

Nona, which we shall presently visit. The city was given over to pillage, its fortifications razed, and the Venetians prepared to build the castle of Malconsiglio on the opposite island of Ugliano, possibly on the site now occupied by Fort S. Michele, in order to command the Zara channel. The season was far advanced and the Crusaders resolved to winter in Zara. But feeling ran high. The French and Venetians came to blows in the streets. A Brief from the Pope, ordering the French to separate themselves from the excommunicated Venetians, served to heighten the divergences. So the winter passed. The Venetians employed it in dismantling the defences of the town. But a still further diversion of the Fourth Crusade was brought about by the arrival in Zara of the young and handsome Alexius Comnene, the rightful heir to the throne of Constantinople, whose father, Isaac Comnene, had been dethroned, imprisoned and blinded by the usurper, another Alexius. Young Alexius, who was about fourteen years old, had escaped from Constantinople and the clutches of the usurper, disguised as a common seaman, and found his way to Italy. He now appealed to the Crusaders for help. He promised if they would turn aside, recapture Constantinople and place him