at Venice. Now, while we were in the mountains, one thing befel us which I should like to tell you of. When we had come to the village which is called Ad Scalam, we there wandered away from our true road and the king's highway, for we ought to have climbed the mountain, and ridden past the castle which stands on the top of it ; however, we did not do this, but left the mountain and the castle on our left hands, and descended through a valley, by a long and well-beaten road. When at last we gained a view of the plain below the mountains, we saw before us a town of considerable size, at which we were surprised, because we had (not) heard of any town which we should reach on that day. When we arrived at that town we found that it was Bassano, and we perceived that we had gone out of our way ; however, we remained there for the night, and drank the red wine which is the especial product of the place until we were both nodding. However, we were very uncomfortable, because there was no one in the inn who could talk German with us, and as we were ignorant of Italian we had to ask for everything by signs.

On the following day we rode to Castel Franco, and thence through Treviso, where we sold our horses, and proceeded on mules to Margerum. [3] At Margerum we bade the land farewell, and put to sea in a barque, wherein we sailed as far as Venice to the Fondaco de' Tedeschi. At the Fondaco itself we inquired about inns for knights and pilgrims, and were conducted by a certain German to the inn of St. George, which is a large and respectable one. There we found many noblemen from various countries, all of whom were bound by the same vow as ourselves, and intended to cross the sea and visit the most Holy Sepulchre of the Lord Jesus. There were also in the other inns many pilgrims, both priests, monks, and laymen, gentle and simple, from Germany, from Gaul, and France, and especially two bishops, my Lord of Orleans and my Lord of Le Mans, [4] with a very large retinue of companions and attendants, were there, awaiting the sailing of a ship ; and, moreover, certain women well-stricken in years, wealthy matrons, six in number, were there together with us, desiring to cross the sea to the holy places. I was astonished at the courage of these old women, who through old age were scarcely able to support their own weight, yet forgot their own frailty,

and through love for the Holy Land joined themselves to young knights and underwent the labours of strong men.

The proud nobles, however, were not pleased at this, and thought that they would not embark in the ship in which these ladies were to go, considering it a disgrace that they should go to receive the honour of knighthood in company with old women. These haughty spirits all endeavoured to persuade us not to take our passage in the ship in which the old women meant to sail ; but other wiser and more conscientious knights contradicted those proud men, and rejoiced in the holy penitence of these ladies, hoping that their holiness would render our voyage safer. On account of this there arose an implacable quarrel between those noblemen, which lasted until it pleased God to remove those proud men from among us. Howbeit, those devout ladies remained in our company both in going thither and in returning.

Now, Master Augustine Contarini, whose name means ‘ Count of the Rhine,’ a noble Venetian, was going to take a cargo of pilgrims, and we agreed with him about the fare, and hired his galley, and received from him berths and cots — that is, places for each of us to lie in in the galley — and we hoped for a quick passage, for we had waited for many days while the galley was being fitted for sea. But when everything was ready and there was nothing left to be done but set sail, as we longed to do, there came a ship which brought the bad news that the Emperor of the Turks, Mahomet the Great, [5] was besieging the island of Rhodes, with a great fleet by sea and a fully-equipped army of horse and foot by land, and that the whole of the Aegean and Carpathian and Malean seas swarmed with Turks, and that it was impossible during this year to take pilgrims across to the Holy Land. It would not be easy for me to tell with what sorrow the pilgrims heard this news, and the troubles and discord and quarrels to which they gave rise among the pilgrims would weary me to tell of. However, in another work I have described all the adversity which we endured at Venice, and how the Frenchmen were separated from us, albeit they belonged to our galley. Now, we German pilgrims met together and waited on the chief of the Venetian Senate with a petition that the lords thereof would have the goodness to protect our galley with a safe-conduct, that she might not be taken by the Turks, and we be taken prisoners with her. To this we received the answer that the galley herself was free, and could pass through the Turkish fleet without being taken, by virtue of the treaty between the Turks and the Venetians ; but that they were unwilling to give us any guarantee for the liberty of the pilgrims, and did not advise us to attempt the passage that year. But, if we were altogether determined to go, we might sail as far as the island of Corfu, where lay the Captain of the Sea with the Venetian fleet, and we might safely follow his advice, because he knew all the doings of the Turks. As we agreed to do this, they gave us letters commendatory to the aforesaid captain, and permitted us to go, giving the master of our ship leave to take us to sea, although they had before this forbidden him to take us anywhere.

So we all of us, pilgrims and others, went on board the galley, and the number of pilgrims was one hundred and ten, and that of all the people who embarked in the galley altogether was three hundred and thirty. We weighed our anchors, spread our sails, and set out in the name of God, sailing before the wind, which was fair enough, so that in the space of two hours we had run quite out of sight of land and were on the high sea. However, our fair wind did not last, and on the third day we put in to Parentia. [6] which is in the county of Istria, part of the kingdom of Dalmatia. There the people terrified us by telling us horrible tales about the Turks, wherefore we stayed there for several days, because they told us that we could not reach the island of Corfu unmolested, forasmuch as the Turks had spread their fleet over the whole Adriatic, and made a prey and a spoil of all that met them. Nevertheless, we left that port, and after several days of slow sailing put into Zara, a city in Dalmatia ; but on hearing that the plague was raging there, we quickly turned away from that city, and after a slow and tedious voyage reached the city of Lesina, where, just as we were about to enter the harbour,

a good wind sprung up, to which we spread our sails, and, leaving Lesina, sailed bravely onwards for some hours. Afterwards there arose a wind which was quite useless to us, and, making a tack, we came upon a rugged and deserted part of the coast of Croatia, and were forced to make for an uninhabited harbour, and to furl our sails amid lofty, precipitous mountains. To divert ourselves we went ashore in small boats, and lo, there lay on the sand a corpse cast up by the sea, putrid and rotten. The sailors, being superstitious, were frightened to death at this discovery, and began to predict evil for us, and drew us far away from the body, nor was there one who took pity on it or gave it burial.

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Now these contrary winds rose higher and higher, and for three days and nights we lay among these rocks, and whenever we put out, we were driven back again by the force of the wind, to the great discomfort of us all. Howbeit, this discomfort saved us ; for when three days afterwards a fair wind blew out of that place, and we were making for the high sea, we met a Venetian war-galley, which as it passed us asked our officers if ‘ anything had happened to us at sea yesterday or the day before.’ When we answered ‘ Nothing, except foul winds which had driven us to shelter under the mountains,’ they answered, ‘ Blessed be those winds which drove you into hiding-places. For if you had been on the open sea yesterday, you would have fallen in with an armed Turkish fleet, which is sailing to Apulia to plunder the Christians there.’ On hearing this, we praised God, who had for this time saved us from the hands of the Turks.

We went on our way, and after some days came to Curzola in Illyria, and entering the harbour of the city of Curzola early in the morning, we heard a mass there. Curzola is a city in Illyria, and has another name, ‘ Prepo in alto.’ It is built on the top of a high mountain, and is a small, yet populous city, under the dominion of Venice ; it is well fortified with walls and towers, and is the seat of a bishop.

The inhabitants were all in great terror, fearing that the Turks, whom they saw daily cruising about the sea in search of plunder, might fall upon them, and they wondered how we could venture to sail on so perilous a sea. The more prudent of them advised us to return, but we took no notice of them. We re-embarked, having bought in this city wine, loaves of bread, and other necessaries ; but while they were hoisting the mizen-mast, by the carelessness of one of the sailors, it fell down again, and striking another sailor, killed him on the spot. My Lord Bishop of Le Mans stood close to this dangerous falling spar, and I was by his side with many others, and we were all within a very little of being struck by it and killed. As for the dead man, they wrapped him in a sheet, tied a bag full of stones to his feet, and threw him into the sea.

We sailed fast from Curzola, and about midnight came to Epidaurus, whose modern name is Ragusa. We put into the harbour of Ragusa, cast anchor, moored our ship, and slept until sunrise, After this we entered the city, but found no inns there as in our country. Wherefore I, with my Master George von Stein and some other noblemen, went to a convent of Dominicans, begging them to give us something to eat in return for our money. They brought us good provisions, and capital Sclavonian wine, and treated us handsomely.

Presently the prior of the convent came, bringing two of the brethren with him, named Brother Francis de Catoro, and Brother Dominic, whom he entrusted to my charge, and gave them to me to be my comrades on my journey, for they also desired to go to Jerusalem in our company. At this I was particularly pleased, because hitherto I had been without a brother of my own order, and their company was more desired by me than fine gold. After we had

finished our meal and seen the convent, we walked through the city and viewed it, as did also the other pilgrims. We saw that the city was wonderfully well fortified with towers and exceeding deep ditches, which men were in the act of digging out. Wondering at this, we asked them whether they also feared the Turk, although they paid him tribute. They answered, ‘ We fear him all the same, and are fortifying ourselves against him ; for though he be our friend to-day, he will be our foe to-morrow.’ They blamed our recklessness in venturing to roam over the sea at such a perilous time, when they themselves did not dare to show themselves at sea ; and they tried to persuade us to stay there until better news came. I will describe this city and other places in the account of my return from my second pilgrimage. However, when it grew late, we all went on board our galley, and set sail from the harbour of Ragusa the same evening with a fair wind, and went a long way that night. But at daybreak there arose a strong contrary wind, which drove us out of our true course towards Apulia, which we saw before us ; and had not our crew skilfully retarded our ship, we should have gone ashore upon it. After a long sail, we reached the isles of Gazapolis, and had no wind ; nor did we move, save that by the lazy working of the oars by the crew we slowly crept along.

We thus arrived at a place where a city stands on a mountain overlooking the sea. It is well walled, but is entirely deserted on account of the breath of a dragon, as will be afterwards explained ; and next, after a tedious voyage among lofty mountains, we came to a part of the sea, where the galley remained fixed on the surface of the waters, nor could it be moved by the oars to the right nor to the left ; but, as I have said, it stood stock still, because beneath it was the whirlpool called the ‘ Abyss,’ or opening into the earth, which there sucks up a great part of the sea, and where the waters sink down into that Abyss. Wherefore the waters stand still above it, awaiting their descent into the Abyss ; and when the sea in that region has not much water in it, the water is whirled round, and whatever swims upon it is in danger of being drawn down. And indeed ships would be swallowed up there if their steersmen did not avoid it. So in this place we stood still, and our sailors endeavoured with loud cries and much labour to row the galley away from this gulf, but their labours were in vain. Howbeit, the people of Corcyra, when they saw this—for we were within sight of the island and city of Corcyra—came to our aid from Corcyra, or Corfu, with two small galleys. They made ropes fast to our galley, brought them to their own sterns, and then by rowing their own galleys they, with great force, dragged our galley out of the jaws of the Abyss, lest the deep should swallow us up. Being thus saved, we proceeded to the island of Corcyra, and after sunset entered the harbour of the city, which was full of ships of war, because, as the lords of the Venetian Senate had told us, the Captain of the Sea was there with an armed fleet to keep the peace at sea. So we slept until morning. At daybreak we went ashore to the city in small boats, and found it full of people, and many Turks were walking about among the Christians. After hearing Mass, we Suabian and Bavarian pilgrims hired a small cottage in the suburbs, and there cooked, ate, drank and slept. This cottage was small, and built of beams of very old and very dry wood : wherefore it happened, in consequence of the enormous fire which we made up for cooking, that the place twice actually caught fire ; however, we always put out the fire, so that we did not get into any trouble about it. But the second time that this happened, the neighbours, seeing that the roof was on fire, ran together with clamour and lamentation, while we mounted the roof with ladders and took away the food of the flames.

On this occasion we were in no small danger, for if the fire had gathered strength the whole place would have been burned, and the Greek inhabitants of Corcyra would have sacrificed our lives to revenge themselves for the loss of their houses ; indeed, they are very unfriendly to Germans, and are easily roused to attack them. After we had eaten, we respectfully presented the letter which we had received from the Venetian Senate to the Captain of the Sea, begging for his advice and assistance to further our pilgrimage. He, after reading it, advised us to return to Venice with our galley ; but when he perceived that this advice was

grievous, he said in a sort of rage, ‘ What folly possesses you, that you should wish to expose yourselves to such risks both of body and soul, of life and property ? Behold, the sea is covered with cruel Turks, from whose hands there is no chance of your escaping. Go back to Venice, or stay in some seaport, until better news comes. But if you are utterly determined to go to the East, you must manage your passage yourselves, for I will not permit the galley in which you came to sail thither, because she belongs to St. Mark.’

When we heard this, we were much disturbed, and left his presence, asking for time to take counsel. Hereupon the minds of many, especially those of the two bishops, were so wrought upon by the words of the captain, that they determined to return to Venice with all their retinue. Some even of our knights were fearful, and ready to go back ; but others were brave and unmoved. I joined these latter, and, as far as I was able, heartened and encouraged the timid ones by preaching to them and quoting such passages of Holy Scripture as might raise in them hopes of divine protection. It befel on one day, when I was absent, that my lords the knights of our company were talking about the perils of our pilgrimage, and some were for going on with it, while others were timid and held back. One of them said, ‘ You ought not to pay any heed to the words of encouragement which Brother Felix says to you. What is life or death to him ? He is a professed monk, and has no property, no friends, no position in life, nor anything else in the world, as we have. It is easier for him to die quickly by the sword of a Turk or Saracen than to grow old in his convent, dying daily.’ And he said much more, trying to prevent the lords from listening to me. All this was told me, and I afterwards turned the tables by putting such courage into, that same knight that he could not be persuaded into turning back. The captain kept us in Corcyra for eight days, and every day told us more and more frightful news ; but we Germans had all agreed together that we would not go back, but that in the name of the Lord we would go on to Jerusalem. At last, when the captain saw that we were determined to carry out our intention, he left off interfering with our pilgrimage ; and we made ready to start, removing ourselves into another galley, which we had bought. When all who wished to make this voyage were together on board of this galley, and we were joyfully talking to one another as we stood on deck beside the mast, one of the elders asked that silence should be made, and thus addressed us : ‘ My lords and brother pilgrims, we are undertaking a great, difficult, and arduous matter in making this pilgrimage by sea. And I say to you of a truth that, humanly speaking, we are acting foolishly in exposing ourselves to so great a danger against the advice and persuasion of the Captain of the Sea, and of everyone else. Wherefore the lords bishops and all the most noble, powerful, dignified, and perhaps the wisest of our company have given it up, and are on their way back to their own country, following the advice which has been given them, while we are setting out in the opposite direction. Now, therefore, that our attempt may not be a mere act of sinful foolhardiness, we must needs reform our life on board of this galley, and must more frequently invoke the protection of Almighty God and his saints, that we may be able to make our way through the hosts of our enemies and their fleet.’

On hearing these words, we unanimously decided that no more games of cards or dice should be played on board of the galley, that no quarrels, oaths, or blasphemies should be allowed, and that the clerks and priests should add litanies to their usual daily prayers. Indeed, before this decree was made much disorder took place in these matters, for men were gambling morning, noon, and night, especially the Bishop of Orleans [7] with his suite ; and withal they swore most dreadfully, and quarrelled daily, for the French and we Germans were always at blows. Thus it happened that one of the followers of the Bishop of Orleans struck a devout priest of our company, and incurred excommunication. For the French are proud and passionate men ; and therefore, I believe that it was by an act of divine providence that they were separated from us, and our galley cleared of them ; for we should scarcely have reached Jerusalem in their company without bloodshed and the murder of some of us. We stayed one night in Corcyra, sleeping on board ship ; and that same night we had a terrible fright ; for

when it was late and had grown dark, as we still stood round the mast gossiping, we discovered a strange boat alongside of us, wherein were Turks, spies who were trying to listen to what we were saying. We at once betook ourselves to stones, which we hurled after them as they rowed away ; howbeit the boat straightway glided away out to sea and escaped. Next morning our trumpeters blew their horns or trumpets to show that we were about to start, and we cast off the moorings of the galley, and with joy and singing turned our backs to the harbour. The other pilgrims who stayed behind stood on the quay and laughed at us, saying that we were desperate men—*waghels*. For it was the common talk in Corcyra that we should be taken before we came to Modon. So thus we passed out of sight of Corcyra, and went on our way with joy mixed with fear.

Now those forty pilgrims who were left behind at Corcyra returned in a hired ship to Venice ; and when they came thither, they gave it out for certain that we had been taken by the Turks. They told the same story in other cities in Italy, France, and Germany. This they did wishing to excuse their own cowardice by reference to our misfortunes. In consequence of this, requiem masses were said for my soul in several places in Suabia ; for the pilgrims spread these lies through the whole of Suabia and Bavaria. Meanwhile, we made a prosperous passage to Modon, and did not see even the smallest boat on the sea, at which the people of Modon were surprised ; for all seafaring men there were in great fear. The Germans who dwelt there most earnestly dissuaded us from attempting to go further, and told us many terrible stories ; but we, as before, so now were not to be frightened out of accomplishing our journey, and proceeded on our way ; and by God's guidance, we reached Crete in peace and without alarm, and joyfully entered the port of Candia. On our arrival one may say that the entire city came out to see us, for it was wondrous, nay miraculous, that a Christian galley should escape from the cruel Turks, whom they saw daily prowling about the sea in armed triple-banked [8] galleys in search of plunder. We entered into the house of a certain German, who albeit he kept a house of ill-fame, yet on our arrival cleansed his dwelling and sent away his courtesans ; for there was no other inn there for pilgrims. Over against this house was another which was an inn for Turkish merchants, and there were actually in it many rich Turkish merchants from Constantinople, who, we were told, said of us. ' Those men are lost if they go any further.' Some of these Turks even came into our house, and advised us not to put to sea for the present, because we should certainly be taken. Moreover, the Duke of Candia and his counsellors, desiring to do us a kindness, sent an orator to us, who in a most elegant Latin speech commended our pilgrimage, and urged many arguments against our going any further, pointing out that beyond this place the danger would be greater than it had been during our voyage hither, because between Crete and Cyprus lay the Island of Rhodes, which was at that time beleaguered by the Turks, and while passing it we could not avoid meeting a Turkish corsair. We remained there for five days, and heard worse news every day ; but in spite of this we embarked in our galley and made ready for starting ; but we set sail with fear, lest a gale should spring up and carry the galley among the fleet and army of the besieging Turks. However, as soon as we had left the port and were in the open sea, behold, there blew a very strong and most favourable wind, which bore us faraway from the islands called Cyclades, whereof Rhodes is the first. We were driven along by the force of a fair wind, which constantly increased ; the sea roared, the waves swelled high, and a violent storm came on. All the upper part of the ship was drenched with water. Nevertheless, this storm was most fortunate for us, both because it bore us towards the port for which we were bound, and also because it rendered us safe from the attacks of the Turks ; for it would have been impossible for our ship to be taken when sailing at such a rapid rate.

So we put away all our warlike apparatus, the cannons, spears, lances, shields and bucklers, bows and crossbows, stones and darts with which we had provided ourselves at Corcyra to repel the attacks of the Turks, because we now saw that we had escaped from these enemies of the cross of Christ. On the second day we reached Cyprus, and entered the

harbour of Limasol, because a contrary wind forced us to make for a harbour. From thence, when the wind dropped, we sailed to the port of Larnaca, intending to remain there for several days, because the master of our ship had a brother at Nicosia in the service of the Queen [9] of Cyprus, and had some business to transact with him, and bade us wait until it was finished. When his business was settled, we cast off our moorings and desired eagerly to reach our next port, for we had now no place to stop at short of the Holy Land. Sailing along we sighted the Holy Land on the third day, and out of the joy of our hearts we sang ‘ Te Deum Laudamus’ with loud voices, and directed our prow towards Joppa, commonly called Jaffa, and came to an anchor off the rock of Andromeda. Here the master straightway sent a slave to run to Jerusalem and announce our arrival to the Father Warden of Mount Sion, that he might come with his brethren and with asses and their drivers to bring us to Jerusalem. So we abode in our galley for seven days, waiting for our guides, after which we were landed in small boats, and lodged in very old vaulted rooms, which were both ruinous and foul-smelling, wherein we remained for one night only ; after this, we mounted the asses which had been brought for us, and thus, escorted by Saracens, we left the sea and came to the town of Ramleh, wherein we abode for some days, and then entered Jerusalem, where we were taken, not to a hospice, but to a house in Millo, wherein we ate, slept, and so forth.

Here endeth Part one of Brother Felix Fabri’s first wandering to the Holy Land

- [1] ‘ Maria sopra Minerva, so called from standing on the site of a temple to Minerva, dedicated by Pompey after his victories in Asia. It was rebuilt in 1370 under Gregory XI, and granted to the Dominican monks. It is the only church at Rome which has retained its original architecture.’—Murray’s *Handbook for Rome*.
- [2] ‘An ancient hymn, several times quoted by Fabri, and which is still sung in German churches.
- [3] Mestre (?).
- [4] Gebennensis, Senomanensis.
- [5] He died the following year, 1481.
- [6] Parenzo.
- [7] Gebennensis.
- [8] A triple-banked galley, *triremis*, in mediæval Latin, means one which is rowed by three men to each oar.
- [9] The Queen of Cyprus, the heiress of the Lusignans, ceded Cyprus to Venice in the fifteenth century.

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