

Chapter LXIII: Civil Wars And The Ruin Of The Greek Empire.--Part I.

Civil Wars, And Ruin Of The Greek Empire.--Reigns Of
Andronicus, The Elder And Younger, And John Palæologus.--
Regency, Revolt, Reign, And Abdication Of John Cantacuzene.--
Establishment Of A Genoese Colony At Pera Or Galata.--Their
Wars With The Empire And City Of Constantinople.

The long reign of Andronicus [1] the elder is chiefly memorable by the disputes of the Greek church, the invasion of the Catalans, and the rise of the Ottoman power. He is celebrated as the most learned and virtuous prince of the age; but such virtue, and such learning, contributed neither to the perfection of the individual, nor to the happiness of society. A slave of the most abject superstition, he was surrounded on all sides by visible and invisible enemies; nor were the flames of hell less dreadful to his fancy, than those of a Catalan or Turkish war. Under the reign of the Palæologi, the choice of the patriarch was the most important business of the state; the heads of the Greek church were ambitious and fanatic monks; and their vices or virtues, their learning or ignorance, were equally mischievous or contemptible. By his intemperate discipline, the patriarch Athanasius [2] excited the hatred of the clergy and people: he was heard to declare, that the sinner should swallow the last dregs of the cup of penance; and the foolish tale was propagated of his punishing a sacrilegious ass that had tasted the lettuce of a convent garden. Driven from the throne by the universal clamor, Athanasius composed before his retreat two papers of a very

opposite cast. His public testament was in the tone of charity and resignation; the private codicil breathed the direst anathemas against the authors of his disgrace, whom he excluded forever from the communion of the holy trinity, the angels, and the saints. This last paper he enclosed in an earthen pot, which was placed, by his order, on the top of one of the pillars, in the dome of St. Sophia, in the distant hope of discovery and revenge. At the end of four years, some youths, climbing by a ladder in search of pigeons' nests, detected the fatal secret; and, as Andronicus felt himself touched and bound by the excommunication, he trembled on the brink of the abyss which had been so treacherously dug under his feet. A synod of bishops was instantly convened to debate this important question: the rashness of these clandestine anathemas was generally condemned; but as the knot could be untied only by the same hand, as that hand was now deprived of the crosier, it appeared that this posthumous decree was irrevocable by any earthly power. Some faint testimonies of repentance and pardon were extorted from the author of the mischief; but the conscience of the emperor was still wounded, and he desired, with no less ardor than Athanasius himself, the restoration of a patriarch, by whom alone he could be healed. At the dead of night, a monk rudely knocked at the door of the royal bed-chamber, announcing a revelation of plague and famine, of inundations and earthquakes. Andronicus started from his bed, and spent the night in prayer, till he felt, or thought that he felt, a slight motion of the earth. The emperor on foot led the bishops and monks to the cell of Athanasius; and, after a proper resistance, the saint, from whom this message had been sent, consented to absolve the prince, and govern the church of

Constantinople. Untamed by disgrace, and hardened by solitude, the shepherd was again odious to the flock, and his enemies contrived a singular, and as it proved, a successful, mode of revenge. In the night, they stole away the footstool or foot-cloth of his throne, which they secretly replaced with the decoration of a satirical picture. The emperor was painted with a bridle in his mouth, and Athanasius leading the tractable beast to the feet of Christ. The authors of the libel were detected and punished; but as their lives had been spared, the Christian priest in sullen indignation retired to his cell; and the eyes of Andronicus, which had been opened for a moment, were again closed by his successor.

[Footnote 1: Andronicus himself will justify our freedom in the invective, (Nicephorus Gregoras, l. i. c. i.,) which he pronounced against historic falsehood. It is true, that his censure is more pointedly urged against calumny than against adulation.]

[Footnote 2: For the anathema in the pigeon's nest, see Pachymer, (l. ix. c. 24,) who relates the general history of Athanasius, (l. viii. c. 13--16, 20, 24, l. x. c. 27--29, 31--36, l. xi. c. 1--3, 5, 6, l. xiii. c. 8, 10, 23, 35,) and is followed by Nicephorus Gregoras, (l. vi. c. 5, 7, l. vii. c. 1, 9,) who includes the second retreat of this second Chrysostom.]

If this transaction be one of the most curious and important of a reign of fifty years, I cannot at least accuse the brevity of my materials,

since I reduce into some few pages the enormous folios of Pachymer, [3] Cantacuzene, [4] and Nicephorus Gregoras, [5] who have composed the prolix and languid story of the times. The name and situation of the emperor John Cantacuzene might inspire the most lively curiosity. His memorials of forty years extend from the revolt of the younger Andronicus to his own abdication of the empire; and it is observed, that, like Moses and Cæsar, he was the principal actor in the scenes which he describes. But in this eloquent work we should vainly seek the sincerity of a hero or a penitent. Retired in a cloister from the vices and passions of the world, he presents not a confession, but an apology, of the life of an ambitious statesman. Instead of unfolding the true counsels and characters of men, he displays the smooth and specious surface of events, highly varnished with his own praises and those of his friends. Their motives are always pure; their ends always legitimate: they conspire and rebel without any views of interest; and the violence which they inflict or suffer is celebrated as the spontaneous effect of reason and virtue.

[Footnote 3: Pachymer, in seven books, 377 folio pages, describes the first twenty-six years of Andronicus the Elder; and marks the date of his composition by the current news or lie of the day, (A.D. 1308.) Either death or disgust prevented him from resuming the pen.]

[Footnote 4: After an interval of twelve years, from the conclusion of Pachymer, Cantacuzenus takes up the pen; and his first book (c. 1--59, p. 9--150) relates the civil war, and the eight last years of the elder

Andronicus. The ingenious comparison with Moses and Cæsar is fancied by his French translator, the president Cousin.]

[Footnote 5: Nicephorus Gregoras more briefly includes the entire life and reign of Andronicus the elder, (l. vi. c. 1, p. 96--291.) This is the part of which Cantacuzene complains as a false and malicious representation of his conduct.]

After the example of the first of the Palæologi, the elder Andronicus associated his son Michael to the honors of the purple; and from the age of eighteen to his premature death, that prince was acknowledged, above twenty-five years, as the second emperor of the Greeks. [6] At the head of an army, he excited neither the fears of the enemy, nor the jealousy of the court; his modesty and patience were never tempted to compute the years of his father; nor was that father compelled to repent of his liberality either by the virtues or vices of his son. The son of Michael was named Andronicus from his grandfather, to whose early favor he was introduced by that nominal resemblance. The blossoms of wit and beauty increased the fondness of the elder Andronicus; and, with the common vanity of age, he expected to realize in the second, the hope which had been disappointed in the first, generation. The boy was educated in the palace as an heir and a favorite; and in the oaths and acclamations of the people, the august triad was formed by the names of the father, the son, and the grandson. But the younger Andronicus was speedily corrupted by his infant greatness, while he beheld with puerile impatience the double obstacle that hung, and might long hang, over his

rising ambition. It was not to acquire fame, or to diffuse happiness, that he so eagerly aspired: wealth and impunity were in his eyes the most precious attributes of a monarch; and his first indiscreet demand was the sovereignty of some rich and fertile island, where he might lead a life of independence and pleasure. The emperor was offended by the loud and frequent intemperance which disturbed his capital; the sums which his parsimony denied were supplied by the Genoese usurers of Pera; and the oppressive debt, which consolidated the interest of a faction, could be discharged only by a revolution. A beautiful female, a matron in rank, a prostitute in manners, had instructed the younger Andronicus in the rudiments of love; but he had reason to suspect the nocturnal visits of a rival; and a stranger passing through the street was pierced by the arrows of his guards, who were placed in ambush at her door. That stranger was his brother, Prince Manuel, who languished and died of his wound; and the emperor Michael, their common father, whose health was in a declining state, expired on the eighth day, lamenting the loss of both his children. [7] However guiltless in his intention, the younger Andronicus might impute a brother's and a father's death to the consequence of his own vices; and deep was the sigh of thinking and feeling men, when they perceived, instead of sorrow and repentance, his ill-dissembled joy on the removal of two odious competitors. By these melancholy events, and the increase of his disorders, the mind of the elder emperor was gradually alienated; and, after many fruitless reproofs, he transferred on another grandson [8] his hopes and affection. The change was announced by the new oath of allegiance to the reigning sovereign, and the person whom he should appoint for his successor;

and the acknowledged heir, after a repetition of insults and complaints, was exposed to the indignity of a public trial. Before the sentence, which would probably have condemned him to a dungeon or a cell, the emperor was informed that the palace courts were filled with the armed followers of his grandson; the judgment was softened to a treaty of reconciliation; and the triumphant escape of the prince encouraged the ardor of the younger faction.

[Footnote 6: He was crowned May 21st, 1295, and died October 12th, 1320, (Ducange, *Fam. Byz.* p. 239.) His brother Theodore, by a second marriage, inherited the marquisate of Montferrat, apostatized to the religion and manners of the Latins, (oti kai gnwmh kai pistei kai schkati, kai geneiwn koura kai pasin eqesin DatinoV hn akraijnhV. *Nic. Greg.* l. ix. c. 1,) and founded a dynasty of Italian princes, which was extinguished A.D. 1533, (Ducange, *Fam. Byz.* p. 249--253.)]

[Footnote 7: We are indebted to Nicephorus Gregoras (l. viii. c. 1) for the knowledge of this tragic adventure; while Cantacuzene more discreetly conceals the vices of Andronicus the Younger, of which he was the witness and perhaps the associate, (l. i. c. 1, &c.)]

[Footnote 8: His destined heir was Michael Catharus, the bastard of Constantine his second son. In this project of excluding his grandson Andronicus, Nicephorus Gregoras (l. viii. c. 3) agrees with Cantacuzene, (l. i. c. 1, 2.)]

Yet the capital, the clergy, and the senate, adhered to the person, or at least to the government, of the old emperor; and it was only in the provinces, by flight, and revolt, and foreign succor, that the malecontents could hope to vindicate their cause and subvert his throne. The soul of the enterprise was the great domestic John Cantacuzene; the sally from Constantinople is the first date of his actions and memorials; and if his own pen be most descriptive of his patriotism, an unfriendly historian has not refused to celebrate the zeal and ability which he displayed in the service of the young emperor. [89] That prince escaped from the capital under the pretence of hunting; erected his standard at Adrianople; and, in a few days, assembled fifty thousand horse and foot, whom neither honor nor duty could have armed against the Barbarians. Such a force might have saved or commanded the empire; but their counsels were discordant, their motions were slow and doubtful, and their progress was checked by intrigue and negotiation. The quarrel of the two Andronici was protracted, and suspended, and renewed, during a ruinous period of seven years. In the first treaty, the relics of the Greek empire were divided: Constantinople, Thessalonica, and the islands, were left to the elder, while the younger acquired the sovereignty of the greatest part of Thrace, from Philippi to the Byzantine limit. By the second treaty, he stipulated the payment of his troops, his immediate coronation, and an adequate share of the power and revenue of the state. The third civil war was terminated by the surprise of Constantinople, the final retreat of the old emperor, and the sole reign of his victorious grandson. The reasons of this delay may be found in the characters of the men and of the times. When the heir of the

monarchy first pleaded his wrongs and his apprehensions, he was heard with pity and applause: and his adherents repeated on all sides the inconsistent promise, that he would increase the pay of the soldiers and alleviate the burdens of the people. The grievances of forty years were mingled in his revolt; and the rising generation was fatigued by the endless prospect of a reign, whose favorites and maxims were of other times. The youth of Andronicus had been without spirit, his age was without reverence: his taxes produced an unusual revenue of five hundred thousand pounds; yet the richest of the sovereigns of Christendom was incapable of maintaining three thousand horse and twenty galleys, to resist the destructive progress of the Turks. [9] "How different," said the younger Andronicus, "is my situation from that of the son of Philip! Alexander might complain, that his father would leave him nothing to conquer: alas! my grandsire will leave me nothing to lose." But the Greeks were soon admonished, that the public disorders could not be healed by a civil war; and that their young favorite was not destined to be the savior of a falling empire. On the first repulse, his party was broken by his own levity, their intestine discord, and the intrigues of the ancient court, which tempted each malecontent to desert or betray the cause of the rebellion. Andronicus the younger was touched with remorse, or fatigued with business, or deceived by negotiation: pleasure rather than power was his aim; and the license of maintaining a thousand hounds, a thousand hawks, and a thousand huntsmen, was sufficient to sully his fame and disarm his ambition.

[Footnote 89: The conduct of Cantacuzene, by his own showing, was

inexplicable. He was unwilling to dethrone the old emperor, and dissuaded the immediate march on Constantinople. The young Andronicus, he says, entered into his views, and wrote to warn the emperor of his danger when the march was determined. Cantacuzenus, in *Nov. Byz. Hist. Collect. vol. i. p. 104, &c.--M.*]

[Footnote 9: See Nicephorus Gregoras, l. viii. c. 6. The younger Andronicus complained, that in four years and four months a sum of 350,000 byzants of gold was due to him for the expenses of his household, (Cantacuzen l. i. c. 48.) Yet he would have remitted the debt, if he might have been allowed to squeeze the farmers of the revenue.]

Let us now survey the catastrophe of this busy plot, and the final situation of the principal actors. [10] The age of Andronicus was consumed in civil discord; and, amidst the events of war and treaty, his power and reputation continually decayed, till the fatal night in which the gates of the city and palace were opened without resistance to his grandson. His principal commander scorned the repeated warnings of danger; and retiring to rest in the vain security of ignorance, abandoned the feeble monarch, with some priests and pages, to the terrors of a sleepless night. These terrors were quickly realized by the hostile shouts, which proclaimed the titles and victory of Andronicus the younger; and the aged emperor, falling prostrate before an image of the Virgin, despatched a suppliant message to resign the sceptre, and to obtain his life at the hands of the conqueror. The answer of his

grandson was decent and pious; at the prayer of his friends, the younger Andronicus assumed the sole administration; but the elder still enjoyed the name and preeminence of the first emperor, the use of the great palace, and a pension of twenty-four thousand pieces of gold, one half of which was assigned on the royal treasury, and the other on the fishery of Constantinople. But his impotence was soon exposed to contempt and oblivion; the vast silence of the palace was disturbed only by the cattle and poultry of the neighborhood, [101] which roved with impunity through the solitary courts; and a reduced allowance of ten thousand pieces of gold [11] was all that he could ask, and more than he could hope. His calamities were embittered by the gradual extinction of sight; his confinement was rendered each day more rigorous; and during the absence and sickness of his grandson, his inhuman keepers, by the threats of instant death, compelled him to exchange the purple for the monastic habit and profession. The monk Antony had renounced the pomp of the world; yet he had occasion for a coarse fur in the winter season, and as wine was forbidden by his confessor, and water by his physician, the sherbet of Egypt was his common drink. It was not without difficulty that the late emperor could procure three or four pieces to satisfy these simple wants; and if he bestowed the gold to relieve the more painful distress of a friend, the sacrifice is of some weight in the scale of humanity and religion. Four years after his abdication, Andronicus or Antony expired in a cell, in the seventy-fourth year of his age: and the last strain of adulation could only promise a more splendid crown of glory in heaven than he had enjoyed upon earth. [12] [121]

[Footnote 10: I follow the chronology of Nicephorus Gregoras, who is remarkably exact. It is proved that Cantacuzene has mistaken the dates of his own actions, or rather that his text has been corrupted by ignorant transcribers.]

[Footnote 101: And the washerwomen, according to Nic. Gregoras, p. 431.--M.]

[Footnote 11: I have endeavored to reconcile the 24,000 pieces of Cantacuzene (l. ii. c. 1) with the 10,000 of Nicephorus Gregoras, (l. ix. c. 2;) the one of whom wished to soften, the other to magnify, the hardships of the old emperor.]

[Footnote 12: See Nicephorus Gregoras, (l. ix. 6, 7, 8, 10, 14, l. x. c. 1.) The historian had tasted of the prosperity, and shared the retreat, of his benefactor; and that friendship which "waits or to the scaffold or the cell," should not lightly be accused as "a hireling, a prostitute to praise." * Note: But it may be accused of unparalleled absurdity. He compares the extinction of the feeble old man to that of the sun: his coffin is to be floated like Noah's ark by a deluge of tears.--M.]

[Footnote 121: Prodigies (according to Nic. Gregoras, p. 460) announced the departure of the old and imbecile Imperial Monk from his earthly prison.--M.]

Nor was the reign of the younger, more glorious or fortunate than that

of the elder, Andronicus. [13] He gathered the fruits of ambition; but the taste was transient and bitter: in the supreme station he lost the remains of his early popularity; and the defects of his character became still more conspicuous to the world. The public reproach urged him to march in person against the Turks; nor did his courage fail in the hour of trial; but a defeat and a wound were the only trophies of his expedition in Asia, which confirmed the establishment of the Ottoman monarchy. The abuses of the civil government attained their full maturity and perfection: his neglect of forms, and the confusion of national dresses, are deplored by the Greeks as the fatal symptoms of the decay of the empire. Andronicus was old before his time; the intemperance of youth had accelerated the infirmities of age; and after being rescued from a dangerous malady by nature, or physic, or the Virgin, he was snatched away before he had accomplished his forty-fifth year. He was twice married; and, as the progress of the Latins in arms and arts had softened the prejudices of the Byzantine court, his two wives were chosen in the princely houses of Germany and Italy. The first, Agnes at home, Irene in Greece, was daughter of the duke of Brunswick. Her father [14] was a petty lord [15] in the poor and savage regions of the north of Germany: [16] yet he derived some revenue from his silver mines; [17] and his family is celebrated by the Greeks as the most ancient and noble of the Teutonic name. [18] After the death of this childish princess, Andronicus sought in marriage Jane, the sister of the count of Savoy; [19] and his suit was preferred to that of the French king. [20] The count respected in his sister the superior majesty of a Roman empress: her retinue was composed of knights and ladies; she

was regenerated and crowned in St. Sophia, under the more orthodox appellation of Anne; and, at the nuptial feast, the Greeks and Italians vied with each other in the martial exercises of tilts and tournaments.

[Footnote 13: The sole reign of Andronicus the younger is described by Cantacuzene (l. ii. c. 1--40, p. 191--339) and Nicephorus Gregoras, (l. ix c. 7--l. xi. c. 11, p. 262--361.)]

[Footnote 14: Agnes, or Irene, was the daughter of Duke Henry the Wonderful, the chief of the house of Brunswick, and the fourth in descent from the famous Henry the Lion, duke of Saxony and Bavaria, and conqueror of the Sclavi on the Baltic coast. Her brother Henry was surnamed the Greek, from his two journeys into the East: but these journeys were subsequent to his sister's marriage; and I am ignorant how Agnes was discovered in the heart of Germany, and recommended to the Byzantine court. (Rimius, Memoirs of the House of Brunswick, p. 126--137.)]

[Footnote 15: Henry the Wonderful was the founder of the branch of Grubenhagen, extinct in the year 1596, (Rimius, p. 287.) He resided in the castle of Wolfenbittel, and possessed no more than a sixth part of the allodial estates of Brunswick and Luneburgh, which the Guelph family had saved from the confiscation of their great fiefs. The frequent partitions among brothers had almost ruined the princely houses of Germany, till that just, but pernicious, law was slowly superseded by the right of primogeniture. The principality of Grubenhagen, one of

the last remains of the Hercynian forest, is a woody, mountainous, and barren tract, (Busching's Geography, vol. vi. p. 270--286, English translation.)]

[Footnote 16: The royal author of the Memoirs of Brandenburgh will teach us, how justly, in a much later period, the north of Germany deserved the epithets of poor and barbarous. (Essai sur les Murs, &c.) In the year 1306, in the woods of Luneburgh, some wild people of the Vened race were allowed to bury alive their infirm and useless parents. (Rimius, p. 136.)]

[Footnote 17: The assertion of Tacitus, that Germany was destitute of the precious metals, must be taken, even in his own time, with some limitation, (Germania, c. 5. Annal. xi. 20.) According to Spener, (Hist. Germaniæ Pragmatica, tom. i. p. 351,) Argentifodin in Hercyniis montibus, imperante Othone magno (A.D. 968) primum apertæ, largam etiam opes augendi dederunt copiam: but Rimius (p. 258, 259) defers till the year 1016 the discovery of the silver mines of Grubenhagen, or the Upper Hartz, which were productive in the beginning of the xivth century, and which still yield a considerable revenue to the house of Brunswick.]

[Footnote 18: Cantacuzene has given a most honorable testimony, hn d' ek Germanvn auth Jugathr doukoV nti Mprouzouhk, (the modern Greeks employ the nt for the d, and the mp for the b, and the whole will read in the Italian idiom di Brunzuic,) tou par autoiV epijanestatou, kai?iamprothti pantaV touV omojulouV uperballontoV. The praise is just in itself, and

pleasing to an English ear.]

[Footnote 19: Anne, or Jane, was one of the four daughters of Amedée the Great, by a second marriage, and half-sister of his successor Edward count of Savoy. (Anderson's Tables, p. 650. See Cantacuzene, l. i. c. 40--42.)]

[Footnote 20: That king, if the fact be true, must have been Charles the Fair who in five years (1321--1326) was married to three wives, (Anderson, p. 628.) Anne of Savoy arrived at Constantinople in February, 1326.]

The empress Anne of Savoy survived her husband: their son, John Palæologus, was left an orphan and an emperor in the ninth year of his age; and his weakness was protected by the first and most deserving of the Greeks. The long and cordial friendship of his father for John Cantacuzene is alike honorable to the prince and the subject. It had been formed amidst the pleasures of their youth: their families were almost equally noble; [21] and the recent lustre of the purple was amply compensated by the energy of a private education. We have seen that the young emperor was saved by Cantacuzene from the power of his grandfather; and, after six years of civil war, the same favorite brought him back in triumph to the palace of Constantinople. Under the reign of Andronicus the younger, the great domestic ruled the emperor and the empire; and it was by his valor and conduct that the Isle of Lesbos and the principality of Ætolia were restored to their ancient

allegiance. His enemies confess, that, among the public robbers, Cantacuzene alone was moderate and abstemious; and the free and voluntary account which he produces of his own wealth [22] may sustain the presumption that he was devolved by inheritance, and not accumulated by rapine. He does not indeed specify the value of his money, plate, and jewels; yet, after a voluntary gift of two hundred vases of silver, after much had been secreted by his friends and plundered by his foes, his forfeit treasures were sufficient for the equipment of a fleet of seventy galleys. He does not measure the size and number of his estates; but his granaries were heaped with an incredible store of wheat and barley; and the labor of a thousand yoke of oxen might cultivate, according to the practice of antiquity, about sixty-two thousand five hundred acres of arable land. [23] His pastures were stocked with two thousand five hundred brood mares, two hundred camels, three hundred mules, five hundred asses, five thousand horned cattle, fifty thousand hogs, and seventy thousand sheep: [24] a precious record of rural opulence, in the last period of the empire, and in a land, most probably in Thrace, so repeatedly wasted by foreign and domestic hostility. The favor of Cantacuzene was above his fortune. In the moments of familiarity, in the hour of sickness, the emperor was desirous to level the distance between them and pressed his friend to accept the diadem and purple. The virtue of the great domestic, which is attested by his own pen, resisted the dangerous proposal; but the last testament of Andronicus the younger named him the guardian of his son, and the regent of the empire.

[Footnote 21: The noble race of the Cantacuzeni (illustrious from the xith century in the Byzantine annals) was drawn from the Paladins of France, the heroes of those romances which, in the xiiiith century, were translated and read by the Greeks, (Ducange, Fam. Byzant. p. 258.)]

[Footnote 22: See Cantacuzene, (l. iii. c. 24, 30, 36.)]

[Footnote 23: Saserna, in Gaul, and Columella, in Italy or Spain, allow two yoke of oxen, two drivers, and six laborers, for two hundred jugera (125 English acres) of arable land, and three more men must be added if there be much underwood, (Columella de Re Rustica, l. ii. c. 13, p 441, edit. Gesner.)]

[Footnote 24: In this enumeration (l. iii. c. 30) the French translation of the president Cousin is blotted with three palpable and essential errors. 1. He omits the 1000 yoke of working oxen. 2. He interprets the pentakosiai proV diaciliaiV, by the number of fifteen hundred. * 3. He confounds myriads with chiliads, and gives Cantacuzene no more than 5000 hogs. Put not your trust in translations! Note: * There seems to be another reading, ciliaiV. Niebuhr's edit. in loc.--M.]

Had the regent found a suitable return of obedience and gratitude, perhaps he would have acted with pure and zealous fidelity in the service of his pupil. [25] A guard of five hundred soldiers watched over his person and the palace; the funeral of the late emperor was decently

performed; the capital was silent and submissive; and five hundred letters, which Cantacuzene despatched in the first month, informed the provinces of their loss and their duty. The prospect of a tranquil minority was blasted by the great duke or admiral Apocaucus, and to exaggerate his perfidy, the Imperial historian is pleased to magnify his own imprudence, in raising him to that office against the advice of his more sagacious sovereign. Bold and subtle, rapacious and profuse, the avarice and ambition of Apocaucus were by turns subservient to each other; and his talents were applied to the ruin of his country.

His arrogance was heightened by the command of a naval force and an impregnable castle, and under the mask of oaths and flattery he secretly conspired against his benefactor. The female court of the empress was bribed and directed; he encouraged Anne of Savoy to assert, by the law of nature, the tutelage of her son; the love of power was disguised by the anxiety of maternal tenderness: and the founder of the Palæologi had instructed his posterity to dread the example of a perfidious guardian.

The patriarch John of Apri was a proud and feeble old man, encompassed by a numerous and hungry kindred. He produced an obsolete epistle of Andronicus, which bequeathed the prince and people to his pious care: the fate of his predecessor Arsenius prompted him to prevent, rather than punish, the crimes of a usurper; and Apocaucus smiled at the success of his own flattery, when he beheld the Byzantine priest assuming the state and temporal claims of the Roman pontiff. [26] Between three persons so different in their situation and character, a private league was concluded: a shadow of authority was restored to the senate; and the people was tempted by the name of freedom. By this powerful

confederacy, the great domestic was assaulted at first with clandestine, at length with open, arms. His prerogatives were disputed; his opinions slighted; his friends persecuted; and his safety was threatened both in the camp and city. In his absence on the public service, he was accused of treason; proscribed as an enemy of the church and state; and delivered with all his adherents to the sword of justice, the vengeance of the people, and the power of the devil; his fortunes were confiscated; his aged mother was cast into prison; [261] all his past services were buried in oblivion; and he was driven by injustice to perpetrate the crime of which he was accused. [27] From the review of his preceding conduct, Cantacuzene appears to have been guiltless of any treasonable designs; and the only suspicion of his innocence must arise from the vehemence of his protestations, and the sublime purity which he ascribes to his own virtue. While the empress and the patriarch still affected the appearances of harmony, he repeatedly solicited the permission of retiring to a private, and even a monastic, life. After he had been declared a public enemy, it was his fervent wish to throw himself at the feet of the young emperor, and to receive without a murmur the stroke of the executioner: it was not without reluctance that he listened to the voice of reason, which inculcated the sacred duty of saving his family and friends, and proved that he could only save them by drawing the sword and assuming the Imperial title.

[Footnote 25: See the regency and reign of John Cantacuzenus, and the whole progress of the civil war, in his own history, (l. iii. c. 1--100, p. 348--700,) and in that of Nicephorus Gregoras, (l. xii. c. 1--l. xv.

c. 9, p. 353--492.))]

[Footnote 26: He assumes the royal privilege of red shoes or buskins; placed on his head a mitre of silk and gold; subscribed his epistles with hyacinth or green ink, and claimed for the new, whatever Constantine had given to the ancient, Rome, (Cantacuzen. l. iii. c. 36. Nic. Gregoras, l. xiv. c. 3.)]

[Footnote 261: She died there through persecution and neglect.--M.]

[Footnote 27: Nic. Gregoras (l. xii. c. 5) confesses the innocence and virtues of Cantacuzenus, the guilt and flagitious vices of Apocaucus; nor does he dissemble the motive of his personal and religious enmity to the former; nun de dia kakian allwn, aitiaV o praotatoV thV tvn olwn edoxaV? eioai jqoraV. Note: The alloi were the religious enemies and persecutors of Nicephorus.--M.]