

Return from the Holy Land

Bursting from the darkened heavens on the night of May thirteenth in the year of the Lord 1100 AD, a sharp crackling of lightening illuminated the turbulent choppy channel waters, and revealed the unconquerable everlasting white cliffs of Britain. Then as a crescendo of ear shattering thunder followed, a vigilant seaman in the bow of a tossing ship cried aloud, "Land ho." The captain immediately commanded authoritatively, "Drop anchor."

The seaman responded with a deft ax strike to a rope securing the anchor chain and the anchor fell from sight and instantly findith lodging in the depth of the sea. Then, when they had lowered a second anchor from the stern, the ship surrendered her forward progress, and rolled and heaved in acquiescence to the tempestuous striving of the snarling seas.

Huddled together with their horses and armament in the belly of the wind buffeted ship, a company of crusaders, weary of their long pilgrimage and anxious to find rest for their belabored souls, fell upon their knees and in unison did elevate a prayer of thanks and gratitude for their salvation and preservation. With one accord both great and small chanted praise unto our Lord Jesus Christ. Many of the devout reverently crossing themselves, didst kneel quietly in solemn prayer.

An anchor was made fast to the shore, and with the ship tossing and rolling and complying unto the demands of the restless ocean waves, men scrambled over the gunwale railing and into the sea. Some of the soldiers swam to shore whilst others grasping a halyard line secured to a steel spike imbedded deep into the sand of the shore, did propel themselves hand over hand, until able to stand in waist deep water.

Our horses were hurriedly saddled in the dark, and I jumped my mount over the ship railing into the water. Most of the other horses followed in quick succession, but if a horse having a cantankerous spirit was disinclined to leave the pitching deck, then a crop fervently administered to the flank or buttocks, persuadith the reluctant animal to jump over board.