

Chapter LXV: Elevation Of Timour Or Tamerlane, And His Death.--Part III.

On the throne of Samarcand, [63] he displayed, in a short repose, his magnificence and power; listened to the complaints of the people; distributed a just measure of rewards and punishments; employed his riches in the architecture of palaces and temples; and gave audience to the ambassadors of Egypt, Arabia, India, Tartary, Russia, and Spain, the last of whom presented a suit of tapestry which eclipsed the pencil of the Oriental artists. The marriage of six of the emperor's grandsons was esteemed an act of religion as well as of paternal tenderness; and the pomp of the ancient caliphs was revived in their nuptials. They were celebrated in the gardens of Canighul, decorated with innumerable tents and pavilions, which displayed the luxury of a great city and the spoils of a victorious camp. Whole forests were cut down to supply fuel for the kitchens; the plain was spread with pyramids of meat, and vases of every liquor, to which thousands of guests were courteously invited: the orders of the state, and the nations of the earth, were marshalled at the royal banquet; nor were the ambassadors of Europe (says the haughty Persian) excluded from the feast; since even the casses, the smallest of fish, find their place in the ocean. [64] The public joy was testified by illuminations and masquerades; the trades of Samarcand passed in review; and every trade was emulous to execute some quaint device, some marvellous pageant, with the materials of their peculiar art. After the marriage contracts had been ratified by the cadhis, the bride-grooms and their brides retired to the nuptial chambers: nine times, according to the Asiatic fashion, they were dressed and undressed; and at each

change of apparel, pearls and rubies were showered on their heads, and contemptuously abandoned to their attendants. A general indulgence was proclaimed: every law was relaxed, every pleasure was allowed; the people was free, the sovereign was idle; and the historian of Timour may remark, that, after devoting fifty years to the attainment of empire, the only happy period of his life were the two months in which he ceased to exercise his power. But he was soon awakened to the cares of government and war. The standard was unfurled for the invasion of China: the emirs made their report of two hundred thousand, the select and veteran soldiers of Iran and Touran: their baggage and provisions were transported by five hundred great wagons, and an immense train of horses and camels; and the troops might prepare for a long absence, since more than six months were employed in the tranquil journey of a caravan from Samarcand to Pekin. Neither age, nor the severity of the winter, could retard the impatience of Timour; he mounted on horseback, passed the Sihoon on the ice, marched seventy-six parasangs, three hundred miles, from his capital, and pitched his last camp in the neighborhood of Otrar, where he was expected by the angel of death. Fatigue, and the indiscreet use of iced water, accelerated the progress of his fever; and the conqueror of Asia expired in the seventieth year of his age, thirty-five years after he had ascended the throne of Zagatai. His designs were lost; his armies were disbanded; China was saved; and fourteen years after his decease, the most powerful of his children sent an embassy of friendship and commerce to the court of Pekin. [65]

[Footnote 63: For the return, triumph, and death of Timour, see

Sherefeddin (l. vi. c. 1--30) and Arabshah, (tom. ii. c. 36--47.)]

[Footnote 64: Sherefeddin (l. vi. c. 24) mentions the ambassadors of one of the most potent sovereigns of Europe. We know that it was Henry III. king of Castile; and the curious relation of his two embassies is still extant, (Mariana, Hist. Hispan. l. xix. c. 11, tom. ii. p. 329, 330. Avertissement à l'Hist. de Timur Bec, p. 28--33.) There appears likewise to have been some correspondence between the Mogul emperor and the court of Charles VII. king of France, (Histoire de France, par Velly et Villaret, tom. xii. p. 336.)]

[Footnote 65: See the translation of the Persian account of their embassy, a curious and original piece, (in the ivth part of the Relations de Thevenot.) They presented the emperor of China with an old horse which Timour had formerly rode. It was in the year 1419 that they departed from the court of Herat, to which place they returned in 1422 from Pekin.]

The fame of Timour has pervaded the East and West: his posterity is still invested with the Imperial title; and the admiration of his subjects, who revered him almost as a deity, may be justified in some degree by the praise or confession of his bitterest enemies. [66] Although he was lame of a hand and foot, his form and stature were not unworthy of his rank; and his vigorous health, so essential to himself and to the world, was corroborated by temperance and exercise. In his familiar discourse he was grave and modest, and if he was ignorant of

the Arabic language, he spoke with fluency and elegance the Persian and Turkish idioms. It was his delight to converse with the learned on topics of history and science; and the amusement of his leisure hours was the game of chess, which he improved or corrupted with new refinements. [67] In his religion he was a zealous, though not perhaps an orthodox, Mussulman; [68] but his sound understanding may tempt us to believe, that a superstitious reverence for omens and prophecies, for saints and astrologers, was only affected as an instrument of policy. In the government of a vast empire, he stood alone and absolute, without a rebel to oppose his power, a favorite to seduce his affections, or a minister to mislead his judgment. It was his firmest maxim, that whatever might be the consequence, the word of the prince should never be disputed or recalled; but his foes have maliciously observed, that the commands of anger and destruction were more strictly executed than those of beneficence and favor. His sons and grandsons, of whom Timour left six-and-thirty at his decease, were his first and most submissive subjects; and whenever they deviated from their duty, they were corrected, according to the laws of Zingis, with the bastinade, and afterwards restored to honor and command. Perhaps his heart was not devoid of the social virtues; perhaps he was not incapable of loving his friends and pardoning his enemies; but the rules of morality are founded on the public interest; and it may be sufficient to applaud the wisdom of a monarch, for the liberality by which he is not impoverished, and for the justice by which he is strengthened and enriched. To maintain the harmony of authority and obedience, to chastise the proud, to protect the weak, to reward the deserving, to banish vice and idleness

from his dominions, to secure the traveller and merchant, to restrain the depredations of the soldier, to cherish the labors of the husbandman, to encourage industry and learning, and, by an equal and moderate assessment, to increase the revenue, without increasing the taxes, are indeed the duties of a prince; but, in the discharge of these duties, he finds an ample and immediate recompense. Timour might boast, that, at his accession to the throne, Asia was the prey of anarchy and rapine, whilst under his prosperous monarchy a child, fearless and unhurt, might carry a purse of gold from the East to the West. Such was his confidence of merit, that from this reformation he derived an excuse for his victories, and a title to universal dominion. The four following observations will serve to appreciate his claim to the public gratitude; and perhaps we shall conclude, that the Mogul emperor was rather the scourge than the benefactor of mankind. 1. If some partial disorders, some local oppressions, were healed by the sword of Timour, the remedy was far more pernicious than the disease. By their rapine, cruelty, and discord, the petty tyrants of Persia might afflict their subjects; but whole nations were crushed under the footsteps of the reformer. The ground which had been occupied by flourishing cities was often marked by his abominable trophies, by columns, or pyramids, of human heads. Astracan, Carizme, Delhi, Ispahan, Bagdad, Aleppo, Damascus, Boursa, Smyrna, and a thousand others, were sacked, or burnt, or utterly destroyed, in his presence, and by his troops: and perhaps his conscience would have been startled, if a priest or philosopher had dared to number the millions of victims whom he had sacrificed to the establishment of peace and order. [69] 2. His most destructive wars

were rather inroads than conquests. He invaded Turkestan, Kipzak, Russia, Hindostan, Syria, Anatolia, Armenia, and Georgia, without a hope or a desire of preserving those distant provinces. From thence he departed laden with spoil; but he left behind him neither troops to awe the contumacious, nor magistrates to protect the obedient, natives. When he had broken the fabric of their ancient government, he abandoned them to the evils which his invasion had aggravated or caused; nor were these evils compensated by any present or possible benefits. 3. The kingdoms of Transoxiana and Persia were the proper field which he labored to cultivate and adorn, as the perpetual inheritance of his family. But his peaceful labors were often interrupted, and sometimes blasted, by the absence of the conqueror. While he triumphed on the Volga or the Ganges, his servants, and even his sons, forgot their master and their duty. The public and private injuries were poorly redressed by the tardy rigor of inquiry and punishment; and we must be content to praise the Institutions of Timour, as the specious idea of a perfect monarchy. 4. Whatsoever might be the blessings of his administration, they evaporated with his life. To reign, rather than to govern, was the ambition of his children and grandchildren; [70] the enemies of each other and of the people. A fragment of the empire was upheld with some glory by Sharokh, his youngest son; but after his decease, the scene was again involved in darkness and blood; and before the end of a century, Transoxiana and Persia were trampled by the Uzbeks from the north, and the Turkmen of the black and white sheep. The race of Timour would have been extinct, if a hero, his descendant in the fifth degree, had not fled before the Uzbek arms to the conquest of Hindostan. His

successors (the great Moguls [71]) extended their sway from the mountains of Cashmir to Cape Comorin, and from Candahar to the Gulf of Bengal. Since the reign of Aurungzebe, their empire had been dissolved; their treasures of Delhi have been rifled by a Persian robber; and the richest of their kingdoms is now possessed by a company of Christian merchants, of a remote island in the Northern Ocean.

[Footnote 66: From Arabshah, tom. ii. c. 96. The bright or softer colors are borrowed from Sherefeddin, D'Herbelot, and the Institutions.]

[Footnote 67: His new system was multiplied from 32 pieces and 64 squares to 56 pieces and 110 or 130 squares; but, except in his court, the old game has been thought sufficiently elaborate. The Mogul emperor was rather pleased than hurt with the victory of a subject: a chess player will feel the value of this encomium!]

[Footnote 68: See Sherefeddin, (l. v. c. 15, 25. Arabshah tom. ii. c. 96, p. 801, 803) approves the impiety of Timour and the Moguls, who almost preferred to the Koran the Yacsa, or Law of Zingis, (cui Deus maledicat;) nor will he believe that Sharokh had abolished the use and authority of that Pagan code.]

[Footnote 69: Besides the bloody passages of this narrative, I must refer to an anticipation in the third volume of the Decline and Fall, which in a single note (p. 234, note 25) accumulates nearly 300,000

heads of the monuments of his cruelty. Except in Rowe's play on the fifth of November, I did not expect to hear of Timour's amiable moderation (White's preface, p. 7.) Yet I can excuse a generous enthusiasm in the reader, and still more in the editor, of the Institutions.]

[Footnote 70: Consult the last chapters of Sherefeddin and Arabshah, and M. De Guignes, (Hist. des Huns, tom. iv. l. xx.) Fraser's History of Nadir Shah, (p. 1--62.) The story of Timour's descendants is imperfectly told; and the second and third parts of Sherefeddin are unknown.]

[Footnote 71: Shah Allum, the present Mogul, is in the fourteenth degree from Timour, by Miran Shah, his third son. See the second volume of Dow's History of Hindostan.]

Far different was the fate of the Ottoman monarchy. The massy trunk was bent to the ground, but no sooner did the hurricane pass away, than it again rose with fresh vigor and more lively vegetation. When Timour, in every sense, had evacuated Anatolia, he left the cities without a palace, a treasure, or a king. The open country was overspread with hordes of shepherds and robbers of Tartar or Turkman origin; the recent conquests of Bajazet were restored to the emirs, one of whom, in base revenge, demolished his sepulchre; and his five sons were eager, by civil discord, to consume the remnant of their patrimony. I shall enumerate their names in the order of their age and actions. [72] 1. It is doubtful, whether I relate the story of the true Mustapha, or of an

impostor who personated that lost prince. He fought by his father's side in the battle of Angora: but when the captive sultan was permitted to inquire for his children, Mousa alone could be found; and the Turkish historians, the slaves of the triumphant faction, are persuaded that his brother was confounded among the slain. If Mustapha escaped from that disastrous field, he was concealed twelve years from his friends and enemies; till he emerged in Thessaly, and was hailed by a numerous party, as the son and successor of Bajazet. His first defeat would have been his last, had not the true, or false, Mustapha been saved by the Greeks, and restored, after the decease of his brother Mahomet, to liberty and empire. A degenerate mind seemed to argue his spurious birth; and if, on the throne of Adrianople, he was adored as the Ottoman sultan, his flight, his fetters, and an ignominious gibbet, delivered the impostor to popular contempt. A similar character and claim was asserted by several rival pretenders: thirty persons are said to have suffered under the name of Mustapha; and these frequent executions may perhaps insinuate, that the Turkish court was not perfectly secure of the death of the lawful prince.

2. After his father's captivity, Isa [73] reigned for some time in the neighborhood of Angora, Sinope, and the Black Sea; and his ambassadors were dismissed from the presence of Timour with fair promises and honorable gifts. But their master was soon deprived of his province and life, by a jealous brother, the sovereign of Amasia; and the final event suggested a pious allusion, that the law of Moses and Jesus, of Isa and Mousa, had been abrogated by the greater Mahomet.

3. Soliman is not numbered in the list of the Turkish emperors: yet he checked the victorious progress of the Moguls;

and after their departure, united for a while the thrones of Adrianople and Bursa. In war he was brave, active, and fortunate; his courage was softened by clemency; but it was likewise inflamed by presumption, and corrupted by intemperance and idleness. He relaxed the nerves of discipline, in a government where either the subject or the sovereign must continually tremble: his vices alienated the chiefs of the army and the law; and his daily drunkenness, so contemptible in a prince and a man, was doubly odious in a disciple of the prophet. In the slumber of intoxication he was surprised by his brother Mousa; and as he fled from Adrianople towards the Byzantine capital, Soliman was overtaken and slain in a bath, [731] after a reign of seven years and ten months. 4. The investiture of Mousa degraded him as the slave of the Moguls: his tributary kingdom of Anatolia was confined within a narrow limit, nor could his broken militia and empty treasury contend with the hardy and veteran bands of the sovereign of Romania. Mousa fled in disguise from the palace of Bursa; traversed the Propontis in an open boat; wandered over the Walachian and Servian hills; and after some vain attempts, ascended the throne of Adrianople, so recently stained with the blood of Soliman. In a reign of three years and a half, his troops were victorious against the Christians of Hungary and the Morea; but Mousa was ruined by his timorous disposition and unseasonable clemency. After resigning the sovereignty of Anatolia, he fell a victim to the perfidy of his ministers, and the superior ascendant of his brother Mahomet.

5. The final victory of Mahomet was the just recompense of his prudence and moderation. Before his father's captivity, the royal youth had been intrusted with the government of Amasia, thirty days' journey

from Constantinople, and the Turkish frontier against the Christians of Trebizond and Georgia. The castle, in Asiatic warfare, was esteemed impregnable; and the city of Amasia, [74] which is equally divided by the River Iris, rises on either side in the form of an amphitheatre, and represents on a smaller scale the image of Bagdad. In his rapid career, Timour appears to have overlooked this obscure and contumacious angle of Anatolia; and Mahomet, without provoking the conqueror, maintained his silent independence, and chased from the province the last stragglers of the Tartar host. [741] He relieved himself from the dangerous neighborhood of Isa; but in the contests of their more powerful brethren his firm neutrality was respected; till, after the triumph of Mousa, he stood forth the heir and avenger of the unfortunate Soliman. Mahomet obtained Anatolia by treaty, and Romania by arms; and the soldier who presented him with the head of Mousa was rewarded as the benefactor of his king and country. The eight years of his sole and peaceful reign were usefully employed in banishing the vices of civil discord, and restoring on a firmer basis the fabric of the Ottoman monarchy. His last care was the choice of two viziers, Bajazet and Ibrahim, [75] who might guide the youth of his son Amurath; and such was their union and prudence, that they concealed above forty days the emperor's death, till the arrival of his successor in the palace of Bursa. A new war was kindled in Europe by the prince, or impostor, Mustapha; the first vizier lost his army and his head; but the more fortunate Ibrahim, whose name and family are still revered, extinguished the last pretender to the throne of Bajazet, and closed the scene of domestic hostility.

[Footnote 72: The civil wars, from the death of Bajazet to that of Mustapha, are related, according to the Turks, by Demetrius Cantemir, (p. 58--82.) Of the Greeks, Chalcondyles, (l. iv. and v.,) Phranza, (l. i. c. 30--32,) and Ducas, (c. 18--27,) the last is the most copious and best informed.]

[Footnote 73: Arabshah, (tom. ii. c. 26,) whose testimony on this occasion is weighty and valuable. The existence of Isa (unknown to the Turks) is likewise confirmed by Sherefeddin, (l. v. c. 57.)]

[Footnote 731: He escaped from the bath, and fled towards Constantinople. Five mothers from a village, Dugundschi, whose inhabitants had suffered severely from the exactions of his officers, recognized and followed him. Soliman shot two of them, the others discharged their arrows in their turn the sultan fell and his head was cut off. V. Hammer, vol. i. p. 349.--M.]

[Footnote 74: Arabshah, loc. citat. Abulfeda, Geograph. tab. xvii. p. 302. Busbequius, epist. i. p. 96, 97, in Itinere C. P. et Amasiano.]

[Footnote 741: See his nine battles. V. Hammer, p. 339.--M.]

[Footnote 75: The virtues of Ibrahim are praised by a contemporary Greek, (Ducas, c. 25.) His descendants are the sole nobles in Turkey: they content themselves with the administration of his pious foundations, are excused from public offices, and receive two annual

visits from the sultan, (Cantemir, p. 76.)]

In these conflicts, the wisest Turks, and indeed the body of the nation, were strongly attached to the unity of the empire; and Romania and Anatolia, so often torn asunder by private ambition, were animated by a strong and invincible tendency of cohesion. Their efforts might have instructed the Christian powers; and had they occupied, with a confederate fleet, the Straits of Gallipoli, the Ottomans, at least in Europe, must have been speedily annihilated. But the schism of the West, and the factions and wars of France and England, diverted the Latins from this generous enterprise: they enjoyed the present respite, without a thought of futurity; and were often tempted by a momentary interest to serve the common enemy of their religion. A colony of Genoese, [76] which had been planted at Phocæa [77] on the Ionian coast, was enriched by the lucrative monopoly of alum; [78] and their tranquillity, under the Turkish empire, was secured by the annual payment of tribute. In the last civil war of the Ottomans, the Genoese governor, Adorno, a bold and ambitious youth, embraced the party of Amurath; and undertook, with seven stout galleys, to transport him from Asia to Europe. The sultan and five hundred guards embarked on board the admiral's ship; which was manned by eight hundred of the bravest Franks. His life and liberty were in their hands; nor can we, without reluctance, applaud the fidelity of Adorno, who, in the midst of the passage, knelt before him, and gratefully accepted a discharge of his arrears of tribute. They landed in sight of Mustapha and Gallipoli; two thousand Italians, armed with lances and battle-axes, attended Amurath to the conquest of Adrianople;

and this venal service was soon repaid by the ruin of the commerce and colony of Phocæa.

[Footnote 76: See Pachymer, (l. v. c. 29,) Nicephorus Gregoras, (l. ii. c. 1,) Sherefeddin, (l. v. c. 57,) and Ducas, (c. 25.) The last of these, a curious and careful observer, is entitled, from his birth and station, to particular credit in all that concerns Ionia and the islands. Among the nations that resorted to New Phocæa, he mentions the English; ('Igglnoi;) an early evidence of Mediterranean trade.]

[Footnote 77: For the spirit of navigation, and freedom of ancient Phocæa, or rather the Phocæans, consult the first book of Herodotus, and the Geographical Index of his last and learned French translator, M. Larcher (tom. vii. p. 299.)]

[Footnote 78: Phocæa is not enumerated by Pliny (Hist. Nat. xxxv. 52) among the places productive of alum: he reckons Egypt as the first, and for the second the Isle of Melos, whose alum mines are described by Tournefort, (tom. i. lettre iv.,) a traveller and a naturalist. After the loss of Phocæa, the Genoese, in 1459, found that useful mineral in the Isle of Ischia, (Ismael. Bouillaud, ad Ducam, c. 25.)]

If Timour had generously marched at the request, and to the relief, of the Greek emperor, he might be entitled to the praise and gratitude of the Christians. [79] But a Mussulman, who carried into Georgia the sword of persecution, and respected the holy warfare of Bajazet, was not

disposed to pity or succor the idolaters of Europe. The Tartar followed the impulse of ambition; and the deliverance of Constantinople was the accidental consequence. When Manuel abdicated the government, it was his prayer, rather than his hope, that the ruin of the church and state might be delayed beyond his unhappy days; and after his return from a western pilgrimage, he expected every hour the news of the sad catastrophe. On a sudden, he was astonished and rejoiced by the intelligence of the retreat, the overthrow, and the captivity of the Ottoman. Manuel [80] immediately sailed from Modon in the Morea; ascended the throne of Constantinople, and dismissed his blind competitor to an easy exile in the Isle of Lesbos. The ambassadors of the son of Bajazet were soon introduced to his presence; but their pride was fallen, their tone was modest: they were awed by the just apprehension, lest the Greeks should open to the Moguls the gates of Europe. Soliman saluted the emperor by the name of father; solicited at his hands the government or gift of Romania; and promised to deserve his favor by inviolable friendship, and the restitution of Thessalonica, with the most important places along the Strymon, the Propontis, and the Black Sea. The alliance of Soliman exposed the emperor to the enmity and revenge of Mousa: the Turks appeared in arms before the gates of Constantinople; but they were repulsed by sea and land; and unless the city was guarded by some foreign mercenaries, the Greeks must have wondered at their own triumph. But, instead of prolonging the division of the Ottoman powers, the policy or passion of Manuel was tempted to assist the most formidable of the sons of Bajazet. He concluded a treaty with Mahomet, whose progress was checked by the insuperable barrier of Gallipoli: the sultan and

his troops were transported over the Bosphorus; he was hospitably entertained in the capital; and his successful sally was the first step to the conquest of Romania. The ruin was suspended by the prudence and moderation of the conqueror: he faithfully discharged his own obligations and those of Soliman, respected the laws of gratitude and peace; and left the emperor guardian of his two younger sons, in the vain hope of saving them from the jealous cruelty of their brother Amurath. But the execution of his last testament would have offended the national honor and religion; and the divan unanimously pronounced, that the royal youths should never be abandoned to the custody and education of a Christian dog. On this refusal, the Byzantine councils were divided; but the age and caution of Manuel yielded to the presumption of his son John; and they unsheathed a dangerous weapon of revenge, by dismissing the true or false Mustapha, who had long been detained as a captive and hostage, and for whose maintenance they received an annual pension of three hundred thousand aspers. [81] At the door of his prison, Mustapha subscribed to every proposal; and the keys of Gallipoli, or rather of Europe, were stipulated as the price of his deliverance. But no sooner was he seated on the throne of Romania, than he dismissed the Greek ambassadors with a smile of contempt, declaring, in a pious tone, that, at the day of judgment, he would rather answer for the violation of an oath, than for the surrender of a Mussulman city into the hands of the infidels. The emperor was at once the enemy of the two rivals; from whom he had sustained, and to whom he had offered, an injury; and the victory of Amurath was followed, in the ensuing spring, by the siege of Constantinople. [82]

[Footnote 79: The writer who has the most abused this fabulous generosity, is our ingenious Sir William Temple, (his Works, vol. iii. p. 349, 350, octavo edition,) that lover of exotic virtue. After the conquest of Russia, &c., and the passage of the Danube, his Tartar hero relieves, visits, admires, and refuses the city of Constantine. His flattering pencil deviates in every line from the truth of history; yet his pleasing fictions are more excusable than the gross errors of Cantemir.]

[Footnote 80: For the reigns of Manuel and John, of Mahomet I. and Amurath II., see the Othman history of Cantemir, (p. 70--95,) and the three Greeks, Chalcondyles, Phranza, and Ducas, who is still superior to his rivals.]

[Footnote 81: The Turkish asper (from the Greek asproV) is, or was, a piece of white or silver money, at present much debased, but which was formerly equivalent to the 54th part, at least, of a Venetian ducat or sequin; and the 300,000 aspers, a princely allowance or royal tribute, may be computed at 2500l. sterling, (Leunclav. Pandect. Turc. p. 406--408.) * Note: According to Von Hammer, this calculation is much too low. The asper was a century before the time of which writes, the tenth part of a ducat; for the same tribute which the Byzantine writers state at 300,000 aspers the Ottomans state at 30,000 ducats, about 15000l Note, vol. p. 636.--M.]

[Footnote 82: For the siege of Constantinople in 1422, see the particular and contemporary narrative of John Cananus, published by Leo Allatius, at the end of his edition of *Acropolita*, (p. 188--199.)]

The religious merit of subduing the city of the Cæsars attracted from Asia a crowd of volunteers, who aspired to the crown of martyrdom: their military ardor was inflamed by the promise of rich spoils and beautiful females; and the sultan's ambition was consecrated by the presence and prediction of Seid Bechar, a descendant of the prophet, [83] who arrived in the camp, on a mule, with a venerable train of five hundred disciples. But he might blush, if a fanatic could blush, at the failure of his assurances. The strength of the walls resisted an army of two hundred thousand Turks; their assaults were repelled by the sallies of the Greeks and their foreign mercenaries; the old resources of defence were opposed to the new engines of attack; and the enthusiasm of the dervis, who was snatched to heaven in visionary converse with Mahomet, was answered by the credulity of the Christians, who beheld the Virgin Mary, in a violet garment, walking on the rampart and animating their courage. [84] After a siege of two months, Amurath was recalled to Boursa by a domestic revolt, which had been kindled by Greek treachery, and was soon extinguished by the death of a guiltless brother. While he led his Janizaries to new conquests in Europe and Asia, the Byzantine empire was indulged in a servile and precarious respite of thirty years. Manuel sank into the grave; and John Palæologus was permitted to reign, for an annual tribute of three hundred thousand aspers, and the dereliction of

almost all that he held beyond the suburbs of Constantinople.

[Footnote 83: Cantemir, p. 80. Cananus, who describes Seid Bechar, without naming him, supposes that the friend of Mahomet assumed in his amours the privilege of a prophet, and that the fairest of the Greek nuns were promised to the saint and his disciples.]

[Footnote 84: For this miraculous apparition, Cananus appeals to the Mussulman saint; but who will bear testimony for Seid Bechar?]

In the establishment and restoration of the Turkish empire, the first merit must doubtless be assigned to the personal qualities of the sultans; since, in human life, the most important scenes will depend on the character of a single actor. By some shades of wisdom and virtue, they may be discriminated from each other; but, except in a single instance, a period of nine reigns, and two hundred and sixty-five years, is occupied, from the elevation of Othman to the death of Soliman, by a rare series of warlike and active princes, who impressed their subjects with obedience and their enemies with terror. Instead of the slothful luxury of the seraglio, the heirs of royalty were educated in the council and the field: from early youth they were intrusted by their fathers with the command of provinces and armies; and this manly institution, which was often productive of civil war, must have essentially contributed to the discipline and vigor of the monarchy. The Ottomans cannot style themselves, like the Arabian caliphs, the descendants or successors of the apostle of God; and the kindred which

they claim with the Tartar khans of the house of Zingis appears to be founded in flattery rather than in truth. [85] Their origin is obscure; but their sacred and indefeasible right, which no time can erase, and no violence can infringe, was soon and unalterably implanted in the minds of their subjects. A weak or vicious sultan may be deposed and strangled; but his inheritance devolves to an infant or an idiot: nor has the most daring rebel presumed to ascend the throne of his lawful sovereign. [86]

[Footnote 85: See Ricaut, (l. i. c. 13.) The Turkish sultans assume the title of khan. Yet Abulghazi is ignorant of his Ottoman cousins.]

[Footnote 86: The third grand vizier of the name of Kiuperli, who was slain at the battle of Salankanen in 1691, (Cantemir, p. 382,) presumed to say that all the successors of Soliman had been fools or tyrants, and that it was time to abolish the race, (Marsigli Stato Militaire, &c., p. 28.) This political heretic was a good Whig, and justified against the French ambassador the revolution of England, (Mignot, Hist. des Ottomans, tom. iii. p. 434.) His presumption condemns the singular exception of continuing offices in the same family.]

While the transient dynasties of Asia have been continually subverted by a crafty vizier in the palace, or a victorious general in the camp, the Ottoman succession has been confirmed by the practice of five centuries, and is now incorporated with the vital principle of the Turkish nation.

To the spirit and constitution of that nation, a strong and singular influence may, however, be ascribed. The primitive subjects of Othman were the four hundred families of wandering Turkmen, who had followed his ancestors from the Oxus to the Sangar; and the plains of Anatolia are still covered with the white and black tents of their rustic brethren. But this original drop was dissolved in the mass of voluntary and vanquished subjects, who, under the name of Turks, are united by the common ties of religion, language, and manners. In the cities, from Erzeroum to Belgrade, that national appellation is common to all the Moslems, the first and most honorable inhabitants; but they have abandoned, at least in Romania, the villages, and the cultivation of the land, to the Christian peasants. In the vigorous age of the Ottoman government, the Turks were themselves excluded from all civil and military honors; and a servile class, an artificial people, was raised by the discipline of education to obey, to conquer, and to command.

[87] From the time of Orchan and the first Amurath, the sultans were persuaded that a government of the sword must be renewed in each generation with new soldiers; and that such soldiers must be sought, not in effeminate Asia, but among the hardy and warlike natives of Europe. The provinces of Thrace, Macedonia, Albania, Bulgaria, and Servia, became the perpetual seminary of the Turkish army; and when the royal fifth of the captives was diminished by conquest, an inhuman tax of the fifth child, or of every fifth year, was rigorously levied on the Christian families. At the age of twelve or fourteen years, the most robust youths were torn from their parents; their names were enrolled in a book; and from that moment they were clothed, taught, and maintained,

for the public service. According to the promise of their appearance, they were selected for the royal schools of Bursa, Pera, and Adrianople, intrusted to the care of the bashaws, or dispersed in the houses of the Anatolian peasantry. It was the first care of their masters to instruct them in the Turkish language: their bodies were exercised by every labor that could fortify their strength; they learned to wrestle, to leap, to run, to shoot with the bow, and afterwards with the musket; till they were drafted into the chambers and companies of the Janizaries, and severely trained in the military or monastic discipline of the order. The youths most conspicuous for birth, talents, and beauty, were admitted into the inferior class of Agiamoglans, or the more liberal rank of Ichoglans, of whom the former were attached to the palace, and the latter to the person, of the prince. In four successive schools, under the rod of the white eunuchs, the arts of horsemanship and of darting the javelin were their daily exercise, while those of a more studious cast applied themselves to the study of the Koran, and the knowledge of the Arabic and Persian tongues. As they advanced in seniority and merit, they were gradually dismissed to military, civil, and even ecclesiastical employments: the longer their stay, the higher was their expectation; till, at a mature period, they were admitted into the number of the forty agas, who stood before the sultan, and were promoted by his choice to the government of provinces and the first honors of the empire. [88] Such a mode of institution was admirably adapted to the form and spirit of a despotic monarchy. The ministers and generals were, in the strictest sense, the slaves of the emperor, to whose bounty they were indebted for their instruction and

support. When they left the seraglio, and suffered their beards to grow as the symbol of enfranchisement, they found themselves in an important office, without faction or friendship, without parents and without heirs, dependent on the hand which had raised them from the dust, and which, on the slightest displeasure, could break in pieces these statues of glass, as they were aptly termed by the Turkish proverb. [89] In the slow and painful steps of education, their characters and talents were unfolded to a discerning eye: the man, naked and alone, was reduced to the standard of his personal merit; and, if the sovereign had wisdom to choose, he possessed a pure and boundless liberty of choice. The Ottoman candidates were trained by the virtues of abstinence to those of action; by the habits of submission to those of command. A similar spirit was diffused among the troops; and their silence and sobriety, their patience and modesty, have extorted the reluctant praise of their Christian enemies. [90] Nor can the victory appear doubtful, if we compare the discipline and exercise of the Janizaries with the pride of birth, the independence of chivalry, the ignorance of the new levies, the mutinous temper of the veterans, and the vices of intemperance and disorder, which so long contaminated the armies of Europe.

[Footnote 87: Chalcondyles (l. v.) and Ducas (c. 23) exhibit the rude lineament of the Ottoman policy, and the transmutation of Christian children into Turkish soldiers.]

[Footnote 88: This sketch of the Turkish education and discipline is chiefly borrowed from Ricaut's State of the Ottoman Empire, the Stato

Militaire del' Imperio Ottomano of Count Marsigli, (in Haya, 1732, in folio,) and a description of the Seraglio, approved by Mr. Greaves himself, a curious traveller, and inserted in the second volume of his works.]

[Footnote 89: From the series of cxv. viziers, till the siege of Vienna, (Marsigli, p. 13,) their place may be valued at three years and a half purchase.]

[Footnote 90: See the entertaining and judicious letters of Busbequius.]

The only hope of salvation for the Greek empire, and the adjacent kingdoms, would have been some more powerful weapon, some discovery in the art of war, that would give them a decisive superiority over their Turkish foes. Such a weapon was in their hands; such a discovery had been made in the critical moment of their fate. The chemists of China or Europe had found, by casual or elaborate experiments, that a mixture of saltpetre, sulphur, and charcoal, produces, with a spark of fire, a tremendous explosion. It was soon observed, that if the expansive force were compressed in a strong tube, a ball of stone or iron might be expelled with irresistible and destructive velocity. The precise æra of the invention and application of gunpowder [91] is involved in doubtful traditions and equivocal language; yet we may clearly discern, that it was known before the middle of the fourteenth century; and that before the end of the same, the use of artillery in battles and sieges, by sea and land, was familiar to the states of Germany, Italy, Spain, France,

and England. [92] The priority of nations is of small account; none could derive any exclusive benefit from their previous or superior knowledge; and in the common improvement, they stood on the same level of relative power and military science. Nor was it possible to circumscribe the secret within the pale of the church; it was disclosed to the Turks by the treachery of apostates and the selfish policy of rivals; and the sultans had sense to adopt, and wealth to reward, the talents of a Christian engineer. The Genoese, who transported Amurath into Europe, must be accused as his preceptors; and it was probably by their hands that his cannon was cast and directed at the siege of Constantinople.

[93] The first attempt was indeed unsuccessful; but in the general warfare of the age, the advantage was on their side, who were most commonly the assailants: for a while the proportion of the attack and defence was suspended; and this thundering artillery was pointed against the walls and towers which had been erected only to resist the less potent engines of antiquity. By the Venetians, the use of gunpowder was communicated without reproach to the sultans of Egypt and Persia, their allies against the Ottoman power; the secret was soon propagated to the extremities of Asia; and the advantage of the European was confined to his easy victories over the savages of the new world. If we contrast the rapid progress of this mischievous discovery with the slow and laborious advances of reason, science, and the arts of peace, a philosopher, according to his temper, will laugh or weep at the folly of mankind.

[Footnote 91: The first and second volumes of Dr. Watson's Chemical Essays contain two valuable discourses on the discovery and composition

of gunpowder.]

[Footnote 92: On this subject modern testimonies cannot be trusted. The original passages are collected by Ducange, (Gloss. Latin. tom. i. p. 675, Bombarda.) But in the early doubtful twilight, the name, sound, fire, and effect, that seem to express our artillery, may be fairly interpreted of the old engines and the Greek fire. For the English cannon at Crecy, the authority of John Villani (Chron. l. xii. c. 65) must be weighed against the silence of Froissard. Yet Muratori (Antiquit. Italiae Medii Ævi, tom. ii. Dissert. xxvi. p. 514, 515) has produced a decisive passage from Petrarch, (De Remediis utriusque Fortunæ Dialog.,) who, before the year 1344, execrates this terrestrial thunder, nuper rara, nunc communis. * Note: Mr. Hallam makes the following observation on the objection thrown out by Gibbon: "The positive testimony of Villani, who died within two years afterwards, and had manifestly obtained much information as to the great events passing in France, cannot be rejected. He ascribes a material effect to the cannon of Edward, Colpi delle bombarde, which I suspect, from his strong expressions, had not been employed before, except against stone walls. It seems, he says, as if God thundered con grande uccisione di genti e efondamento di cavalli." Middle Ages, vol. i. p. 510.--M.]

[Footnote 93: The Turkish cannon, which Ducas (c. 30) first introduces before Belgrade, (A.D. 1436,) is mentioned by Chalcondyles (l. v. p. 123) in 1422, at the siege of Constantinople.]