

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

In the strong city of Demotica, his peculiar domain, the emperor John Cantacuzenus was invested with the purple buskins: his right leg was clothed by his noble kinsmen, the left by the Latin chiefs, on whom he conferred the order of knighthood. But even in this act of revolt, he was still studious of loyalty; and the titles of John Palæologus and Anne of Savoy were proclaimed before his own name and that of his wife Irene. Such vain ceremony is a thin disguise of rebellion, nor are there perhaps any personal wrongs that can authorize a subject to take arms against his sovereign: but the want of preparation and success may confirm the assurance of the usurper, that this decisive step was the effect of necessity rather than of choice. Constantinople adhered to the young emperor; the king of Bulgaria was invited to the relief of Adrianople: the principal cities of Thrace and Macedonia, after some hesitation, renounced their obedience to the great domestic; and the leaders of the troops and provinces were induced, by their private interest, to prefer the loose dominion of a woman and a priest. [271] The army of Cantacuzene, in sixteen divisions, was stationed on the banks of the Melas to tempt or to intimidate the capital: it was dispersed by treachery or fear; and the officers, more especially the mercenary Latins, accepted the bribes, and embraced the service, of the Byzantine court. After this loss, the rebel emperor (he fluctuated between the two characters) took the road of Thessalonica with a chosen remnant; but he failed in his enterprise on that important place; and he was closely pursued by the great duke, his enemy Apocaucus, at the head of a

superior power by sea and land. Driven from the coast, in his march, or rather flight, into the mountains of Servia, Cantacuzene assembled his troops to scrutinize those who were worthy and willing to accompany his broken fortunes. A base majority bowed and retired; and his trusty band was diminished to two thousand, and at last to five hundred, volunteers. The cral, [28] or despot of the Servians received him with general hospitality; but the ally was insensibly degraded to a suppliant, a hostage, a captive; and in this miserable dependence, he waited at the door of the Barbarian, who could dispose of the life and liberty of a Roman emperor. The most tempting offers could not persuade the cral to violate his trust; but he soon inclined to the stronger side; and his friend was dismissed without injury to a new vicissitude of hopes and perils. Near six years the flame of discord burnt with various success and unabated rage: the cities were distracted by the faction of the nobles and the plebeians; the Cantacuzeni and Palæologi: and the Bulgarians, the Servians, and the Turks, were invoked on both sides as the instruments of private ambition and the common ruin. The regent deplored the calamities, of which he was the author and victim: and his own experience might dictate a just and lively remark on the different nature of foreign and civil war. "The former," said he, "is the external warmth of summer, always tolerable, and often beneficial; the latter is the deadly heat of a fever, which consumes without a remedy the vitals of the constitution." [29]

[Footnote 271: Cantacuzene asserts, that in all the cities, the populace were on the side of the emperor, the aristocracy on his. The

populace took the opportunity of rising and plundering the wealthy as Cantacuzenites, vol. iii. c. 29 Ages of common oppression and ruin had not extinguished these republican factions.--M.]

[Footnote 28: The princes of Servia (Ducange, Famil. Dalmaticæ, &c., c. 2, 3, 4, 9) were styled Despots in Greek, and Cral in their native idiom, (Ducange, Gloss. Græc. p. 751.) That title, the equivalent of king, appears to be of Sclavonic origin, from whence it has been borrowed by the Hungarians, the modern Greeks, and even by the Turks, (Leunclavius, Pandect. Turc. p. 422,) who reserve the name of Padishah for the emperor. To obtain the latter instead of the former is the ambition of the French at Constantinople, (Avertissement à l'Histoire de Timur Bec, p. 39.)]

[Footnote 29: Nic. Gregoras, l. xii. c. 14. It is surprising that Cantacuzene has not inserted this just and lively image in his own writings.]

The introduction of barbarians and savages into the contests of civilized nations, is a measure pregnant with shame and mischief; which the interest of the moment may compel, but which is reprobated by the best principles of humanity and reason. It is the practice of both sides to accuse their enemies of the guilt of the first alliances; and those who fail in their negotiations are loudest in their censure of the example which they envy and would gladly imitate. The Turks of Asia were less barbarous perhaps than the shepherds of Bulgaria and Servia; but

their religion rendered them implacable foes of Rome and Christianity. To acquire the friendship of their emirs, the two factions vied with each other in baseness and profusion: the dexterity of Cantacuzene obtained the preference: but the succor and victory were dearly purchased by the marriage of his daughter with an infidel, the captivity of many thousand Christians, and the passage of the Ottomans into Europe, the last and fatal stroke in the fall of the Roman empire. The inclining scale was decided in his favor by the death of Apocaucus, the just though singular retribution of his crimes. A crowd of nobles or plebeians, whom he feared or hated, had been seized by his orders in the capital and the provinces; and the old palace of Constantine was assigned as the place of their confinement. Some alterations in raising the walls, and narrowing the cells, had been ingeniously contrived to prevent their escape, and aggravate their misery; and the work was incessantly pressed by the daily visits of the tyrant. His guards watched at the gate, and as he stood in the inner court to overlook the architects, without fear or suspicion, he was assaulted and laid breathless on the ground, by two [291] resolute prisoners of the Palæologian race, [30] who were armed with sticks, and animated by despair. On the rumor of revenge and liberty, the captive multitude broke their fetters, fortified their prison, and exposed from the battlements the tyrant's head, presuming on the favor of the people and the clemency of the empress. Anne of Savoy might rejoice in the fall of a haughty and ambitious minister, but while she delayed to resolve or to act, the populace, more especially the mariners, were excited by the widow of the great duke to a sedition, an assault, and a massacre. The

prisoners (of whom the far greater part were guiltless or inglorious of the deed) escaped to a neighboring church: they were slaughtered at the foot of the altar; and in his death the monster was not less bloody and venomous than in his life. Yet his talents alone upheld the cause of the young emperor; and his surviving associates, suspicious of each other, abandoned the conduct of the war, and rejected the fairest terms of accommodation. In the beginning of the dispute, the empress felt, and complained, that she was deceived by the enemies of Cantacuzene: the patriarch was employed to preach against the forgiveness of injuries; and her promise of immortal hatred was sealed by an oath, under the penalty of excommunication. [31] But Anne soon learned to hate without a teacher: she beheld the misfortunes of the empire with the indifference of a stranger: her jealousy was exasperated by the competition of a rival empress; and on the first symptoms of a more yielding temper, she threatened the patriarch to convene a synod, and degrade him from his office. Their incapacity and discord would have afforded the most decisive advantage; but the civil war was protracted by the weakness of both parties; and the moderation of Cantacuzene has not escaped the reproach of timidity and indolence. He successively recovered the provinces and cities; and the realm of his pupil was measured by the walls of Constantinople; but the metropolis alone counterbalanced the rest of the empire; nor could he attempt that important conquest till he had secured in his favor the public voice and a private correspondence. An Italian, of the name of Facciolati, [32] had succeeded to the office of great duke: the ships, the guards, and the golden gate, were subject to his command; but his humble ambition was bribed to become the

instrument of treachery; and the revolution was accomplished without danger or bloodshed. Destitute of the powers of resistance, or the hope of relief, the inflexible Anne would have still defended the palace, and have smiled to behold the capital in flames, rather than in the possession of a rival. She yielded to the prayers of her friends and enemies; and the treaty was dictated by the conqueror, who professed a loyal and zealous attachment to the son of his benefactor. The marriage of his daughter with John Palæologus was at length consummated: the hereditary right of the pupil was acknowledged; but the sole administration during ten years was vested in the guardian. Two emperors and three empresses were seated on the Byzantine throne; and a general amnesty quieted the apprehensions, and confirmed the property, of the most guilty subjects. The festival of the coronation and nuptials was celebrated with the appearances of concord and magnificence, and both were equally fallacious. During the late troubles, the treasures of the state, and even the furniture of the palace, had been alienated or embezzled; the royal banquet was served in pewter or earthenware; and such was the proud poverty of the times, that the absence of gold and jewels was supplied by the paltry artifices of glass and gilt-leather.

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[Footnote 291: Nicephorus says four, p.734.]

[Footnote 30: The two avengers were both Palæologi, who might resent, with royal indignation, the shame of their chains. The tragedy of Apocaucus may deserve a peculiar reference to Cantacuzene (l. iii. c.

86) and Nic. Gregoras, (l. xiv. c. 10.)]

[Footnote 31: Cantacuzene accuses the patriarch, and spares the empress, the mother of his sovereign, (l. iii. 33, 34,) against whom Nic.

Gregoras expresses a particular animosity, (l. xiv. 10, 11, xv. 5.) It is true that they do not speak exactly of the same time.]

[Footnote 32: The traitor and treason are revealed by Nic. Gregoras, (l. xv. c. 8;) but the name is more discreetly suppressed by his great accomplice, (Cantacuzen. l. iii. c. 99.)]

[Footnote 33: Nic. Greg. l. xv. 11. There were, however, some true pearls, but very thinly sprinkled. The rest of the stones had only pantodaphn croian proV to diaugeV.]

I hasten to conclude the personal history of John Cantacuzene. [34] He triumphed and reigned; but his reign and triumph were clouded by the discontent of his own and the adverse faction. His followers might style the general amnesty an act of pardon for his enemies, and of oblivion for his friends: [35] in his cause their estates had been forfeited or plundered; and as they wandered naked and hungry through the streets, they cursed the selfish generosity of a leader, who, on the throne of the empire, might relinquish without merit his private inheritance. The adherents of the empress blushed to hold their lives and fortunes by the precarious favor of a usurper; and the thirst of revenge was concealed by a tender concern for the succession, and even the safety, of her son.

They were justly alarmed by a petition of the friends of Cantacuzene, that they might be released from their oath of allegiance to the Palæologi, and intrusted with the defence of some cautionary towns; a measure supported with argument and eloquence; and which was rejected (says the Imperial historian) "by my sublime, and almost incredible virtue." His repose was disturbed by the sound of plots and seditions; and he trembled lest the lawful prince should be stolen away by some foreign or domestic enemy, who would inscribe his name and his wrongs in the banners of rebellion. As the son of Andronicus advanced in the years of manhood, he began to feel and to act for himself; and his rising ambition was rather stimulated than checked by the imitation of his father's vices. If we may trust his own professions, Cantacuzene labored with honest industry to correct these sordid and sensual appetites, and to raise the mind of the young prince to a level with his fortune. In the Servian expedition, the two emperors showed themselves in cordial harmony to the troops and provinces; and the younger colleague was initiated by the elder in the mysteries of war and government. After the conclusion of the peace, Palæologus was left at Thessalonica, a royal residence, and a frontier station, to secure by his absence the peace of Constantinople, and to withdraw his youth from the temptations of a luxurious capital. But the distance weakened the powers of control, and the son of Andronicus was surrounded with artful or unthinking companions, who taught him to hate his guardian, to deplore his exile, and to vindicate his rights. A private treaty with the cral or despot of Servia was soon followed by an open revolt; and Cantacuzene, on the throne of the elder Andronicus, defended the cause of age and



prerogative, which in his youth he had so vigorously attacked. At his request the empress-mother undertook the voyage of Thessalonica, and the office of mediation: she returned without success; and unless Anne of Savoy was instructed by adversity, we may doubt the sincerity, or at least the fervor, of her zeal. While the regent grasped the sceptre with a firm and vigorous hand, she had been instructed to declare, that the ten years of his legal administration would soon elapse; and that, after a full trial of the vanity of the world, the emperor Cantacuzene sighed for the repose of a cloister, and was ambitious only of a heavenly crown. Had these sentiments been genuine, his voluntary abdication would have restored the peace of the empire, and his conscience would have been relieved by an act of justice. Palæologus alone was responsible for his future government; and whatever might be his vices, they were surely less formidable than the calamities of a civil war, in which the Barbarians and infidels were again invited to assist the Greeks in their mutual destruction. By the arms of the Turks, who now struck a deep and everlasting root in Europe, Cantacuzene prevailed in the third contest in which he had been involved; and the young emperor, driven from the sea and land, was compelled to take shelter among the Latins of the Isle of Tenedos. His insolence and obstinacy provoked the victor to a step which must render the quarrel irreconcilable; and the association of his son Matthew, whom he invested with the purple, established the succession in the family of the Cantacuzeni. But Constantinople was still attached to the blood of her ancient princes; and this last injury accelerated the restoration of the rightful heir. A noble Genoese espoused the cause of Palæologus, obtained a promise of his sister, and

achieved the revolution with two galleys and two thousand five hundred auxiliaries. Under the pretence of distress, they were admitted into the lesser port; a gate was opened, and the Latin shout of, "Long life and victory to the emperor, John Palæologus!" was answered by a general rising in his favor. A numerous and loyal party yet adhered to the standard of Cantacuzene: but he asserts in his history (does he hope for belief?) that his tender conscience rejected the assurance of conquest; that, in free obedience to the voice of religion and philosophy, he descended from the throne and embraced with pleasure the monastic habit and profession. [36] So soon as he ceased to be a prince, his successor was not unwilling that he should be a saint: the remainder of his life was devoted to piety and learning; in the cells of Constantinople and Mount Athos, the monk Joasaph was respected as the temporal and spiritual father of the emperor; and if he issued from his retreat, it was as the minister of peace, to subdue the obstinacy, and solicit the pardon, of his rebellious son. [37]

[Footnote 34: From his return to Constantinople, Cantacuzene continues his history and that of the empire, one year beyond the abdication of his son Matthew, A.D. 1357, (l. iv. c. 1--50, p. 705--911.) Nicephorus Gregoras ends with the synod of Constantinople, in the year 1351, (l. xxii. c. 3, p. 660; the rest, to the conclusion of the xxivth book, p. 717, is all controversy;) and his fourteen last books are still MSS. in the king of France's library.]

[Footnote 35: The emperor (Cantacuzen. l. iv. c. 1) represents his own

virtues, and Nic. Gregoras (l. xv. c. 11) the complaints of his friends, who suffered by its effects. I have lent them the words of our poor cavaliers after the Restoration.]

[Footnote 36: The awkward apology of Cantacuzene, (l. iv. c. 39--42,) who relates, with visible confusion, his own downfall, may be supplied by the less accurate, but more honest, narratives of Matthew Villani (l. iv. c. 46, in the Script. Rerum Ital. tom. xiv. p. 268) and Ducas, (c 10, 11.)]

[Footnote 37: Cantacuzene, in the year 1375, was honored with a letter from the pope, (Fleury, Hist. Ecclés. tom. xx. p. 250.) His death is placed by a respectable authority on the 20th of November, 1411, (Ducange, Fam. Byzant. p. 260.) But if he were of the age of his companion Andronicus the Younger, he must have lived 116 years; a rare instance of longevity, which in so illustrious a person would have attracted universal notice.]

Yet in the cloister, the mind of Cantacuzene was still exercised by theological war. He sharpened a controversial pen against the Jews and Mahometans; [38] and in every state he defended with equal zeal the divine light of Mount Thabor, a memorable question which consummates the religious follies of the Greeks. The fakirs of India, [39] and the monks of the Oriental church, were alike persuaded, that in the total abstraction of the faculties of the mind and body, the purer spirit may ascend to the enjoyment and vision of the Deity. The opinion and

practice of the monasteries of Mount Athos [40] will be best represented in the words of an abbot, who flourished in the eleventh century. "When thou art alone in thy cell," says the ascetic teacher, "shut thy door, and seat thyself in a corner: raise thy mind above all things vain and transitory; recline thy beard and chin on thy breast; turn thy eyes and thy thoughts toward the middle of thy belly, the region of the navel; and search the place of the heart, the seat of the soul. At first, all will be dark and comfortless; but if you persevere day and night, you will feel an ineffable joy; and no sooner has the soul discovered the place of the heart, than it is involved in a mystic and ethereal light." This light, the production of a distempered fancy, the creature of an empty stomach and an empty brain, was adored by the Quietists as the pure and perfect essence of God himself; and as long as the folly was confined to Mount Athos, the simple solitaries were not inquisitive how the divine essence could be a material substance, or how an immaterial substance could be perceived by the eyes of the body. But in the reign of the younger Andronicus, these monasteries were visited by Barlaam, [41] a Calabrian monk, who was equally skilled in philosophy and theology; who possessed the language of the Greeks and Latins; and whose versatile genius could maintain their opposite creeds, according to the interest of the moment. The indiscretion of an ascetic revealed to the curious traveller the secrets of mental prayer and Barlaam embraced the opportunity of ridiculing the Quietists, who placed the soul in the navel; of accusing the monks of Mount Athos of heresy and blasphemy. His attack compelled the more learned to renounce or dissemble the simple devotion of their brethren; and Gregory Palamas

introduced a scholastic distinction between the essence and operation of God. His inaccessible essence dwells in the midst of an uncreated and eternal light; and this beatific vision of the saints had been manifested to the disciples on Mount Thabor, in the transfiguration of Christ. Yet this distinction could not escape the reproach of polytheism; the eternity of the light of Thabor was fiercely denied; and Barlaam still charged the Palamites with holding two eternal substances, a visible and an invisible God. From the rage of the monks of Mount Athos, who threatened his life, the Calabrian retired to Constantinople, where his smooth and specious manners introduced him to the favor of the great domestic and the emperor. The court and the city were involved in this theological dispute, which flamed amidst the civil war; but the doctrine of Barlaam was disgraced by his flight and apostasy: the Palamites triumphed; and their adversary, the patriarch John of Apri, was deposed by the consent of the adverse factions of the state. In the character of emperor and theologian, Cantacuzene presided in the synod of the Greek church, which established, as an article of faith, the uncreated light of Mount Thabor; and, after so many insults, the reason of mankind was slightly wounded by the addition of a single absurdity. Many rolls of paper or parchment have been blotted; and the impenitent sectaries, who refused to subscribe the orthodox creed, were deprived of the honors of Christian burial; but in the next age the question was forgotten; nor can I learn that the axe or the fagot were employed for the extirpation of the Barlaamite heresy. [42]

[Footnote 38: His four discourses, or books, were printed at Basil,

1543, (Fabric Bibliot. Græc. tom. vi. p. 473.) He composed them to satisfy a proselyte who was assaulted with letters from his friends of Ispahan. Cantacuzene had read the Koran; but I understand from Maracci that he adopts the vulgar prejudices and fables against Mahomet and his religion.]

[Footnote 39: See the Voyage de Bernier, tom. i. p. 127.]

[Footnote 40: Mosheim, Institut. Hist. Ecclés. p. 522, 523. Fleury, Hist. Ecclés. tom. xx. p. 22, 24, 107--114, &c. The former unfolds the causes with the judgment of a philosopher, the latter transcribes and transcribes and translates with the prejudices of a Catholic priest.]

[Footnote 41: Basnage (in Canisii Antiq. Lectiones, tom. iv. p. 363--368) has investigated the character and story of Barlaam. The duplicity of his opinions had inspired some doubts of the identity of his person. See likewise Fabricius, (Bibliot. Græc. tom. x. p. 427--432.)]

[Footnote 42: See Cantacuzene (l. ii. c. 39, 40, l. iv. c. 3, 23, 24, 25) and Nic. Gregoras, (l. xi. c. 10, l. xv. 3, 7, &c.,) whose last books, from the sixth to xxivth, are almost confined to a subject so interesting to the authors. Boivin, (in Vit. Nic. Gregoræ,) from the unpublished books, and Fabricius, (Bibliot. Græc. tom. x. p. 462--473,) or rather Montfaucon, from the MSS. of the Coislin library, have added some facts and documents.]

For the conclusion of this chapter, I have reserved the Genoese war, which shook the throne of Cantacuzene, and betrayed the debility of the Greek empire. The Genoese, who, after the recovery of Constantinople, were seated in the suburb of Pera or Galata, received that honorable fief from the bounty of the emperor. They were indulged in the use of their laws and magistrates; but they submitted to the duties of vassals and subjects; the forcible word of liegemen[43] was borrowed from the Latin jurisprudence; and their podesta, or chief, before he entered on his office, saluted the emperor with loyal acclamations and vows of fidelity. Genoa sealed a firm alliance with the Greeks; and, in case of a defensive war, a supply of fifty empty galleys and a succor of fifty galleys, completely armed and manned, was promised by the republic to the empire. In the revival of a naval force, it was the aim of Michael Palæologus to deliver himself from a foreign aid; and his vigorous government contained the Genoese of Galata within those limits which the insolence of wealth and freedom provoked them to exceed. A sailor threatened that they should soon be masters of Constantinople, and slew the Greek who resented this national affront; and an armed vessel, after refusing to salute the palace, was guilty of some acts of piracy in the Black Sea. Their countrymen threatened to support their cause; but the long and open village of Galata was instantly surrounded by the Imperial troops; till, in the moment of the assault, the prostrate Genoese implored the clemency of their sovereign. The defenceless situation which secured their obedience exposed them to the attack of their Venetian rivals, who, in the reign of the elder Andronicus, presumed to

violate the majesty of the throne. On the approach of their fleets, the Genoese, with their families and effects, retired into the city: their empty habitations were reduced to ashes; and the feeble prince, who had viewed the destruction of his suburb, expressed his resentment, not by arms, but by ambassadors. This misfortune, however, was advantageous to the Genoese, who obtained, and imperceptibly abused, the dangerous license of surrounding Galata with a strong wall; of introducing into the ditch the waters of the sea; of erecting lofty turrets; and of mounting a train of military engines on the rampart. The narrow bounds in which they had been circumscribed were insufficient for the growing colony; each day they acquired some addition of landed property; and the adjacent hills were covered with their villas and castles, which they joined and protected by new fortifications. [44] The navigation and trade of the Euxine was the patrimony of the Greek emperors, who commanded the narrow entrance, the gates, as it were, of that inland sea. In the reign of Michael Palæologus, their prerogative was acknowledged by the sultan of Egypt, who solicited and obtained the liberty of sending an annual ship for the purchase of slaves in Circassia and the Lesser Tartary: a liberty pregnant with mischief to the Christian cause; since these youths were transformed by education and discipline into the formidable Mamalukes. [45] From the colony of Pera, the Genoese engaged with superior advantage in the lucrative trade of the Black Sea; and their industry supplied the Greeks with fish and corn; two articles of food almost equally important to a superstitious people. The spontaneous bounty of nature appears to have bestowed the harvests of Ukraine, the produce of a rude and savage husbandry; and the endless exportation of



salt fish and caviare is annually renewed by the enormous sturgeons that are caught at the mouth of the Don or Tanais, in their last station of the rich mud and shallow water of the Mæotis. [46] The waters of the Oxus, the Caspian, the Volga, and the Don, opened a rare and laborious passage for the gems and spices of India; and after three months' march the caravans of Carizme met the Italian vessels in the harbors of Crimæa. [47] These various branches of trade were monopolized by the diligence and power of the Genoese. Their rivals of Venice and Pisa were forcibly expelled; the natives were awed by the castles and cities, which arose on the foundations of their humble factories; and their principal establishment of Caffa [48] was besieged without effect by the Tartar powers. Destitute of a navy, the Greeks were oppressed by these haughty merchants, who fed, or famished, Constantinople, according to their interest. They proceeded to usurp the customs, the fishery, and even the toll, of the Bosphorus; and while they derived from these objects a revenue of two hundred thousand pieces of gold, a remnant of thirty thousand was reluctantly allowed to the emperor. [49] The colony of Pera or Galata acted, in peace and war, as an independent state; and, as it will happen in distant settlements, the Genoese podesta too often forgot that he was the servant of his own masters.

[Footnote 43: Pachymer (l. v. c. 10) very properly explains *liziouV* (*ligios*) by *liidiouV*. The use of these words in the Greek and Latin of the feudal times may be amply understood from the Glossaries of Ducange, (Græc. p. 811, 812. Latin. tom. iv. p. 109--111.)]

[Footnote 44: The establishment and progress of the Genoese at Pera, or Galata, is described by Ducange (C. P. Christiana, l. i. p. 68, 69) from the Byzantine historians, Pachymer, (l. ii. c. 35, l. v. 10, 30, l. ix. 15 l. xii. 6, 9,) Nicephorus Gregoras, (l. v. c. 4, l. vi. c. 11, l. ix. c. 5, l. ix. c. 1, l. xv. c. 1, 6,) and Cantacuzene, (l. i. c. 12, l. ii. c. 29, &c.)]

[Footnote 45: Both Pachymer (l. iii. c. 3, 4, 5) and Nic. Greg. (l. iv. c. 7) understand and deplore the effects of this dangerous indulgence. Bibars, sultan of Egypt, himself a Tartar, but a devout Mussulman, obtained from the children of Zingis the permission to build a stately mosque in the capital of Crimea, (De Guignes, Hist. des Huns, tom. iii. p. 343.)]

[Footnote 46: Chardin (Voyages en Perse, tom. i. p. 48) was assured at Caffa, that these fishes were sometimes twenty-four or twenty-six feet long, weighed eight or nine hundred pounds, and yielded three or four quintals of caviare. The corn of the Bosphorus had supplied the Athenians in the time of Demosthenes.]

[Footnote 47: De Guignes, Hist. des Huns, tom. iii. p. 343, 344. Viaggi di Ramusio, tom. i. fol. 400. But this land or water carriage could only be practicable when Tartary was united under a wise and powerful monarch.]

[Footnote 48: Nic. Gregoras (l. xiii. c. 12) is judicious and well

informed on the trade and colonies of the Black Sea. Chardin describes the present ruins of Caffa, where, in forty days, he saw above 400 sail employed in the corn and fish trade, (Voyages en Perse, tom. i. p. 46--48.)]

[Footnote 49: See Nic. Gregoras, l. xvii. c. 1.]

These usurpations were encouraged by the weakness of the elder Andronicus, and by the civil wars that afflicted his age and the minority of his grandson. The talents of Cantacuzene were employed to the ruin, rather than the restoration, of the empire; and after his domestic victory, he was condemned to an ignominious trial, whether the Greeks or the Genoese should reign in Constantinople. The merchants of Pera were offended by his refusal of some contiguous land, some commanding heights, which they proposed to cover with new fortifications; and in the absence of the emperor, who was detained at Demotica by sickness, they ventured to brave the debility of a female reign. A Byzantine vessel, which had presumed to fish at the mouth of the harbor, was sunk by these audacious strangers; the fishermen were murdered. Instead of suing for pardon, the Genoese demanded satisfaction; required, in a haughty strain, that the Greeks should renounce the exercise of navigation; and encountered with regular arms the first sallies of the popular indignation. They instantly occupied the debatable land; and by the labor of a whole people, of either sex and of every age, the wall was raised, and the ditch was sunk, with incredible speed. At the same time, they attacked and burnt two

Byzantine galleys; while the three others, the remainder of the Imperial navy, escaped from their hands: the habitations without the gates, or along the shore, were pillaged and destroyed; and the care of the regent, of the empress Irene, was confined to the preservation of the city. The return of Cantacuzene dispelled the public consternation: the emperor inclined to peaceful counsels; but he yielded to the obstinacy of his enemies, who rejected all reasonable terms, and to the ardor of his subjects, who threatened, in the style of Scripture, to break them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Yet they reluctantly paid the taxes, that he imposed for the construction of ships, and the expenses of the war; and as the two nations were masters, the one of the land, the other of the sea, Constantinople and Pera were pressed by the evils of a mutual siege. The merchants of the colony, who had believed that a few days would terminate the war, already murmured at their losses: the succors from their mother-country were delayed by the factions of Genoa; and the most cautious embraced the opportunity of a Rhodian vessel to remove their families and effects from the scene of hostility. In the spring, the Byzantine fleet, seven galleys and a train of smaller vessels, issued from the mouth of the harbor, and steered in a single line along the shore of Pera; unskilfully presenting their sides to the beaks of the adverse squadron. The crews were composed of peasants and mechanics; nor was their ignorance compensated by the native courage of Barbarians: the wind was strong, the waves were rough; and no sooner did the Greeks perceive a distant and inactive enemy, than they leaped headlong into the sea, from a doubtful, to an inevitable peril. The troops that marched to the attack of the lines of Pera were struck at

the same moment with a similar panic; and the Genoese were astonished, and almost ashamed, at their double victory. Their triumphant vessels, crowned with flowers, and dragging after them the captive galleys, repeatedly passed and repassed before the palace: the only virtue of the emperor was patience; and the hope of revenge his sole consolation. Yet the distress of both parties interposed a temporary agreement; and the shame of the empire was disguised by a thin veil of dignity and power. Summoning the chiefs of the colony, Cantacuzene affected to despise the trivial object of the debate; and, after a mild reproof, most liberally granted the lands, which had been previously resigned to the seeming custody of his officers. [50]

[Footnote 50: The events of this war are related by Cantacuzene (l. iv. c. 11 with obscurity and confusion, and by Nic. Gregoras l. xvii. c. 1--7) in a clear and honest narrative. The priest was less responsible than the prince for the defeat of the fleet.]

But the emperor was soon solicited to violate the treaty, and to join his arms with the Venetians, the perpetual enemies of Genoa and her colonies. While he compared the reasons of peace and war, his moderation was provoked by a wanton insult of the inhabitants of Pera, who discharged from their rampart a large stone that fell in the midst of Constantinople. On his just complaint, they coldly blamed the imprudence of their engineer; but the next day the insult was repeated; and they exulted in a second proof that the royal city was not beyond the reach of their artillery. Cantacuzene instantly signed his treaty with the

Venetians; but the weight of the Roman empire was scarcely felt in the balance of these opulent and powerful republics. [51] From the Straits of Gibraltar to the mouth of the Tanais, their fleets encountered each other with various success; and a memorable battle was fought in the narrow sea, under the walls of Constantinople. It would not be an easy task to reconcile the accounts of the Greeks, the Venetians, and the Genoese; [52] and while I depend on the narrative of an impartial historian, [53] I shall borrow from each nation the facts that redound to their own disgrace, and the honor of their foes. The Venetians, with their allies the Catalans, had the advantage of number; and their fleet, with the poor addition of eight Byzantine galleys, amounted to seventy-five sail: the Genoese did not exceed sixty-four; but in those times their ships of war were distinguished by the superiority of their size and strength. The names and families of their naval commanders, Pisani and Doria, are illustrious in the annals of their country; but the personal merit of the former was eclipsed by the fame and abilities of his rival. They engaged in tempestuous weather; and the tumultuary conflict was continued from the dawn to the extinction of light. The enemies of the Genoese applaud their prowess; the friends of the Venetians are dissatisfied with their behavior; but all parties agree in praising the skill and boldness of the Catalans, [531] who, with many wounds, sustained the brunt of the action. On the separation of the fleets, the event might appear doubtful; but the thirteen Genoese galleys, that had been sunk or taken, were compensated by a double loss of the allies; of fourteen Venetians, ten Catalans, and two Greeks; [532] and even the grief of the conquerors expressed the assurance and habit

of more decisive victories. Pisani confessed his defeat, by retiring into a fortified harbor, from whence, under the pretext of the orders of the senate, he steered with a broken and flying squadron for the Isle of Candia, and abandoned to his rivals the sovereignty of the sea. In a public epistle, [54] addressed to the doge and senate, Petrarch employs his eloquence to reconcile the maritime powers, the two luminaries of Italy. The orator celebrates the valor and victory of the Genoese, the first of men in the exercise of naval war: he drops a tear on the misfortunes of their Venetian brethren; but he exhorts them to pursue with fire and sword the base and perfidious Greeks; to purge the metropolis of the East from the heresy with which it was infected. Deserted by their friends, the Greeks were incapable of resistance; and three months after the battle, the emperor Cantacuzene solicited and subscribed a treaty, which forever banished the Venetians and Catalans, and granted to the Genoese a monopoly of trade, and almost a right of dominion. The Roman empire (I smile in transcribing the name) might soon have sunk into a province of Genoa, if the ambition of the republic had not been checked by the ruin of her freedom and naval power. A long contest of one hundred and thirty years was determined by the triumph of Venice; and the factions of the Genoese compelled them to seek for domestic peace under the protection of a foreign lord, the duke of Milan, or the French king. Yet the spirit of commerce survived that of conquest; and the colony of Pera still awed the capital and navigated the Euxine, till it was involved by the Turks in the final servitude of Constantinople itself.

[Footnote 51: The second war is darkly told by Cantacuzene, (l. iv. c. 18, p. 24, 25, 28--32,) who wishes to disguise what he dares not deny. I regret this part of Nic. Gregoras, which is still in MS. at Paris. \* Note: This part of Nicephorus Gregoras has not been printed in the new edition of the Byzantine Historians. The editor expresses a hope that it may be undertaken by Hase. I should join in the regret of Gibbon, if these books contain any historical information: if they are but a continuation of the controversies which fill the last books in our present copies, they may as well sleep their eternal sleep in MS. as in print.--M.]

[Footnote 52: Muratori (Annali d' Italia, tom. xii. p. 144) refers to the most ancient Chronicles of Venice (Caresinus, the continuator of Andrew Dandulus, tom. xii. p. 421, 422) and Genoa, (George Stella Annales Genuenses, tom. xvii. p. 1091, 1092;) both which I have diligently consulted in his great Collection of the Historians of Italy.]

[Footnote 53: See the Chronicle of Matteo Villani of Florence, l. ii. c. 59, p. 145--147, c. 74, 75, p. 156, 157, in Muratori's Collection, tom. xiv.]

[Footnote 531: Cantacuzene praises their bravery, but imputes their losses to their ignorance of the seas: they suffered more by the breakers than by the enemy, vol. iii. p. 224.--M.]



[Footnote 532: Cantacuzene says that the Genoese lost twenty-eight ships with their crews, autandroi; the Venetians and Catalans sixteen, the Imperials, none Cantacuzene accuses Pisani of cowardice, in not following up the victory, and destroying the Genoese. But Pisani's conduct, and indeed Cantacuzene's account of the battle, betray the superiority of the Genoese.--M.]

[Footnote 54: The Abbé de Sade (*Mémoires sur la Vie de Petrarque*, tom. iii. p. 257--263) translates this letter, which he copied from a MS. in the king of France's library. Though a servant of the duke of Milan, Petrarch pours forth his astonishment and grief at the defeat and despair of the Genoese in the following year, (p. 323--332.)]