

brother monarch royally. When the meeting took place he set Richard at his side on a throne covered with silk, and standing before them was the interpreter. The first to speak was Richard, who addressed Isaac thus :—

‘I am astonished, my lord Emperor, that a Christian prince like you, that a witness like you of the sufferings of that Sacred Land in which our Lord Christ was crucified, have made no effort to deliver it from the yoke of the infidels. You will not only not aid those who are now besieging Acre, but will not even give provisions to those who are coming to aid them from so far. In the name of God, in the name of our Holy Faith, I demand that you put an end to all the complaints that are made against you. I demand that you join us yourself, as you ought to do, with your own army, and that for the future you allow the crusaders freely to buy in Cyprus whatever may be requisite for their enterprise.’

To this Isaac replied with a grave and regretful courtesy, ‘My lord King, I am well aware of the honour with which I should cover myself if only I could do as you advise me. But for me it is impossible, seeing I know this: that if once I left my island I should never again return to it. Nevertheless I desire to aid you, so far as my means suffer me; and till Acre is taken I promise to do for you this much: I will send and will maintain for you a company of two hundred