

third until the ninth hour, cheerful and unscathed. And when the Saracens saw this they took counsel together, and came to the brethren, saying: "We mean to kindle a great blazing fire, and to cast you into it. And if the doctrine ye hold be true the fire will not burn you, but if it be false and evil ye shall be utterly consumed."

Then the brethren answered, saying: "We are ready, O Cadi, to go into the fire and into prison, or to endure whatever thou canst inflict on us for our religion; and ready thou shalt ever find us. But this one thing thou oughtest to know, that if the fire consume us, think not this cometh from (the fault of) our religion, but only from our sins, seeing that on account of our sins God may well let us burn. And for all that, our religion is not the less good and perfect as anything in the world ever can be; nor is there in the world any other faith whereby men may be saved but this."

8. The same history continued.

And as order was thus being taken for the burning of the friars, the report thereof spread like lightning throughout the whole city; and from the said city great and small, men and women, flocked together to see what should come of it. But the brethren were meanwhile brought out to the *Medan*<sup>1</sup> i.e., the piazza of the city, where an exceeding great fire had been kindled. And Friar Thomas went forward to cast himself into the fire, but as he did so a certain Saracen caught him by the hood, saying: "Nay, thou shalt not go, for thou art old, and mayest have upon thee some crafty device whereby the fire could not burn thee; so let another than thou go in!" Then incontinently four Saracens laid violent hands on Friar James of Padua in order to cast him into the fire; but he said to them, "Suffer me and I will of

<sup>1</sup> *Maidán*. We generally employ this word in India for an open plain, or the esplanade outside a city; but in Western Asia it seems to be used specially for the public square or piazza (in the Italian sense) of a city, as here.