

Chapter LXIV: Moguls, Ottoman Turks.--Part IV.

But the Greeks had not time to rejoice in the death of their enemies; and the Turkish cimeter was wielded with the same spirit by Amurath the First, the son of Orchan, and the brother of Soliman. By the pale and fainting light of the Byzantine annals, [52] we can discern, that he subdued without resistance the whole province of Romania or Thrace, from the Hellespont to Mount Hæmus, and the verge of the capital; and that Adrianople was chosen for the royal seat of his government and religion in Europe. Constantinople, whose decline is almost coeval with her foundation, had often, in the lapse of a thousand years, been assaulted by the Barbarians of the East and West; but never till this fatal hour had the Greeks been surrounded, both in Asia and Europe, by the arms of the same hostile monarchy. Yet the prudence or generosity of Amurath postponed for a while this easy conquest; and his pride was satisfied with the frequent and humble attendance of the emperor John Palæologus and his four sons, who followed at his summons the court and camp of the Ottoman prince. He marched against the Sclavonian nations between the Danube and the Adriatic, the Bulgarians, Servians, Bosnians, and Albanians; and these warlike tribes, who had so often insulted the majesty of the empire, were repeatedly broken by his destructive inroads. Their countries did not abound either in gold or silver; nor were their rustic hamlets and townships enriched by commerce or decorated by the arts of luxury. But the natives of the soil have been distinguished in every age by their hardiness of mind and body; and they were converted by a prudent institution into the firmest and most

faithful supporters of the Ottoman greatness. [53] The vizier of Amurath reminded his sovereign that, according to the Mahometan law, he was entitled to a fifth part of the spoil and captives; and that the duty might easily be levied, if vigilant officers were stationed in Gallipoli, to watch the passage, and to select for his use the stoutest and most beautiful of the Christian youth. The advice was followed: the edict was proclaimed; many thousands of the European captives were educated in religion and arms; and the new militia was consecrated and named by a celebrated dervis. Standing in the front of their ranks, he stretched the sleeve of his gown over the head of the foremost soldier, and his blessing was delivered in these words: "Let them be called Janizaries, (Yengi cheri, or new soldiers;) may their countenance be ever bright! their hand victorious! their sword keen! may their spear always hang over the heads of their enemies! and wheresoever they go, may they return with a white face!" [54] [541] Such was the origin of these haughty troops, the terror of the nations, and sometimes of the sultans themselves. Their valor has declined, their discipline is relaxed, and their tumultuary array is incapable of contending with the order and weapons of modern tactics; but at the time of their institution, they possessed a decisive superiority in war; since a regular body of infantry, in constant exercise and pay, was not maintained by any of the princes of Christendom. The Janizaries fought with the zeal of proselytes against their idolatrous countrymen; and in the battle of Cossova, the league and independence of the Sclavonian tribes was finally crushed. As the conqueror walked over the field, he observed that the greatest part of the slain consisted of beardless

youths; and listened to the flattering reply of his vizier, that age and wisdom would have taught them not to oppose his irresistible arms. But the sword of his Janizaries could not defend him from the dagger of despair; a Servian soldier started from the crowd of dead bodies, and Amurath was pierced in the belly with a mortal wound. [542] The grandson of Othman was mild in his temper, modest in his apparel, and a lover of learning and virtue; but the Moslems were scandalized at his absence from public worship; and he was corrected by the firmness of the mufti, who dared to reject his testimony in a civil cause: a mixture of servitude and freedom not unfrequent in Oriental history. [55]

[Footnote 52: After the conclusion of Cantacuzene and Gregoras, there follows a dark interval of a hundred years. George Phranza, Michael Ducas, and Laonicus Chalcondyles, all three wrote after the taking of Constantinople.]

[Footnote 53: See Cantemir, p. 37--41, with his own large and curious annotations.]

[Footnote 54: White and black face are common and proverbial expressions of praise and reproach in the Turkish language. *Hic niger est, hunc tu Romane caveto*, was likewise a Latin sentence.]

[Footnote 541: According to Von Hammer. vol. i. p. 90, Gibbon and the European writers assign too late a date to this enrolment of the Janizaries. It took place not in the reign of Amurath, but in that of

his predecessor Orchan.--M.]

[Footnote 542: Ducas has related this as a deliberate act of self-devotion on the part of a Servian noble who pretended to desert, and stabbed Amurath during a conference which he had requested. The Italian translator of Ducas, published by Bekker in the new edition of the Byzantines, has still further heightened the romance. See likewise in Von Hammer (*Osmanische Geschichte*, vol. i. p. 138) the popular Servian account, which resembles that of Ducas, and may have been the source of that of his Italian translator. The Turkish account agrees more nearly with Gibbon; but the Servian, (Milosch Kohilovisch) while he lay among the heap of the dead, pretended to have some secret to impart to Amurath, and stabbed him while he leaned over to listen.--M.]

[Footnote 55: See the life and death of Morad, or Amurath I., in Cantemir, (p 33--45,) the first book of Chalcondyles, and the *Annales Turcici* of Leunclavius. According to another story, the sultan was stabbed by a Croat in his tent; and this accident was alleged to Busbequius (*Epist* i. p. 98) as an excuse for the unworthy precaution of pinioning, as if were, between two attendants, an ambassador's arms, when he is introduced to the royal presence.]

The character of Bajazet, the son and successor of Amurath, is strongly expressed in his surname of Ilderim, or the lightning; and he might glory in an epithet, which was drawn from the fiery energy of his soul and the rapidity of his destructive march. In the fourteen years of his

reign, [56] he incessantly moved at the head of his armies, from Bursa to Adrianople, from the Danube to the Euphrates; and, though he strenuously labored for the propagation of the law, he invaded, with impartial ambition, the Christian and Mahometan princes of Europe and Asia. From Angora to Amasia and Erzeroum, the northern regions of Anatolia were reduced to his obedience: he stripped of their hereditary possessions his brother emirs of Ghermian and Caramania, of Aidin and Sarukhan; and after the conquest of Iconium the ancient kingdom of the Seljukians again revived in the Ottoman dynasty. Nor were the conquests of Bajazet less rapid or important in Europe. No sooner had he imposed a regular form of servitude on the Servians and Bulgarians, than he passed the Danube to seek new enemies and new subjects in the heart of Moldavia. [57] Whatever yet adhered to the Greek empire in Thrace, Macedonia, and Thessaly, acknowledged a Turkish master: an obsequious bishop led him through the gates of Thermopylæ into Greece; and we may observe, as a singular fact, that the widow of a Spanish chief, who possessed the ancient seat of the oracle of Delphi, deserved his favor by the sacrifice of a beautiful daughter. The Turkish communication between Europe and Asia had been dangerous and doubtful, till he stationed at Gallipoli a fleet of galleys, to command the Hellespont and intercept the Latin succors of Constantinople. While the monarch indulged his passions in a boundless range of injustice and cruelty, he imposed on his soldiers the most rigid laws of modesty and abstinence; and the harvest was peaceably reaped and sold within the precincts of his camp. Provoked by the loose and corrupt administration of justice, he collected in a house the judges and lawyers of his dominions, who

expected that in a few moments the fire would be kindled to reduce them to ashes. His ministers trembled in silence: but an Æthiopian buffoon presumed to insinuate the true cause of the evil; and future venality was left without excuse, by annexing an adequate salary to the office of cadhi. [58] The humble title of emir was no longer suitable to the Ottoman greatness; and Bajazet condescended to accept a patent of sultan from the caliphs who served in Egypt under the yoke of the Mamalukes: [59] a last and frivolous homage that was yielded by force to opinion; by the Turkish conquerors to the house of Abbas and the successors of the Arabian prophet. The ambition of the sultan was inflamed by the obligation of deserving this august title; and he turned his arms against the kingdom of Hungary, the perpetual theatre of the Turkish victories and defeats. Sigismond, the Hungarian king, was the son and brother of the emperors of the West: his cause was that of Europe and the church; and, on the report of his danger, the bravest knights of France and Germany were eager to march under his standard and that of the cross. In the battle of Nicopolis, Bajazet defeated a confederate army of a hundred thousand Christians, who had proudly boasted, that if the sky should fall, they could uphold it on their lances. The far greater part were slain or driven into the Danube; and Sigismond, escaping to Constantinople by the river and the Black Sea, returned after a long circuit to his exhausted kingdom. [60] In the pride of victory, Bajazet threatened that he would besiege Buda; that he would subdue the adjacent countries of Germany and Italy, and that he would feed his horse with a bushel of oats on the altar of St. Peter at Rome. His progress was checked, not by the miraculous interposition of the

apostle, not by a crusade of the Christian powers, but by a long and painful fit of the gout. The disorders of the moral, are sometimes corrected by those of the physical, world; and an acrimonious humor falling on a single fibre of one man, may prevent or suspend the misery of nations.

[Footnote 56: The reign of Bajazet I., or Ilderim Bayazid, is contained in Cantemir, (p. 46,) the iid book of Chalcondyles, and the Annales Turcici. The surname of Ilderim, or lightning, is an example, that the conquerors and poets of every age have felt the truth of a system which derives the sublime from the principle of terror.]

[Footnote 57: Cantemir, who celebrates the victories of the great Stephen over the Turks, (p. 47,) had composed the ancient and modern state of his principality of Moldavia, which has been long promised, and is still unpublished.]

[Footnote 58: Leunclav. Annal. Turcici, p. 318, 319. The venality of the cadhis has long been an object of scandal and satire; and if we distrust the observations of our travellers, we may consult the feeling of the Turks themselves, (D'Herbelot, Bibliot. Orientale, p. 216, 217, 229, 230.)]

[Footnote 59: The fact, which is attested by the Arabic history of Ben Schounah, a contemporary Syrian, (De Guignes Hist. des Huns. tom. iv. p. 336.) destroys the testimony of Saad Effendi and Cantemir, (p. 14, 15,)]

of the election of Othman to the dignity of sultan.]

[Footnote 60: See the *Decades Rerum Hungaricarum* (Dec. iii. l. ii. p. 379) of Bonfinius, an Italian, who, in the xvth century, was invited into Hungary to compose an eloquent history of that kingdom. Yet, if it be extant and accessible, I should give the preference to some homely chronicle of the time and country.]

Such is the general idea of the Hungarian war; but the disastrous adventure of the French has procured us some memorials which illustrate the victory and character of Bajazet. [61] The duke of Burgundy, sovereign of Flanders, and uncle of Charles the Sixth, yielded to the ardor of his son, John count of Nevers; and the fearless youth was accompanied by four princes, his cousins, and those of the French monarch. Their inexperience was guided by the Sire de Coucy, one of the best and oldest captain of Christendom; [62] but the constable, admiral, and marshal of France [63] commanded an army which did not exceed the number of a thousand knights and squires. [631] These splendid names were the source of presumption and the bane of discipline. So many might aspire to command, that none were willing to obey; their national spirit despised both their enemies and their allies; and in the persuasion that Bajazet would fly, or must fall, they began to compute how soon they should visit Constantinople and deliver the holy sepulchre. When their scouts announced the approach of the Turks, the gay and thoughtless youths were at table, already heated with wine; they instantly clasped their armor, mounted their horses, rode full speed to the vanguard,



and resented as an affront the advice of Sigismond, which would have deprived them of the right and honor of the foremost attack. The battle of Nicopolis would not have been lost, if the French would have obeyed the prudence of the Hungarians; but it might have been gloriously won, had the Hungarians imitated the valor of the French. They dispersed the first line, consisting of the troops of Asia; forced a rampart of stakes, which had been planted against the cavalry; broke, after a bloody conflict, the Janizaries themselves; and were at length overwhelmed by the numerous squadrons that issued from the woods, and charged on all sides this handful of intrepid warriors. In the speed and secrecy of his march, in the order and evolutions of the battle, his enemies felt and admired the military talents of Bajazet. They accuse his cruelty in the use of victory. After reserving the count of Nevers, and four-and-twenty lords, [632] whose birth and riches were attested by his Latin interpreters, the remainder of the French captives, who had survived the slaughter of the day, were led before his throne; and, as they refused to abjure their faith, were successively beheaded in his presence. The sultan was exasperated by the loss of his bravest Janizaries; and if it be true, that, on the eve of the engagement, the French had massacred their Turkish prisoners, [64] they might impute to themselves the consequences of a just retaliation. [641] A knight, whose life had been spared, was permitted to return to Paris, that he might relate the deplorable tale, and solicit the ransom of the noble captives. In the mean while, the count of Nevers, with the princes and barons of France, were dragged along in the marches of the Turkish camp, exposed as a grateful trophy to the Moslems of Europe and Asia, and

strictly confined at Boursa, as often as Bajazet resided in his capital. The sultan was pressed each day to expiate with their blood the blood of his martyrs; but he had pronounced that they should live, and either for mercy or destruction his word was irrevocable. He was assured of their value and importance by the return of the messenger, and the gifts and intercessions of the kings of France and of Cyprus. Lusignan presented him with a gold saltcellar of curious workmanship, and of the price of ten thousand ducats; and Charles the Sixth despatched by the way of Hungary a cast of Norwegian hawks, and six horse-loads of scarlet cloth, of fine linen of Rheims, and of Arras tapestry, representing the battles of the great Alexander. After much delay, the effect of distance rather than of art, Bajazet agreed to accept a ransom of two hundred thousand ducats for the count of Nevers and the surviving princes and barons: the marshal Boucicault, a famous warrior, was of the number of the fortunate; but the admiral of France had been slain in battle; and the constable, with the Sire de Coucy, died in the prison of Boursa. This heavy demand, which was doubled by incidental costs, fell chiefly on the duke of Burgundy, or rather on his Flemish subjects, who were bound by the feudal laws to contribute for the knighthood and captivity of the eldest son of their lord. For the faithful discharge of the debt, some merchants of Genoa gave security to the amount of five times the sum; a lesson to those warlike times, that commerce and credit are the links of the society of nations. It had been stipulated in the treaty, that the French captives should swear never to bear arms against the person of their conqueror; but the ungenerous restraint was abolished by Bajazet himself. "I despise," said he to the heir of Burgundy, "thy oaths

and thy arms. Thou art young, and mayest be ambitious of effacing the disgrace or misfortune of thy first chivalry. Assemble thy powers, proclaim thy design, and be assured that Bajazet will rejoice to meet thee a second time in a field of battle." Before their departure, they were indulged in the freedom and hospitality of the court of Bursa. The French princes admired the magnificence of the Ottoman, whose hunting and hawking equipage was composed of seven thousand huntsmen and seven thousand falconers. [65] In their presence, and at his command, the belly of one of his chamberlains was cut open, on a complaint against him for drinking the goat's milk of a poor woman. The strangers were astonished by this act of justice; but it was the justice of a sultan who disdains to balance the weight of evidence, or to measure the degrees of guilt.

[Footnote 61: I should not complain of the labor of this work, if my materials were always derived from such books as the chronicle of honest Froissard, (vol. iv. c. 67, 72, 74, 79--83, 85, 87, 89,) who read little, inquired much, and believed all. The original *Mémoires* of the Maréchal de Boucicault (Partie i. c. 22--28) add some facts, but they are dry and deficient, if compared with the pleasant garrulity of Froissard.]

[Footnote 62: An accurate Memoir on the Life of Enguerrand VII., Sire de Coucy, has been given by the Baron de Zurlauben, (*Hist. de l'Académie des Inscriptions*, tom. xxv.) His rank and possessions were equally considerable in France and England; and, in 1375, he led an army of adventurers into Switzerland, to recover a large patrimony which he

claimed in right of his grandmother, the daughter of the emperor Albert I. of Austria, (Sinner, Voyage dans la Suisse Occidentale, tom. i. p. 118--124.)]

[Footnote 63: That military office, so respectable at present, was still more conspicuous when it was divided between two persons, (Daniel, Hist. de la Milice Française, tom. ii. p. 5.) One of these, the marshal of the crusade, was the famous Boucicault, who afterwards defended Constantinople, governed Genoa, invaded the coast of Asia, and died in the field of Azincour.]

[Footnote 631: Daru, Hist. de Venise, vol. ii. p. 104, makes the whole French army amount to 10,000 men, of whom 1000 were knights. The curious volume of Schiltberger, a German of Munich, who was taken prisoner in the battle, (edit. Munich, 1813,) and which V. Hammer receives as authentic, gives the whole number at 6000. See Schiltberger. Reise in dem Orient. and V. Hammer, note, p. 610.--M.]

[Footnote 632: According to Schiltberger there were only twelve French lords granted to the prayer of the "duke of Burgundy," and "Herr Stephan Synther, and Johann von Bodem." Schiltberger, p. 13.--M.]

[Footnote 64: For this odious fact, the Abbé de Vertot quotes the Hist. Anonyme de St. Denys, l. xvi. c. 10, 11. (Ordre de Malthe, tom. ii. p. 310.)]

[Footnote 64: See Schiltberger's very graphic account of the massacre. He was led out to be slaughtered in cold blood with the rest of the Christian prisoners, amounting to 10,000. He was spared at the intercession of the son of Bajazet, with a few others, on account of their extreme youth. No one under 20 years of age was put to death. The "duke of Burgundy" was obliged to be a spectator of this butchery which lasted from early in the morning till four o'clock, P. M. It ceased only at the supplication of the leaders of Bajazet's army. Schiltberger, p. 14.--M.]

[Footnote 65: Sherefeddin Ali (Hist. de Timour Bec, l. v. c. 13) allows Bajazet a round number of 12,000 officers and servants of the chase. A part of his spoils was afterwards displayed in a hunting-match of Timour, 1. hounds with satin housings; 2. leopards with collars set with jewels; 3. Grecian greyhounds; and 4, dogs from Europe, as strong as African lions, (idem, l. vi. c. 15.) Bajazet was particularly fond of flying his hawks at cranes, (Chalcondyles, l. ii. p. 85.)]

After his enfranchisement from an oppressive guardian, John Palæologus remained thirty-six years, the helpless, and, as it should seem, the careless spectator of the public ruin. [66] Love, or rather lust, was his only vigorous passion; and in the embraces of the wives and virgins of the city, the Turkish slave forgot the dishonor of the emperor of the Romans Andronicus, his eldest son, had formed, at Adrianople, an intimate and guilty friendship with Sauzes, the son of Amurath; and the two youths conspired against the authority and lives of their parents.

The presence of Amurath in Europe soon discovered and dissipated their rash counsels; and, after depriving Sauzes of his sight, the Ottoman threatened his vassal with the treatment of an accomplice and an enemy, unless he inflicted a similar punishment on his own son. Palæologus trembled and obeyed; and a cruel precaution involved in the same sentence the childhood and innocence of John, the son of the criminal. But the operation was so mildly, or so unskilfully, performed, that the one retained the sight of an eye, and the other was afflicted only with the infirmity of squinting. Thus excluded from the succession, the two princes were confined in the tower of Anema; and the piety of Manuel, the second son of the reigning monarch, was rewarded with the gift of the Imperial crown. But at the end of two years, the turbulence of the Latins and the levity of the Greeks, produced a revolution; [661] and the two emperors were buried in the tower from whence the two prisoners were exalted to the throne. Another period of two years afforded Palæologus and Manuel the means of escape: it was contrived by the magic or subtlety of a monk, who was alternately named the angel or the devil: they fled to Scutari; their adherents armed in their cause; and the two Byzantine factions displayed the ambition and animosity with which Cæsar and Pompey had disputed the empire of the world. The Roman world was now contracted to a corner of Thrace, between the Propontis and the Black Sea, about fifty miles in length and thirty in breadth; a space of ground not more extensive than the lesser principalities of Germany or Italy, if the remains of Constantinople had not still represented the wealth and populousness of a kingdom. To restore the public peace, it was found necessary to divide this fragment of the empire; and while

Palæologus and Manuel were left in possession of the capital, almost all that lay without the walls was ceded to the blind princes, who fixed their residence at Rhodosto and Selybria. In the tranquil slumber of royalty, the passions of John Palæologus survived his reason and his strength: he deprived his favorite and heir of a blooming princess of Trebizond; and while the feeble emperor labored to consummate his nuptials, Manuel, with a hundred of the noblest Greeks, was sent on a peremptory summons to the Ottoman porte. They served with honor in the wars of Bajazet; but a plan of fortifying Constantinople excited his jealousy: he threatened their lives; the new works were instantly demolished; and we shall bestow a praise, perhaps above the merit of Palæologus, if we impute this last humiliation as the cause of his death.

[Footnote 66: For the reigns of John Palæologus and his son Manuel, from 1354 to 1402, see Ducas, c. 9--15, Phranza, l. i. c. 16--21, and the ist and iid books of Chalcondyles, whose proper subject is drowned in a sea of episode.]

[Footnote 661: According to Von Hammer it was the power of Bajazet, vol. i. p. 218.]

The earliest intelligence of that event was communicated to Manuel, who escaped with speed and secrecy from the palace of Bursa to the Byzantine throne. Bajazet affected a proud indifference at the loss of this valuable pledge; and while he pursued his conquests in Europe and

Asia, he left the emperor to struggle with his blind cousin John of Selybria, who, in eight years of civil war, asserted his right of primogeniture. At length, the ambition of the victorious sultan pointed to the conquest of Constantinople; but he listened to the advice of his vizier, who represented that such an enterprise might unite the powers of Christendom in a second and more formidable crusade. His epistle to the emperor was conceived in these words: "By the divine clemency, our invincible cimeter has reduced to our obedience almost all Asia, with many and large countries in Europe, excepting only the city of Constantinople; for beyond the walls thou hast nothing left. Resign that city; stipulate thy reward; or tremble, for thyself and thy unhappy people, at the consequences of a rash refusal." But his ambassadors were instructed to soften their tone, and to propose a treaty, which was subscribed with submission and gratitude. A truce of ten years was purchased by an annual tribute of thirty thousand crowns of gold; the Greeks deplored the public toleration of the law of Mahomet, and Bajazet enjoyed the glory of establishing a Turkish cadhi, and founding a royal mosque in the metropolis of the Eastern church. [67] Yet this truce was soon violated by the restless sultan: in the cause of the prince of Selybria, the lawful emperor, an army of Ottomans again threatened Constantinople; and the distress of Manuel implored the protection of the king of France. His plaintive embassy obtained much pity and some relief; and the conduct of the succor was intrusted to the marshal Boucicault, [68] whose religious chivalry was inflamed by the desire of revenging his captivity on the infidels. He sailed with four ships of war, from Aiguesmortes to the Hellespont; forced the passage, which was



guarded by seventeen Turkish galleys; landed at Constantinople a supply of six hundred men-at-arms and sixteen hundred archers; and reviewed them in the adjacent plain, without condescending to number or array the multitude of Greeks. By his presence, the blockade was raised both by sea and land; the flying squadrons of Bajazet were driven to a more respectful distance; and several castles in Europe and Asia were stormed by the emperor and the marshal, who fought with equal valor by each other's side. But the Ottomans soon returned with an increase of numbers; and the intrepid Boucicault, after a year's struggle, resolved to evacuate a country which could no longer afford either pay or provisions for his soldiers. The marshal offered to conduct Manuel to the French court, where he might solicit in person a supply of men and money; and advised, in the mean while, that, to extinguish all domestic discord, he should leave his blind competitor on the throne. The proposal was embraced: the prince of Selybria was introduced to the capital; and such was the public misery, that the lot of the exile seemed more fortunate than that of the sovereign. Instead of applauding the success of his vassal, the Turkish sultan claimed the city as his own; and on the refusal of the emperor John, Constantinople was more closely pressed by the calamities of war and famine. Against such an enemy prayers and resistance were alike unavailing; and the savage would have devoured his prey, if, in the fatal moment, he had not been overthrown by another savage stronger than himself. By the victory of Timour or Tamerlane, the fall of Constantinople was delayed about fifty years; and this important, though accidental, service may justly introduce the life and character of the Mogul conqueror.

[Footnote 67: Cantemir, p. 50--53. Of the Greeks, Ducas alone (c. 13, 15) acknowledges the Turkish cadhi at Constantinople. Yet even Ducas dissembles the mosque.]

[Footnote 68: Mémoires du bon Messire Jean le Maingre, dit Boucicault, Maréchal de France, partie ire c. 30, 35.]