

## Chapter LX: The Fourth Crusade.--Part III.

But these generous deliverers were unwilling to release their hostage, till they had obtained from his father the payment, or at least the promise, of their recompense. They chose four ambassadors, Matthew of Montmorency, our historian the marshal of Champagne, and two Venetians, to congratulate the emperor. The gates were thrown open on their approach, the streets on both sides were lined with the battle axes of the Danish and English guard: the presence-chamber glittered with gold and jewels, the false substitute of virtue and power: by the side of the blind Isaac his wife was seated, the sister of the king of Hungary: and by her appearance, the noble matrons of Greece were drawn from their domestic retirement, and mingled with the circle of senators and soldiers. The Latins, by the mouth of the marshal, spoke like men conscious of their merits, but who respected the work of their own hands; and the emperor clearly understood, that his son's engagements with Venice and the pilgrims must be ratified without hesitation or delay. Withdrawing into a private chamber with the empress, a chamberlain, an interpreter, and the four ambassadors, the father of young Alexius inquired with some anxiety into the nature of his stipulations. The submission of the Eastern empire to the pope, the succor of the Holy Land, and a present contribution of two hundred thousand marks of silver.--"These conditions are weighty," was his prudent reply: "they are hard to accept, and difficult to perform. But no conditions can exceed the measure of your services and deserts." After this satisfactory assurance, the barons mounted on horseback, and

introduced the heir of Constantinople to the city and palace: his youth and marvellous adventures engaged every heart in his favor, and Alexius was solemnly crowned with his father in the dome of St. Sophia. In the first days of his reign, the people, already blessed with the restoration of plenty and peace, was delighted by the joyful catastrophe of the tragedy; and the discontent of the nobles, their regret, and their fears, were covered by the polished surface of pleasure and loyalty. The mixture of two discordant nations in the same capital might have been pregnant with mischief and danger; and the suburb of Galata, or Pera, was assigned for the quarters of the French and Venetians. But the liberty of trade and familiar intercourse was allowed between the friendly nations: and each day the pilgrims were tempted by devotion or curiosity to visit the churches and palaces of Constantinople. Their rude minds, insensible perhaps of the finer arts, were astonished by the magnificent scenery: and the poverty of their native towns enhanced the populousness and riches of the first metropolis of Christendom. [68] Descending from his state, young Alexius was prompted by interest and gratitude to repeat his frequent and familiar visits to his Latin allies; and in the freedom of the table, the gay petulance of the French sometimes forgot the emperor of the East. [69] In their most serious conferences, it was agreed, that the reunion of the two churches must be the result of patience and time; but avarice was less tractable than zeal; and a larger sum was instantly disbursed to appease the wants, and silence the importunity, of the crusaders. [70] Alexius was alarmed by the approaching hour of their departure: their absence might have relieved him from the engagement which he was yet incapable of

performing; but his friends would have left him, naked and alone, to the caprice and prejudice of a perfidious nation. He wished to bribe their stay, the delay of a year, by undertaking to defray their expense, and to satisfy, in their name, the freight of the Venetian vessels. The offer was agitated in the council of the barons; and, after a repetition of their debates and scruples, a majority of votes again acquiesced in the advice of the doge and the prayer of the young emperor. At the price of sixteen hundred pounds of gold, he prevailed on the marquis of Montferrat to lead him with an army round the provinces of Europe; to establish his authority, and pursue his uncle, while Constantinople was awed by the presence of Baldwin and his confederates of France and Flanders. The expedition was successful: the blind emperor exulted in the success of his arms, and listened to the predictions of his flatterers, that the same Providence which had raised him from the dungeon to the throne, would heal his gout, restore his sight, and watch over the long prosperity of his reign. Yet the mind of the suspicious old man was tormented by the rising glories of his son; nor could his pride conceal from his envy, that, while his own name was pronounced in faint and reluctant acclamations, the royal youth was the theme of spontaneous and universal praise. [71]

[Footnote 68: Compare, in the rude energy of Villehardouin, (No. 66, 100,) the inside and outside views of Constantinople, and their impression on the minds of the pilgrims: *cette ville (says he) que de toutes les autres ere souveraine*. See the parallel passages of Fulcherius Carnotensis, *Hist. Hierosol.* l. i. c. 4, and Will. Tyr. ii.

3, xx. 26.]

[Footnote 69: As they played at dice, the Latins took off his diadem, and clapped on his head a woollen or hairy cap, to megaloprepeV kai pagkleiston katerrupainen onoma, (Nicetas, p. 358.) If these merry companions were Venetians, it was the insolence of trade and a commonwealth.]

[Footnote 70: Villehardouin, No. 101. Dandolo, p. 322. The doge affirms, that the Venetians were paid more slowly than the French; but he owns, that the histories of the two nations differed on that subject. Had he read Villehardouin? The Greeks complained, however, good totius Græciæ opes transtulisset, (Gunther, Hist. C. P. c 13) See the lamentations and invectives of Nicetas, (p. 355.)]

[Footnote 71: The reign of Alexius Comnenus occupies three books in Nicetas, p. 291--352. The short restoration of Isaac and his son is despatched in five chapters, p. 352--362.]

By the recent invasion, the Greeks were awakened from a dream of nine centuries; from the vain presumption that the capital of the Roman empire was impregnable to foreign arms. The strangers of the West had violated the city, and bestowed the sceptre, of Constantine: their Imperial clients soon became as unpopular as themselves: the well-known vices of Isaac were rendered still more contemptible by his infirmities, and the young Alexius was hated as an apostate, who had renounced the

manners and religion of his country. His secret covenant with the Latins was divulged or suspected; the people, and especially the clergy, were devoutly attached to their faith and superstition; and every convent, and every shop, resounded with the danger of the church and the tyranny of the pope. [72] An empty treasury could ill supply the demands of regal luxury and foreign extortion: the Greeks refused to avert, by a general tax, the impending evils of servitude and pillage; the oppression of the rich excited a more dangerous and personal resentment; and if the emperor melted the plate, and despoiled the images, of the sanctuary, he seemed to justify the complaints of heresy and sacrilege. During the absence of Marquis Boniface and his Imperial pupil, Constantinople was visited with a calamity which might be justly imputed to the zeal and indiscretion of the Flemish pilgrims. [73] In one of their visits to the city, they were scandalized by the aspect of a mosque or synagogue, in which one God was worshipped, without a partner or a son. Their effectual mode of controversy was to attack the infidels with the sword, and their habitation with fire: but the infidels, and some Christian neighbors, presumed to defend their lives and properties; and the flames which bigotry had kindled, consumed the most orthodox and innocent structures. During eight days and nights, the conflagration spread above a league in front, from the harbor to the Propontis, over the thickest and most populous regions of the city. It is not easy to count the stately churches and palaces that were reduced to a smoking ruin, to value the merchandise that perished in the trading streets, or to number the families that were involved in the common destruction. By this outrage, which the doge and the barons in vain affected to disclaim, the

name of the Latins became still more unpopular; and the colony of that nation, above fifteen thousand persons, consulted their safety in a hasty retreat from the city to the protection of their standard in the suburb of Pera. The emperor returned in triumph; but the firmest and most dexterous policy would have been insufficient to steer him through the tempest, which overwhelmed the person and government of that unhappy youth. His own inclination, and his father's advice, attached him to his benefactors; but Alexius hesitated between gratitude and patriotism, between the fear of his subjects and of his allies. [74] By his feeble and fluctuating conduct he lost the esteem and confidence of both; and, while he invited the marquis of Monferrat to occupy the palace, he suffered the nobles to conspire, and the people to arm, for the deliverance of their country. Regardless of his painful situation, the Latin chiefs repeated their demands, resented his delays, suspected his intentions, and exacted a decisive answer of peace or war. The haughty summons was delivered by three French knights and three Venetian deputies, who girded their swords, mounted their horses, pierced through the angry multitude, and entered, with a fearful countenance, the palace and presence of the Greek emperor. In a peremptory tone, they recapitulated their services and his engagements; and boldly declared, that unless their just claims were fully and immediately satisfied, they should no longer hold him either as a sovereign or a friend. After this defiance, the first that had ever wounded an Imperial ear, they departed without betraying any symptoms of fear; but their escape from a servile palace and a furious city astonished the ambassadors themselves; and their return to the camp was the signal of mutual hostility.

[Footnote 72: When Nicetas reproaches Alexius for his impious league, he bestows the harshest names on the pope's new religion, *meizon kai atopwtaton... parektrophn pistewV... tvn tou Papa pronomiwn kainismon,...* *metaqesin te kai metapoihsin tvn palaivn 'RwmaioiV?eqvn,* (p. 348.) Such was the sincere language of every Greek to the last gasp of the empire.]

[Footnote 73: Nicetas (p. 355) is positive in the charge, and specifies the Flemings, (*FlamioneV,*) though he is wrong in supposing it an ancient name. Villehardouin (No. 107) exculpates the barons, and is ignorant (perhaps affectedly ignorant) of the names of the guilty.]

[Footnote 74: Compare the suspicions and complaints of Nicetas (p. 359--362) with the blunt charges of Baldwin of Flanders, (*Gesta Innocent III. c. 92, p. 534,*) *cum patriarcha et mole nobilium, nobis promises perjurus et mendax.*]

Among the Greeks, all authority and wisdom were overborne by the impetuous multitude, who mistook their rage for valor, their numbers for strength, and their fanaticism for the support and inspiration of Heaven. In the eyes of both nations Alexius was false and contemptible; the base and spurious race of the Angeli was rejected with clamorous disdain; and the people of Constantinople encompassed the senate, to demand at their hands a more worthy emperor. To every senator, conspicuous by his birth or dignity, they successively presented the

purple: by each senator the deadly garment was repulsed: the contest lasted three days; and we may learn from the historian Nicetas, one of the members of the assembly, that fear and weaknesses were the guardians of their loyalty. A phantom, who vanished in oblivion, was forcibly proclaimed by the crowd: [75] but the author of the tumult, and the leader of the war, was a prince of the house of Ducas; and his common appellation of Alexius must be discriminated by the epithet of Mourzoufle, [76] which in the vulgar idiom expressed the close junction of his black and shaggy eyebrows. At once a patriot and a courtier, the perfidious Mourzoufle, who was not destitute of cunning and courage, opposed the Latins both in speech and action, inflamed the passions and prejudices of the Greeks, and insinuated himself into the favor and confidence of Alexius, who trusted him with the office of great chamberlain, and tinged his buskins with the colors of royalty. At the dead of night, he rushed into the bed-chamber with an affrighted aspect, exclaiming, that the palace was attacked by the people and betrayed by the guards. Starting from his couch, the unsuspecting prince threw himself into the arms of his enemy, who had contrived his escape by a private staircase. But that staircase terminated in a prison: Alexius was seized, stripped, and loaded with chains; and, after tasting some days the bitterness of death, he was poisoned, or strangled, or beaten with clubs, at the command, or in the presence, of the tyrant. The emperor Isaac Angelus soon followed his son to the grave; and Mourzoufle, perhaps, might spare the superfluous crime of hastening the extinction of impotence and blindness.



[Footnote 75: His name was Nicholas Canabus: he deserved the praise of Nicetas and the vengeance of Mourzoufle, (p. 362.)]

[Footnote 76: Villehardouin (No. 116) speaks of him as a favorite, without knowing that he was a prince of the blood, Angelus and Ducas. Ducange, who pries into every corner, believes him to be the son of Isaac Ducas Sebastocrator, and second cousin of young Alexius.]

The death of the emperors, and the usurpation of Mourzoufle, had changed the nature of the quarrel. It was no longer the disagreement of allies who overvalued their services, or neglected their obligations: the French and Venetians forgot their complaints against Alexius, dropped a tear on the untimely fate of their companion, and swore revenge against the perfidious nation who had crowned his assassin. Yet the prudent doge was still inclined to negotiate: he asked as a debt, a subsidy, or a fine, fifty thousand pounds of gold, about two millions sterling; nor would the conference have been abruptly broken, if the zeal, or policy, of Mourzoufle had not refused to sacrifice the Greek church to the safety of the state. [77] Amidst the invectives of his foreign and domestic enemies, we may discern, that he was not unworthy of the character which he had assumed, of the public champion: the second siege of Constantinople was far more laborious than the first; the treasury was replenished, and discipline was restored, by a severe inquisition into the abuses of the former reign; and Mourzoufle, an iron mace in his hand, visiting the posts, and affecting the port and aspect of a warrior, was an object of terror to his soldiers, at least, and to his

kinsmen. Before and after the death of Alexius, the Greeks made two vigorous and well-conducted attempts to burn the navy in the harbor; but the skill and courage of the Venetians repulsed the fire-ships; and the vagrant flames wasted themselves without injury in the sea. [78] In a nocturnal sally the Greek emperor was vanquished by Henry, brother of the count of Flanders: the advantages of number and surprise aggravated the shame of his defeat: his buckler was found on the field of battle; and the Imperial standard, [79] a divine image of the Virgin, was presented, as a trophy and a relic to the Cistercian monks, the disciples of St. Bernard. Near three months, without excepting the holy season of Lent, were consumed in skirmishes and preparations, before the Latins were ready or resolved for a general assault. The land fortifications had been found impregnable; and the Venetian pilots represented, that, on the shore of the Propontis, the anchorage was unsafe, and the ships must be driven by the current far away to the straits of the Hellespont; a prospect not unpleasing to the reluctant pilgrims, who sought every opportunity of breaking the army. From the harbor, therefore, the assault was determined by the assailants, and expected by the besieged; and the emperor had placed his scarlet pavilions on a neighboring height, to direct and animate the efforts of his troops. A fearless spectator, whose mind could entertain the ideas of pomp and pleasure, might have admired the long array of two embattled armies, which extended above half a league, the one on the ships and galleys, the other on the walls and towers raised above the ordinary level by several stages of wooden turrets. Their first fury was spent in the discharge of darts, stones, and fire, from the engines; but the

water was deep; the French were bold; the Venetians were skilful; they approached the walls; and a desperate conflict of swords, spears, and battle-axes, was fought on the trembling bridges that grappled the floating, to the stable, batteries. In more than a hundred places, the assault was urged, and the defence was sustained; till the superiority of ground and numbers finally prevailed, and the Latin trumpets sounded a retreat. On the ensuing days, the attack was renewed with equal vigor, and a similar event; and, in the night, the doge and the barons held a council, apprehensive only for the public danger: not a voice pronounced the words of escape or treaty; and each warrior, according to his temper, embraced the hope of victory, or the assurance of a glorious death. [80] By the experience of the former siege, the Greeks were instructed, but the Latins were animated; and the knowledge that Constantinople might be taken, was of more avail than the local precautions which that knowledge had inspired for its defence. In the third assault, two ships were linked together to double their strength; a strong north wind drove them on the shore; the bishops of Troyes and Soissons led the van; and the auspicious names of the pilgrim and the paradise resounded along the line. [81] The episcopal banners were displayed on the walls; a hundred marks of silver had been promised to the first adventurers; and if their reward was intercepted by death, their names have been immortalized by fame. [81 1] Four towers were scaled; three gates were burst open; and the French knights, who might tremble on the waves, felt themselves invincible on horseback on the solid ground. Shall I relate that the thousands who guarded the emperor's person fled on the approach, and before the lance, of a single warrior?

Their ignominious flight is attested by their countryman Nicetas: an army of phantoms marched with the French hero, and he was magnified to a giant in the eyes of the Greeks. [82] While the fugitives deserted their posts and cast away their arms, the Latins entered the city under the banners of their leaders: the streets and gates opened for their passage; and either design or accident kindled a third conflagration, which consumed in a few hours the measure of three of the largest cities of France. [83] In the close of evening, the barons checked their troops, and fortified their stations: They were awed by the extent and populousness of the capital, which might yet require the labor of a month, if the churches and palaces were conscious of their internal strength. But in the morning, a suppliant procession, with crosses and images, announced the submission of the Greeks, and deprecated the wrath of the conquerors: the usurper escaped through the golden gate: the palaces of Blachernæ and Boucoleon were occupied by the count of Flanders and the marquis of Montferrat; and the empire, which still bore the name of Constantine, and the title of Roman, was subverted by the arms of the Latin pilgrims. [84]

[Footnote 77: This negotiation, probable in itself, and attested by Nicetas, (p 65,) is omitted as scandalous by the delicacy of Dandolo and Villehardouin. \* Note: Wilken places it before the death of Alexius, vol. v. p. 276.--M.]

[Footnote 78: Baldwin mentions both attempts to fire the fleet, (Gest. c. 92, p. 534, 535;) Villehardouin, (No. 113--15) only describes the

first. It is remarkable that neither of these warriors observe any peculiar properties in the Greek fire.]

[Footnote 79: Ducange (No. 119) pours forth a torrent of learning on the Gonfanon Imperial. This banner of the Virgin is shown at Venice as a trophy and relic: if it be genuine the pious doge must have cheated the monks of Citeaux.]

[Footnote 80: Villehardouin (No. 126) confesses, that mult ere grant peril; and Guntherus (Hist. C. P. c. 13) affirms, that nulla spes victoriæ arridere poterat. Yet the knight despises those who thought of flight, and the monk praises his countrymen who were resolved on death.]

[Footnote 81: Baldwin, and all the writers, honor the names of these two galleys, felici auspicio.]

[Footnote 811: Pietro Alberti, a Venetian noble and Andrew d'Amboise a French knight.--M.]

[Footnote 82: With an allusion to Homer, Nicetas calls him enneorguioV, nine orgyæ, or eighteen yards high, a stature which would, indeed, have excused the terror of the Greek. On this occasion, the historian seems fonder of the marvellous than of his country, or perhaps of truth. Baldwin exclaims in the words of the psalmist, *persequitur unus ex nobis centum alienos.*]

[Footnote 83: Villehardouin (No. 130) is again ignorant of the authors of this more legitimate fire, which is ascribed by Gunther to a quidam comes Teutonicus, (c. 14.) They seem ashamed, the incendiaries!]

[Footnote 84: For the second siege and conquest of Constantinople, see Villehardouin (No. 113--132,) Baldwin's iid Epistle to Innocent III., (Gesta c. 92, p. 534--537,) with the whole reign of Mourzoufle, in Nicetas, (p 363--375;) and borrowed some hints from Dandolo (Chron. Venet. p. 323--330) and Gunther, (Hist. C. P. c. 14--18,) who added the decorations of prophecy and vision. The former produces an oracle of the Erythræan sibyl, of a great armament on the Adriatic, under a blind chief, against Byzantium, &c. Curious enough, were the prediction anterior to the fact.]

Constantinople had been taken by storm; and no restraints, except those of religion and humanity, were imposed on the conquerors by the laws of war. Boniface, marquis of Montferrat, still acted as their general; and the Greeks, who revered his name as that of their future sovereign, were heard to exclaim in a lamentable tone, "Holy marquis-king, have mercy upon us!" His prudence or compassion opened the gates of the city to the fugitives; and he exhorted the soldiers of the cross to spare the lives of their fellow-Christians. The streams of blood that flowed down the pages of Nicetas may be reduced to the slaughter of two thousand of his unresisting countrymen; [85] and the greater part was massacred, not by the strangers, but by the Latins, who had been driven from the city, and who exercised the revenge of a triumphant faction. Yet of these exiles,

some were less mindful of injuries than of benefits; and Nicetas himself was indebted for his safety to the generosity of a Venetian merchant. Pope Innocent the Third accuses the pilgrims for respecting, in their lust, neither age nor sex, nor religious profession; and bitterly laments that the deeds of darkness, fornication, adultery, and incest, were perpetrated in open day; and that noble matrons and holy nuns were polluted by the grooms and peasants of the Catholic camp. [86] It is indeed probable that the license of victory prompted and covered a multitude of sins: but it is certain, that the capital of the East contained a stock of venal or willing beauty, sufficient to satiate the desires of twenty thousand pilgrims; and female prisoners were no longer subject to the right or abuse of domestic slavery. The marquis of Montferrat was the patron of discipline and decency; the count of Flanders was the mirror of chastity: they had forbidden, under pain of death, the rape of married women, or virgins, or nuns; and the proclamation was sometimes invoked by the vanquished [87] and respected by the victors. Their cruelty and lust were moderated by the authority of the chiefs, and feelings of the soldiers; for we are no longer describing an irruption of the northern savages; and however ferocious they might still appear, time, policy, and religion had civilized the manners of the French, and still more of the Italians. But a free scope was allowed to their avarice, which was glutted, even in the holy week, by the pillage of Constantinople. The right of victory, unshackled by any promise or treaty, had confiscated the public and private wealth of the Greeks; and every hand, according to its size and strength, might lawfully execute the sentence and seize the forfeiture. A portable and

universal standard of exchange was found in the coined and uncoined metals of gold and silver, which each captor, at home or abroad, might convert into the possessions most suitable to his temper and situation. Of the treasures, which trade and luxury had accumulated, the silks, velvets, furs, the gems, spices, and rich movables, were the most precious, as they could not be procured for money in the ruder countries of Europe. An order of rapine was instituted; nor was the share of each individual abandoned to industry or chance. Under the tremendous penalties of perjury, excommunication, and death, the Latins were bound to deliver their plunder into the common stock: three churches were selected for the deposit and distribution of the spoil: a single share was allotted to a foot-soldier; two for a sergeant on horseback; four to a knight; and larger proportions according to the rank and merit of the barons and princes. For violating this sacred engagement, a knight belonging to the count of St. Paul was hanged with his shield and coat of arms round his neck; his example might render similar offenders more artful and discreet; but avarice was more powerful than fear; and it is generally believed that the secret far exceeded the acknowledged plunder. Yet the magnitude of the prize surpassed the largest scale of experience or expectation. [88] After the whole had been equally divided between the French and Venetians, fifty thousand marks were deducted to satisfy the debts of the former and the demands of the latter. The residue of the French amounted to four hundred thousand marks of silver, [89] about eight hundred thousand pounds sterling; nor can I better appreciate the value of that sum in the public and private transactions of the age, than by defining it as seven times the annual revenue of the



kingdom of England. [90]

[Footnote 85: *Ceciderunt tamen eâ die civium quasi duo millia, &c.*, (Gunther, c. 18.) Arithmetic is an excellent touchstone to try the amplifications of passion and rhetoric.]

[Footnote 86: *Quidam* (says Innocent III., *Gesta*, c. 94, p. 538) *nec religioni, nec ætati, nec sexui pepercerunt: sed fornicationes, adulteria, et incestus in oculis omnium exercentes, non solûm maritatas et viduas, sed et matronas et virgines Deoque dicatas, exposuerunt spurcitiis garcionum.* Villehardouin takes no notice of these common incidents.]

[Footnote 87: Nicetas saved, and afterwards married, a noble virgin, (p. 380,) whom a soldier, *eti martusi polloiV onhdon epibrimwmenoV*, had almost violated in spite of the *entolai, entalmata eu gegonotwn.*]

[Footnote 88: Of the general mass of wealth, Gunther observes, *ut de pauperibus et advenis cives ditissimi redderentur*, (*Hist. C. P. c. 18*; Villehardouin, (No. 132,) *that since the creation, ne fu tant gaaignié dans une ville*; Baldwin, (*Gesta*, c. 92,) *ut tantum tota non videatur possidere Latinitas.*]

[Footnote 89: Villehardouin, No. 133--135. Instead of 400,000, there is a various reading of 500,000. The Venetians had offered to take the whole booty, and to give 400 marks to each knight, 200 to each priest

and horseman, and 100 to each foot-soldier: they would have been great losers, (Le Beau, Hist. du. Bas Empire tom. xx. p. 506. I know not from whence.)]

[Footnote 90: At the council of Lyons (A.D. 1245) the English ambassadors stated the revenue of the crown as below that of the foreign clergy, which amounted to 60,000 marks a year, (Matthew Paris, p. 451 Hume's Hist. of England, vol. ii. p. 170.)]

In this great revolution we enjoy the singular felicity of comparing the narratives of Villehardouin and Nicetas, the opposite feelings of the marshal of Champagne and the Byzantine senator. [91] At the first view it should seem that the wealth of Constantinople was only transferred from one nation to another; and that the loss and sorrow of the Greeks is exactly balanced by the joy and advantage of the Latins. But in the miserable account of war, the gain is never equivalent to the loss, the pleasure to the pain; the smiles of the Latins were transient and fallacious; the Greeks forever wept over the ruins of their country; and their real calamities were aggravated by sacrilege and mockery. What benefits accrued to the conquerors from the three fires which annihilated so vast a portion of the buildings and riches of the city? What a stock of such things, as could neither be used nor transported, was maliciously or wantonly destroyed! How much treasure was idly wasted in gaming, debauchery, and riot! And what precious objects were bartered for a vile price by the impatience or ignorance of the soldiers, whose reward was stolen by the base industry of the last of the Greeks!

These alone, who had nothing to lose, might derive some profit from the revolution; but the misery of the upper ranks of society is strongly painted in the personal adventures of Nicetas himself His stately palace had been reduced to ashes in the second conflagration; and the senator, with his family and friends, found an obscure shelter in another house which he possessed near the church of St. Sophia. It was the door of this mean habitation that his friend, the Venetian merchant, guarded in the disguise of a soldier, till Nicetas could save, by a precipitate flight, the relics of his fortune and the chastity of his daughter. In a cold, wintry season, these fugitives, nursed in the lap of prosperity, departed on foot; his wife was with child; the desertion of their slaves compelled them to carry their baggage on their own shoulders; and their women, whom they placed in the centre, were exhorted to conceal their beauty with dirt, instead of adorning it with paint and jewels Every step was exposed to insult and danger: the threats of the strangers were less painful than the taunts of the plebeians, with whom they were now levelled; nor did the exiles breathe in safety till their mournful pilgrimage was concluded at Selymbria, above forty miles from the capital. On the way they overtook the patriarch, without attendance and almost without apparel, riding on an ass, and reduced to a state of apostolical poverty, which, had it been voluntary, might perhaps have been meritorious. In the mean while, his desolate churches were profaned by the licentiousness and party zeal of the Latins. After stripping the gems and pearls, they converted the chalices into drinking-cups; their tables, on which they gamed and feasted, were covered with the pictures of Christ and the saints; and they trampled under foot the most

venerable objects of the Christian worship. In the cathedral of St. Sophia, the ample veil of the sanctuary was rent asunder for the sake of the golden fringe; and the altar, a monument of art and riches, was broken in pieces and shared among the captors. Their mules and horses were laden with the wrought silver and gilt carvings, which they tore down from the doors and pulpit; and if the beasts stumbled under the burden, they were stabbed by their impatient drivers, and the holy pavement streamed with their impure blood. A prostitute was seated on the throne of the patriarch; and that daughter of Belial, as she is styled, sung and danced in the church, to ridicule the hymns and processions of the Orientals. Nor were the repositories of the royal dead secure from violation: in the church of the Apostles, the tombs of the emperors were rifled; and it is said, that after six centuries the corpse of Justinian was found without any signs of decay or putrefaction. In the streets, the French and Flemings clothed themselves and their horses in painted robes and flowing head-dresses of linen; and the coarse intemperance of their feasts [92] insulted the splendid sobriety of the East. To expose the arms of a people of scribes and scholars, they affected to display a pen, an inkhorn, and a sheet of paper, without discerning that the instruments of science and valor were alike feeble and useless in the hands of the modern Greeks.

[Footnote 91: The disorders of the sack of Constantinople, and his own adventures, are feelingly described by Nicetas, p. 367--369, and in the Status Urb. C. P. p. 375--384. His complaints, even of sacrilege, are justified by Innocent III., (Gesta, c. 92;) but Villehardouin does not

betray a symptom of pity or remorse.]

[Footnote 92: If I rightly apprehend the Greek of Nicetas's receipts, their favorite dishes were boiled buttocks of beef, salt pork and peas, and soup made of garlic and sharp or sour herbs, (p. 382.)]

Their reputation and their language encouraged them, however, to despise the ignorance and to overlook the progress of the Latins. [93] In the love of the arts, the national difference was still more obvious and real; the Greeks preserved with reverence the works of their ancestors, which they could not imitate; and, in the destruction of the statues of Constantinople, we are provoked to join in the complaints and invectives of the Byzantine historian. [94] We have seen how the rising city was adorned by the vanity and despotism of the Imperial founder: in the ruins of paganism, some gods and heroes were saved from the axe of superstition; and the forum and hippodrome were dignified with the relics of a better age. Several of these are described by Nicetas, [95] in a florid and affected style; and from his descriptions I shall select some interesting particulars. 1. The victorious charioteers were cast in bronze, at their own or the public charge, and fitly placed in the hippodrome: they stood aloft in their chariots, wheeling round the goal: the spectators could admire their attitude, and judge of the resemblance; and of these figures, the most perfect might have been transported from the Olympic stadium. 2. The sphinx, river-horse, and crocodile, denote the climate and manufacture of Egypt and the spoils of that ancient province. 3. The she-wolf suckling Romulus and Remus,

a subject alike pleasing to the old and the new Romans, but which could really be treated before the decline of the Greek sculpture.

4. An eagle holding and tearing a serpent in his talons, a domestic monument of the Byzantines, which they ascribed, not to a human artist, but to the magic power of the philosopher Apollonius, who, by this talisman, delivered the city from such venomous reptiles. 5. An ass and his driver, which were erected by Augustus in his colony of Nicopolis, to commemorate a verbal omen of the victory of Actium. 6. An equestrian statue which passed, in the vulgar opinion, for Joshua, the Jewish conqueror, stretching out his hand to stop the course of the descending sun. A more classical tradition recognized the figures of Bellerophon and Pegasus; and the free attitude of the steed seemed to mark that he trod on air, rather than on the earth. 7. A square and lofty obelisk of brass; the sides were embossed with a variety of picturesque and rural scenes, birds singing; rustics laboring, or playing on their pipes; sheep bleating; lambs skipping; the sea, and a scene of fish and fishing; little naked cupids laughing, playing, and pelting each other with apples; and, on the summit, a female figure, turning with the slightest breath, and thence denominated the wind's attendant. 8. The Phrygian shepherd presenting to Venus the prize of beauty, the apple of discord. 9. The incomparable statue of Helen, which is delineated by Nicetas in the words of admiration and love: her well-turned feet, snowy arms, rosy lips, bewitching smiles, swimming eyes, arched eyebrows, the harmony of her shape, the lightness of her drapery, and her flowing locks that waved in the wind; a beauty that might have moved her Barbarian destroyers to pity and remorse. 10. The

manly or divine form of Hercules, [96] as he was restored to life by the masterhand of Lysippus; of such magnitude, that his thumb was equal to his waist, his leg to the stature, of a common man: [97] his chest ample, his shoulders broad, his limbs strong and muscular, his hair curled, his aspect commanding. Without his bow, or quiver, or club, his lion's skin carelessly thrown over him, he was seated on an osier basket, his right leg and arm stretched to the utmost, his left knee bent, and supporting his elbow, his head reclining on his left hand, his countenance indignant and pensive. 11. A colossal statue of Juno, which had once adorned her temple of Samos, the enormous head by four yoke of oxen was laboriously drawn to the palace. 12. Another colossus, of Pallas or Minerva, thirty feet in height, and representing with admirable spirit the attributes and character of the martial maid. Before we accuse the Latins, it is just to remark, that this Pallas was destroyed after the first siege, by the fear and superstition of the Greeks themselves. [98] The other statues of brass which I have enumerated were broken and melted by the unfeeling avarice of the crusaders: the cost and labor were consumed in a moment; the soul of genius evaporated in smoke; and the remnant of base metal was coined into money for the payment of the troops. Bronze is not the most durable of monuments: from the marble forms of Phidias and Praxiteles, the Latins might turn aside with stupid contempt; [99] but unless they were crushed by some accidental injury, those useless stones stood secure on their pedestals. [100] The most enlightened of the strangers, above the gross and sensual pursuits of their countrymen, more piously exercised the right of conquest in the search and seizure of the relics of the saints. [101] Immense was the

supply of heads and bones, crosses and images, that were scattered by this revolution over the churches of Europe; and such was the increase of pilgrimage and oblation, that no branch, perhaps, of more lucrative plunder was imported from the East. [102] Of the writings of antiquity, many that still existed in the twelfth century, are now lost. But the pilgrims were not solicitous to save or transport the volumes of an unknown tongue: the perishable substance of paper or parchment can only be preserved by the multiplicity of copies; the literature of the Greeks had almost centred in the metropolis; and, without computing the extent of our loss, we may drop a tear over the libraries that have perished in the triple fire of Constantinople. [103]

[Footnote 93: Nicetas uses very harsh expressions, *par agrammatoiv BarbaroiV, kai teleon analfabhtoiV*, (Fragment, apud Fabric. Bibliot. Græc. tom. vi. p. 414.) This reproach, it is true, applies most strongly to their ignorance of Greek and of Homer. In their own language, the Latins of the xiith and xiiiith centuries were not destitute of literature. See Harris's *Philological Inquiries*, p. iii. c. 9, 10, 11.]

[Footnote 94: Nicetas was of Chonæ in Phrygia, (the old Colossæ of St. Paul:) he raised himself to the honors of senator, judge of the veil, and great logothete; beheld the fall of the empire, retired to Nice, and composed an elaborate history from the death of Alexius Comnenus to the reign of Henry.]

[Footnote 95: A manuscript of Nicetas in the Bodleian library contains



this curious fragment on the statues of Constantinople, which fraud, or shame, or rather carelessness, has dropped in the common editions. It is published by Fabricius, (Bibliot. Græc. tom. vi. p. 405--416,) and immoderately praised by the late ingenious Mr. Harris of Salisbury, (Philological Inquiries, p. iii. c. 5, p. 301--312.)]

[Footnote 96: To illustrate the statue of Hercules, Mr. Harris quotes a Greek epigram, and engraves a beautiful gem, which does not, however, copy the attitude of the statue: in the latter, Hercules had not his club, and his right leg and arm were extended.]

[Footnote 97: I transcribe these proportions, which appear to me inconsistent with each other; and may possibly show, that the boasted taste of Nicetas was no more than affectation and vanity.]

[Footnote 98: Nicetas in Isaaco Angelo et Alexio, c. 3, p. 359. The Latin editor very properly observes, that the historian, in his bombast style, produces ex pulice elephantem.]

[Footnote 99: In two passages of Nicetas (edit. Paris, p. 360. Fabric. p. 408) the Latins are branded with the lively reproach of oi tou kalou anerastoi barbaroi, and their avarice of brass is clearly expressed. Yet the Venetians had the merit of removing four bronze horses from Constantinople to the place of St. Mark, (Sanuto, Vite del Dogi, in Muratori, Script. Rerum Italicarum, tom. xxii. p. 534.)]

[Footnote 100: Winckelman, Hist. de l'Art. tom. iii. p. 269, 270.]

[Footnote 101: See the pious robbery of the abbot Martin, who transferred a rich cargo to his monastery of Paris, diocese of Basil, (Gunther, Hist. C. P. c. 19, 23, 24.) Yet in secreting this booty, the saint incurred an excommunication, and perhaps broke his oath. (Compare Wilken vol. v. p. 308.--M.)]

[Footnote 102: Fleury, Hist. Eccles tom. xvi. p. 139--145.]

[Footnote 103: I shall conclude this chapter with the notice of a modern history, which illustrates the taking of Constantinople by the Latins; but which has fallen somewhat late into my hands. Paolo Ramusio, the son of the compiler of Voyages, was directed by the senate of Venice to write the history of the conquest: and this order, which he received in his youth, he executed in a mature age, by an elegant Latin work, *de Bello Constantinopolitano et Imperatoribus Comnenis per Gallos et Venetos restitutis*, (Venet. 1635, in folio.) Ramusio, or Rhamnusius, transcribes and translates, *sequitur ad unguem*, a MS. of Villehardouin, which he possessed; but he enriches his narrative with Greek and Latin materials, and we are indebted to him for a correct state of the fleet, the names of the fifty Venetian nobles who commanded the galleys of the republic, and the patriot opposition of Pantaleon Barbus to the choice of the doge for emperor.]