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### **The Works Of Mr. George Lillo; With Some Account Of His Life**

Containing, Silvia; or, The Country Burial. A Ballad Opera. George Barnwell, A Tragedy. The Life of Scanderbeg. And The Christian Hero, A Tragedy

**Lillo, George**

**London, 1775**

A Brief Account Of The Life And Character Of Scanderbeg.

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THE LIFE AND DEEDS OF

CHARLES THE GREAT

BY THE REV. J. G. COLEMAN

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD





THE  
LIFE OF SCANDERBEG.

**T**HOUGH the life of Scanderbeg is certainly as full of the most surprizing events, his actions as wonderful, and his character as perfect and exalted, as any of the ancient heroes of Greece or Rome; yet for want of a Homer or a Virgil, a Plutarch or a Livy, to celebrate his praise, or write his life in a manner worthy of him, there are great numbers, who are conversant with the classic as well as other writers, who know very little of Scanderbeg, besides his name: so necessary to the fame even of the greatest men, is an elegant poet, or faithful historian.

The tragedy of the Christian Hero, now in rehearsal at the theatre royal in Drury Lane, is, as we have been credibly informed, founded on that wonderful and important circumstance in the life of Scanderbeg, his raising the siege of Croia, after it had been invested near six months by the numerous troops of the Turkish Sultan, Amurath the Second; who died, after infinite vexation and disappointment, of grief and rage, under the walls of the city. We judge it therefore necessary at this time to give the public some account, collected from the most authentick authors, of the life and character of this excellent prince; that those, who are as yet unacquainted with the story, may by reading this, besides the instruction and entertainment they may find in it, be the better able to judge of the play, when it shall appear upon the stage.

It may give light to the following history to observe that Albania, the country of Scanderbeg, is  
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in that part of Greece which lies between Dalmatia and Achaia, on the Adriatick and Ionian seas; and includes in it some parts of the ancient kingdoms of Epirus and Macedon, and of the provinces of Liburnia, Dalmatia and Illyria, and is supposed to have taken its present name, which is but modern, from a colony of Albanians, a people of Asia; who coming into Europe and settling there, in time communicated their name to the country.

After the conquest of Greece by Paulus Æmilius and others, Albania, though not then known by that name, was incorporated with some adjacent countries, and so became part of a Roman province under the government of the *præfectus prætorio* of Illyrium. At the division of the Empire it was allotted to the emperors of Constantinople, and so remained till the decline of their power; when the government of it fell to the family of the Castriots, who were generally called kings of Epirus, as a country of the greatest antiquity and fame, but Albania was certainly the most powerful and wealthy part of their dominions, and Croia, its metropolis, the seat of their residence.

John Castriot and Voisava, a prince and princess celebrated by the historians of that age for their uncommon perfections of mind and body, were the parents of our hero. They had besides him three sons and five daughters. The untimely fate of the three elder sons, whose names were Reposius, Stanissa and Constantine, we shall mention hereafter: of the daughters we find little more recorded than that they were married to Christian princes and noblemen suitable to their rank. George Castriot, or Scanderbeg, which last name was given him by the Turks, and is the same  
by



by which Alexander the great is known amongst them, the fourth and youngest son, was born at Croia, in the year 1405.

The overthrow of Bajazet by Tamerlane seemed for a time to have put an end to the spreading empire of the Ottomans; but after the death of that victorious prince, Mahomet the Second, the son of Bajazet, recover'd his father's kingdom, which his son Amurath the Second vastly increased by his conquests both in Asia and Europe. He was a prince of courage enough, and set no bounds to his ambition; but upon the least disappointment exceeding fretful and impatient, especially in his old age; zealous in his religion, a profound politician, a commander of great experience, and for the most part successful in his enterprizes; the most beloved by his subjects, and the most faithful observer of his word, of any of the Turkish sultans either before or after him; not that he was always a slave to it (his perfidiousness to the Castriots is a notorious instance of the contrary.) No, that was not to be expected from an arbitrary prince and an orthodox Mahometan, as Amurath was. The bigot and the tyrant, how good soever the natural disposition may be, will sometimes get the better of the man.

Amurath, in the beginning of his reign, met with some opposition; first from an impostor who pretended to be Mustapha, the son of his grandfather Bajazet; and soon after from his own younger brother of the same name. But his courage and good fortune having put an end to these domestick troubles by the death of both the Mustaphas, he quickly convinced the neighbouring princes, who had assisted his competitors, that he was not to be offended with impunity. The Mahometan king of Caramania in Asia paid his life for his temerity;





so did the Christian prince of Smyrna ; which city, with it's district, Amurath conquered and added to his other acquisitions in Asia. Greece next felt the effects of his resentment, or rather of his ambition, which incessantly urged him to seize all advantages to enlarge his dominions. His numerous troops with almost incredible celerity subdued Achaia, Thessaly and Macedon. Athens, perhaps unprepared for resistance, tamely submitted to the intolerable yoke of Turkish bondage ; and Thessalonica, after a brave defence, being taken by storm, suffered all the misery that an enraged and barbarous enemy, licensed to plunder, massacre and enslave, could possibly inflict. John Castriot, king of Epirus and Albania, who saw with grief the supineness of the Greek emperor, resolved to guard against surprize. He knew Amurath was preparing to attack him, and prudently chose rather to meet him on the borders of Macedon, than to wait for him in Albania. This wise conduct not only preserved his dominions from being the seat of war, but enabled him to annoy the enemy with little loss on his part ; the mountains, which part Macedon from Epirus, being a very happy situation for that purpose. Amurath, soon weary of a war that was likely to prove so tedious and expensive, and which in the mean while put a stop to the career of his victories, was easily induced to hearken to terms of accommodation, and yielded at length to leave Castriot the free and quiet possession of his crown and kingdom, and to make a perpetual peace with him ; conditions not to be refused by a prince comparatively so weak as the king of Epirus, and which the haughty Sultan would certainly have denied to the emperor of Constantinople. There was but one difficulty to overcome,





come, and that to a prince less generous than Castriot had been insuperable. Amurath demanded his four sons as hostages. It is easy to judge how bitter this proposal must be to an affectionate father: but considering what he owed to his brave and loyal subjects, whom the least misfortune would have exposed to inevitable ruin, and trusting to the Sultan's honour, who though known to be a vindictive and implacable enemy, was nevertheless esteemed an inviolable regarader of his word, the afflicted king complied. Amurath received the royal pledges, and ending the war carried them with him to Adrianople. We do not find that Castriot had any difference with the Sultan afterwards, and must therefore conclude that these princes, during the life of their father, were used with all the respect and honour due to their rank and characters.

George Castriot, though not above eight years of age when he came to Adrianople, was quickly distinguished and admired by the Sultan, and the whole seraglio. His extraordinary beauty, majestic deportment, wit, vivacity and greatness of mind charmed all who had the opportunity of being acquainted with him. Amurath, pleased with his promising genius, appointed him a retinue, a table and tutors to instruct him, in the same manner as his own sons, in the Mahometan religion, and all the sciences as far as they were known in the Turkish court; and being determined, as it afterwards appeared, never to part with him, he forced him to submit to circumcision, and gave him the magnificent name of Scanderbeg, or Alexander: hoping no doubt, considering his tender age, by these means to extinguish in him the very memory of the Christian religion, his father's house and native



country. Scanderbeg's improvement, especially in martial exercises, so pleased the Sultan, that having wars in Natolia, he took him with him, where he gave such proofs of his wisdom and courage, that, at nineteen years of age, Amurath gave him the command of five thousand horse, and soon after the title of Bassa. Returning himself into Europe, he left him to command all his troops in the Lesser Asia; which he did with so much success, that from thence Amurath used frequently to call him his right eye, his right hand, his defence, and the augmentor of his dominions.

Scanderbeg, in his return to Adrianople, killed a gigantic Tartar, esteemed invincible, in single combat; and some time after, being with Amurath at Bursa in Bithynia, he encountered two Persian champions, famous for their strength and courage, and who had publickly challenged any two men in the Sultan's army, with the same success.

However pleasing to a youthful, courageous and high spirited prince, honour and fame may be, yet Scanderbeg's love of truth was superior to these temptations. He was constantly attended, when in the field, by some Christian soldiers, natives of Albania, by whom he was secretly instructed and confirmed in the Christian religion: the maintaining of which and the civil liberty of his country was his governing principle, during the whole course of his laborious and important life. It is no wonder therefore, that being sent with a numerous army against the Hungarians he avoided all occasions of giving them battle. He behaved however with such prudence and circumspection, that he lost no reputation, nor drew upon himself the least suspicion from the subtle and mistrustful Sultan.

Soon





Soon after Scanderbeg's return from the Hungarian war, Amurath received an account of the death of John Castriot, the father of our hero; upon which he dispatched Sebalia, a Bassa of great courage and experience, with a powerful army into Albania; who immediately took possession of the whole kingdom, telling the people, who were surprized and without a leader, that he came as a friend by the Sultan's order only to prevent innovations, and secure the country for the interest of the hostage prince, on whom the succession was devolved; and to whom, on his arrival, which they were shortly to expect, it should be safely delivered. In the mean time Amurath, who intended nothing less, caused the three elder brothers of Scanderbeg to be secretly destroyed by poison, and reduced this Christian kingdom to the miserable condition of a Turkish province. The liberty which this brave people had so long enjoyed under the paternal care of their native princes, seemed now to be lost for ever; their churches were turned to mosques, their laws subverted, and their estates and persons become the property of the barbarous and foreign tyrant. It is much easier to imagine than describe the grief and indignation of Scanderbeg on this occasion; which, great as they were, he was so much master of himself as to conceal. He knew Amurath too well to express the least resentment whilst he was in his power, and wisely reserved himself till time should give him an opportunity to free his country and revenge the injuries done to himself and his family. Amurath, who really loved him, and was therefore unwilling to take his life, vainly imagined by heaping new honours on him at present, and promising him more and greater proofs of his favour hereafter, to extinguish the memory of his





wrongs, or make him think that those done to his brothers and his country were none to him. He was not however absolutely free from suspicion. He would sometimes talk to Scanderbeg of restoring him to his father's kingdom, to discover whether he entertained any such hopes; but all to little purpose: for Scanderbeg, who knew the success of his designs depended on their secrecy, was not to be over-reached.

The war between the Turks and Hungarians being renewed with greater violence than ever, the Sultan, notwithstanding his fair speeches and seeming confidence in Scanderbeg, did not think it proper to trust him with the sole command of his army, but set over him the bassa of Romania. The Christian army under the command of the great Hunniades, meeting the Sultan's near the Moravia, a river so called, a fierce and bloody battle ensued; wherein victory declared for the Christians. The Turks lost forty thousand men. In this battle Scanderbeg, with his countrymen the Epirots, to whom he had before communicated his design (contrary to their custom) were the first who fled, which so discouraged the Turkish army, that the rout soon became universal. In this confusion Scanderbeg and his followers seized the Turkish secretary, and having bound and conveyed him to a private place, compelled him to write an order, as from the Sultan, to the governor of Croia, to deliver to Scanderbeg, now appointed governor, the charge of that city. Their own preservation compelled them to dispatch the secretary; after which they set forward with all possible expedition, towards Albania. As soon as they arrived there, Scanderbeg sent his kinsman Amasie, a young prince of an enterprising genius (though afterwards a traitor and an apostate) with his counterfeited



counterfeit credentials to the governor of Croia; who without suspicion quitted the city, of which Scanderbeg immediately took possession. But though the Turkish governor was gone, the garrison remained. Scanderbeg therefore gave secret orders to those who had followed him from Hungary, to enter the city by small numbers at a time, to prevent suspicion; who in the dead of the night, being joined by the citizens, fell with such fury on the Turks, that in a few hours the whole garrison was cut off, except some few who submitted to the government of Scanderbeg and embraced the Christian faith.

Croia being thus happily recovered, messengers were dispatched to all parts of the kingdom to proclaim the king, and excite the people to take arms for the recovery of their liberty: but fame had already filled all parts of the country with Scanderbeg's return and the reduction of Croia. The Epirots, who had long wished for such a day, were every where in arms asserting their right and taking vengeance of their oppressors; and that with such fury, that in a few days there was not a Turk to be found in Epirus, except in a few garrisons, all which were soon subdued. Amurath heard of Scanderbeg's revolt and success with the utmost rage and indignation, but being embarrassed with the Hungarian war, affected to make light of it, and for the present spoke of it as a matter of little consequence.

Scanderbeg being now at leisure, in an assembly convened for that purpose, restored the civil government of his kingdom to its former order; and soon settling its tranquillity began to think it time to annoy his enemies; and entering Macedon, where he met with little opposition, he made the Sultan's





Sultan's subjects pay for the depredations his own had suffered, during their master's usurpation of his country. The news of this so enraged Amurath, that though the Hungarian war was not yet ended; he ordered Alibeg, a bassa, of whose conduct and courage he had a high opinion, to invade Epirus with forty thousand men, to bring Scanderbeg to him either alive or dead, and to reduce the whole country once more to his subjection. The Epirots, who justly feared falling a second time into the hands of the Turks, and terribly alarmed at the preparations, flocked from all parts of the country to their king at Croia; who entertained them with his usual cheerfulness and affability, but without the least sign of fear. The Epirots, who were afterwards better acquainted with their prince's conduct and intrepidity, were surprized to see him behave in a manner so very improper, as they thought, considering the present danger that threatened himself and people. But how was their wonder increased, when they saw that out of the multitude that attended and offered to serve him, strangers as well as Epirots, he took only eight thousand horse, and seven thousand foot, (when he might have had twice that number) and dismissed the rest. With this small army he marched to the lower Dibra, on the borders of Macedon, about eighty miles from Croia; where, in a narrow pass, defended by mountains on one hand, and a wood on the other, he encamped and waited for the Turkish army; upon its approach, he ordered Amasie, with three thousand men, to conceal himself in the wood till the armies should be engaged, and then, as opportunity offered, to attack the Turks in the rear. The bassa did Scanderbeg the justice to admire the order of his little army, but confiding in his





his numbers, came on with great resolution and assurance of success. Scanderbeg, at the head of his troops, with invincible courage sustained the attack; and beginning the battle himself with his own hand made terrible slaughter amongst the Turks. His soldiers following the example of their leader, the Turks were soon put to a stand. Alibeg, seeing this, retreated, in hopes that Scanderbeg would have followed him into the open country, where he might by his numerous army easily have encompassed and destroyed him: but being disappointed by the prudence of Scanderbeg, the Turks returned with greater fury than before: upon which, Scanderbeg retreated in his turn, which drew his enemy into the streight as he designed; where being attacked by Amasie behind, and Scanderbeg before, their great numbers were not only useless, but hastened their destruction by trampling one another to death. Upon this every one began to shift for himself. The bassa and some few others escaped with much difficulty, and left behind him twenty two thousand slain, two thousand prisoners, twenty-four standards, with all his ammunition, tents, and baggage. This glorious victory cost the Christians but three hundred men. Scanderbeg having mounted his seven thousand foot, with horses taken from the Turks, entered the Sultan's dominions: which having plundered, and with the spoils greatly enriched his followers, without reserving anything for himself, he returned triumphantly to Croia.

The loss of this battle, with that before mentioned, gained by Hunniades, so reduced the power of Amurath, that he was forced, though with great reluctance, to sue to the Hungarians for a peace; which they upon terms, that seemed indeed advantageous



tageous enough for themselves, too easily granted; and thereby lost an opportunity which has never since returned nor perhaps ever will: for had they assisted Scanderbeg with all their forces, instead of making peace with Amurath, as in justice and policy they ought to have done, the Turks might in all probability have been utterly driven out of Europe, and all the miseries they have since brought upon the Christian world been prevented. A peace was however made and solemnly sworn to by Uladisslaus king of Hungary on the Evangelists, and by Amurath on the Koran. The old Sultan, ever melancholy and impatient, grew weary of the world upon these disappointments, and after revenging himself on the king of Caramania, who had taken the advantage of his troubles to endeavour to throw off his yoke, he resigned his crown to his son Mahomet, and retired to Magnesia. Julian, Cardinal St. Angelo, the pope's legate at the court of Hungaria, being informed that the Turkish affairs were in the utmost confusion under the government of the young Sultan, persuaded Uladisslaus to break the peace, and absolved him from the oath given to Amurath; or, in other words, gave him a dispensation to be perjured. Scanderbeg's assistance was asked; who being under no obligation to the contrary, and having resolved to omit no opportunity of distressing the common enemy, raised an army of thirty thousand men, a greater than he ever brought into the field, either before or after; designing to march them through Servia in order to join the Hungarians; but Providence, that purposed, as it afterwards appeared, to vindicate its justice and make that faithless king an instance of its severity, prevented Scanderbeg from coming to his assistance. The despot of Servia, whose daughter

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Amurath had married, denying him a passage, a dispute arose, in which the despot was a sufferer; yet so much time was lost, that the battle of Verna was fought whilst Scanderbeg was on the borders of Servia. These dangers roused Amurath from his stupidity. He quitted Magnesia, and re-assumed the government; and passing over from Asia to Europe with a numerous army, joined his bassa, and marched to seek the Hungarians. The two armies met near the city of Verna in Bulgaria, where a terrible battle ensued, in which Amurath proved victorious; Uladislaus, the king of Hungaria and Poland, lost his life, with two thirds of his army and the flower of his nobility. Hunniades, the valiant prince of Transilvania, sometime after king of Hungaria, very hardly escaped; and the pope's legate, the impious promoter of this perfidious war, after being stripped and wounded, and enduring the utmost indignities and reproaches from some of those whom he had seduced, justly perished in the storm that he had raised.

The following circumstance from Knowles's account of this battle is too remarkable to be omitted. Amurath seeing the great slaughter of his men, who were forced to retreat, and even ready to fly, took the writing out of his bosom, wherein the late league was comprised, and holding it in his hand with his eyes raised towards heaven, said; "Behold, thou crucified Christ, this is the league thy followers have, in thy name, made with me; which without cause they have violated: now if thou art God, as they say thou art, revenge the wrong done to thy name and me; shew thy power upon this perjured people, who in their deeds deny thee." Amurath, who was observed after this battle to be as gloomy and dis-





discontented as ever, being asked the cause, answered, that he desired no more victories at such a price: and indeed it cost him the greatest part of his numerous army.

Having given orders for the government of his empire, he once more retired to Magnesia; but his restless mind, and thirst of revenge on Scanderbeg, soon made him weary of this unactive life; he quitted his devotions, and returning to Adrianople, took the management of the publick affairs again into his own hands, to the no small mortification of his ambitious son, to whom he had a second time committed them. Intent on the destruction of Scanderbeg, and hoping to ruin him by a fallacious peace, he sent Ayradin, a man of great subtlety, as his ambassador, to Croia. He carried with him letters from Amurath full of cruel reproaches, threats, flattery, promises and artful insinuations; calculated to work upon all the passions, especially ambition and terror; promising him, on condition he would return to his obedience and embrace the Mahometan faith, his eternal friendship, with a vast accession of wealth and power; but threatening him and his, if he refused, with utter ruin and extirpation. Scanderbeg, who detested and despised these proposals and him that sent them, dismissed the ambassador with an answer that became his own courage and the justice of his cause. The Sultan reading it was so provoked, that stroaking his white beard according to his custom when he was angry, he cried out; "Thou desirest, vain wretch, an honourable death; well, take thy wish; I will attend the funeral of my foster-son: yes, though unbidden, I will honour in person the funeral pomp of the great king of Epirus."



To keep Scanderbeg employed and waste his strength by degrees, Amurath sent Ferises with nine thousand horse to the borders of Epirus, while he himself prepared to follow him with his whole force. Scanderbeg had dismissed his army raised for the Hungarian war, and had with him only his usual complement, which was one thousand five-hundred foot and two thousand horse. Ferises attacked him with a great deal of vigour; and hoping to gain immortal honour and end the war at once by the death of Scanderbeg, with more courage than prudence, sought for him (where he was always to be found) in the front of the battle; Scanderbeg met and dispatched him by a single blow with his sabre in the fight of both armies; which so disheartened the Turks that they took to their heels, but were so closely pursued by the Epirots, that few of them escaped to carry the news to Adrianople.

The Sultan, who imputed the overthrow of Ferises to his own rashness, sent Mustapha, a commander not less valiant but more prudent, with a fresh supply of troops to the borders of Epirus; but charged him not to hazard a battle on any occasion whatever, but only to harass the frontiers, and constantly retire upon the approach of Scanderbeg; telling him he should take it for good service if he should hear, that "the trees and fruits of Epirus" had felt the effects of his anger." Mustapha so well observed his orders, that having strongly intrenched his army on the mountains that part Macedon from Epirus, he from thence by small parties sent forth from time to time grievously infested the country; burning the villages, destroying the vineyards, and doing all the mischief in their power. Scanderbeg





derbeg had too much love for his suffering people, as well as regard for his own honour, to hear of these devastations with patience. He did every thing that policy could suggest to draw them from their entrenchment; but finding all attempts of this kind ineffectual, he resolved, if possible, to drive them out by force; which he thus effected. Scanderbeg observing a small party of Turks foraging, according to their daily practice, at some distance from their camp, surprized them with four thousand horse and one thousand foot, and drove them to their trenches; which his troops entering with the fugitives, the whole camp was instantly filled with terror and confusion. The Christians, provoked with the ruin of their country, made dreadful havock of the Turks. Mustapha, seeing all was lost, escaped by the port nearest to Macedon. Five thousand Turks fell on the spot, and the rest fled; many of whom being afterwards found in Epirus were either killed or made prisoners.

Notwithstanding these triumphs, Scanderbeg had, like other great and good men, his portion of affliction. Amasie, his kinsman, seduced by the flattery of Amurath and his own ambition, deserted his cause and fled to Adrianople; where he embraced Mahometanism, and was ever after a concealed traitor or an open enemy to Scanderbeg. Lech Zachary, who possessed a small territory in Albania under the protection of Scanderbeg, who was by covenant to succeed him if he died without issue, being basely murdered by his unnatural kinsman, Lactucagne; the Venetians, upon some frivolous pretences, claimed part of this inheritance, and seizing upon the city Dayna, which lay convenient for them, fortified it against Scanderbeg.

Upon



Upon this a war ensued, in which Scanderbeg had greatly the advantage. He subdued almost the whole province of Scutaria, and defeated an army of the Venetians near the river Dryne, took many prisoners, and amongst them some of great eminence, but shed as little blood as possible. As this was a war into which he was forced against his inclination, and in which conquest itself gave him no pleasure, he was ever ready to end it upon honourable terms; which he did as soon as they were offered.

During the war Mustapha obtaining another army of the Sultan, returned into Epirus and met with worse success than before. He now lost ten thousand men, with his own liberty and that of twelve principal officers, whose ransom cost Amurath twenty five thousand ducats and many valuable presents; which with the plunder of the Turkish camp and the contributions raised in Macedon, greatly enriched the Epirots. This victory cost Scanderbeg only three hundred men.

Amurath having again defeated Hunniades, in a battle which lasted three days, on the plains of Cossova, resolved to go against Scanderbeg in person, and execute the vengeance with which he had so long threatened him; for this purpose he assembled an army at Adrianople of one hundred and sixty thousand men. Scanderbeg, who had early information of his proceedings, and foresaw where the storm would fall, prepared for his defence. He ordered those who lived in the open country in farms and villages to quit their habitations and take with them every thing that was moveable; the rest he entirely destroyed, that the enemy, on their arrival, might have nothing to subsist on. The women and children,

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and such as infirmities and old age had rendered useless, were sent into fortified places in the remotest parts of the kingdom; or into the Venetian or other neighbouring Christian dominions, where they remained till the danger was over. This, however necessary, was very grievous to the Epirots. It was a moving scene to see aged parents taking leave of their children and affectionate wives of their husbands, almost despairing ever to see them again: so terrible were their apprehensions of the Sultan's power. They had now long enjoyed, under their indulgent and fortunate king, liberty, safety and prosperity: he indeed had perpetual wars, but wars more advantageous to his people than peace itself. All these blessings they thought must now be lost; some perhaps feared for themselves, but all trembled for their king and country. Scanderbeg alone was himself on this occasion: he laboured for their preservation without partaking of their fears; he ordered the fortifications of Croia to be repaired and improved; and sending thence all who might be useless or burthensome, he supplied it with provisions and ammunition for twelve months, added one thousand three hundred men to the inhabitants for its defence, and appointed Uraconties governor, a man every way equal to so important a trust. Of all that were able to bear arms he chose only ten thousand men, with which small army he remained in the open country and sent the rest to defend the cities, and other defensible places in his dominions. Amurath, who travelled slow by reason of his great age, sent forty thousand light horse before him to besiege Setigrade on the borders of Macedon, the second city for strength in Epirus; whilst he himself followed with the bulk of his army. The  
Turks



Turks were no sooner encamped before that city, but Scanderbeg cut off two thousand of them, to give them a taste of what entertainment they were to expect in Epirus. A few days after Amurath arrived and besieged the city with his whole force, but with no appearance of success, being repulsed with great loss in all his attacks. At length a villain poisoned the fountain which supplied the whole city with water, which obliged the garrison to surrender. Amurath, as he promised, bountifully rewarded the traitor, but had him secretly made away with soon after.

The Sultan, having once more recruited his army, prepared for the siege of Croia; not doubting but that the reduction of the capital would be followed by the submission of the whole kingdom. Croia is situated on an ascent in the plain of Tyranna, and in two places only accessible, being everywhere else defended by impregnable rocks. The numerous troops of Amurath not only blocked up the city, but covered the plains to the mountains of Tumenestra, where Scanderbeg lay with his forces to observe the enemy. The Sultan, who knew his vigilance, first took care to fortify his own camp and then summoned the city: but receiving a resolute answer from the governor, he mounted his cannon and battered the walls with such fury, that a breach was soon made. Encouraged by this success he commanded his troops to an assault, but was forced, after the loss of eight thousand Janissaries, to retreat with shame and confusion to oppose Scanderbeg, who had entered the trenches, fired the camp in several places, and with dreadful havoc and confusion drove all before him. The old Sultan, being deeply affected with the distractions of his people, gave himself





up a prey to melancholy. The whole army was dispirited : the council and officers, more anxious for their master's life than the success of the war, neglected every thing but the care of his person. His son Mahomet only, who gave early proofs of his savage disposition, drove the unwilling foldiers to the breach, where they were slaughtered on heaps without gaining the least advantage, and many received their death from the hand of that cruel prince for flying to avoid it. Scanderbeg, who never slept above two hours at a time during this siege, and even then armed, with his horse and weapons by him, gave the Turks no rest night or day, but, by assaulting them sometimes in one place and sometimes in another, kept them in perpetual fear. Mahomet burning with rage left the trenches with a great number of troops, resolving at all events to ascend the mountains, and engage his enemy there. Scanderbeg, who never failed of the best intelligence, being informed of this, left five hundred men with an able officer to guard the passage, which they did so effectually that Mahomet spent a great deal of time and lost abundance of men to no purpose. Scanderbeg in the mean while with eight thousand men marched round to the opposite side of the Turkish camp, where he was least expected, and forcing their trenches made such terrible slaughter of the enemy that their former losses seemed nothing in comparison to this. Mahomet, who had no reason to boast of his success, hearing this returned with his troops to oppose Scanderbeg and save the rest of the camp, being pursued by the five hundred Epirots to his very entrance into the trenches ; which Scanderbeg then quitted, having prevented Mahomet's design, destroyed a vast number of his enemies, and plundered their camp without the loss of one single



gleman on his own side. The least alarm, or even the name of Scanderbeg, which the Epirots frequently made use of in their attacks to terrify their enemies, was now sufficient to strike a panick through the Ottoman army and put the whole camp into confusion. Instead of battering the city, they placed their cannon on the lines that encompassed their camp to defend themselves; but this availed them little, for Scanderbeg continued to infest and destroy them almost at his pleasure. To add to their misfortunes, their provisions began to fail them. To remedy this evil, Amurath sent to Desia, a city of the Venetians; where for his money his agents were furnished with a great quantity of provisions; but Scanderbeg intercepted the convoy and sent it all to his own camp, leaving the Sultan to supply himself from his own dominions or where else he could. Amurath, to leave no means unattempted to make himself master of Croia, ordered it to be undermined; but the rock on which the city was founded, could not be sufficiently penetrated. He then tried to corrupt the governor, or raise a mutiny in the city by the force of his bribes; but being disappointed in both, he was prevailed upon to offer peace, desiring only a small yearly tribute to save his honour: but Scanderbeg absolutely refusing, he abandoned himself to despair, tore his white beard and cursed his destiny, that had reserved him to this shame in his old age. He would sometimes boast of his former glory, and count over the battles he had fought and the victories he had gained, and so aggravate his present miseries by the memory of his past triumphs. Finding himself near his end he sent for his son and the chief officers of his army, to whom he complained bitterly, and with many tears, of his hard fortune in





being compelled to resign his breath in an obscure country and in the sight of an enemy; and turning towards his son, intreated him to revenge his death. After which being speechless he struggled for some time in extreme agonies, and so expired. The Sultan's fate determined the siege of Croia. Mahomet with his broken and dejected troops took the shortest way out of Epirus; but being closely pursued by Scanderbeg, who treated them after his usual manner, that miserable army was much more reduced before they entered their new master's dominions. What thanksgiving to the Giver of Victory, what praises of their king's wisdom and magnanimity, what mutual congratulations on their deliverance filled the mouths and hearts of the Epirots on this occasion we need not describe: the thoughts of every reader, who knows the value of liberty, will more than supply that omission.

Scanderbeg, now at leisure, to the great joy of his subjects, married the daughter of Arantes Conino, prince of Durazzo; a lady of incomparable beauty, and adorned with every possible virtue in its highest perfection. After which, accompanied with his fair queen, he visited every part of his kingdom to comfort and glad the hearts of his people, whose delight he justly was, after their afflictions. In his progress he administered justice with mercy; and indeed so prudent was his government at all times, that during his whole reign, except when the Turks infested the country, persons loaded with gold might have travelled from one end of Epirus to the other without being molested. He was so far from oppressing his subjects, that it became a proverb amongst the neighbouring princes, that the Turks dominions are Scanderbeg's revenues.

Maho-



Mahomet, who succeeded his father, proved a very victorious but a very impious prince. His mother, the daughter of the Despot of Servia, was a Christian; and it was thought by some, that he would be a favourer of that religion, but he deceived their expectations and professed Mahometanism, but was secretly a contemner of both. Ambition was his God, and his practice was suitable to his faith. He conquered the two empires of Constantinople and Trapezond, twelve kingdoms, and five hundred cities, and was therefore called Mahomet the Great. And yet this mighty conqueror, during the life of Scanderbeg, could never subdue Epirus, nor any part of it, nor even keep the city of Setigrade, which was recovered from the Turks soon after the death of Amurath. Not that he was wanting in his endeavours; he had nothing more at heart: all his acquisitions cost him less perhaps than his unsuccessful attempts upon this little kingdom. After he was established in his throne he had almost continual wars with Scanderbeg: he tried flattery as well as force, and invited that prince to his court under pretence of love and admiration of his person and courage, and a desire to see him and renew their former acquaintance. He twice invaded Epirus in person, each time with two hundred thousand men; but was both times forced to return with infinite shame and loss. Nay he descended to the meanest and worst of villanies; he hired two traitors to assassinate Scanderbeg, who, to the eternal infamy of their abettors, were discovered and justly punished.

If any thing can be more wonderful than the actions of this great man's life, it is that he should be preserved amidst so many dangers to which his own courage and the malice of his enemies conti-

nually





nually exposed him, to die in peace. Being with his wife and son at Lyssa, he was attacked with a violent fever; and apprehending it to be mortal, he recommended to the princes his confidents, and the Venetian ambassador, unanimity and the care of his son, who was then in his minority, and to whom he gave much excellent advice: but above all things charged him, if he should live to undertake the government of his kingdom, so to rule as to be rather beloved than feared by his subjects: whose fidelity to himself he praised, and for whom he expressed the greatest affection. While Scanderbeg was thus setting his house in order and preparing for death with the piety of a Christian, and the resolution of a hero; news was brought him that the Turks had entered the dominions of the Venetians. Upon which, dying as he was, he rose and called for his armour; but the strength of his body not answering the vigor of his mind, he fainted, and was by his weeping attendants carried again to his bed. Recovering his speech he bid his officers hasten to the assistance of his friends, and tell the Turks, that "he was detained for the present at Lyssa, but that he would be with them to-morrow." These words of Scanderbeg, spoken in his weakness before he had recovered the perfect use of his reason, being reported by his officers, reached the Turkish camp that evening, and filled it with such terror, that expecting every moment to be attacked, the whole army remained all night under arms, and at the approach of day quitted their station and fled as if Scanderbeg had been indeed at their heels, to the mountains of Scutaria, where the greater part of them miserably perished. While the Turks were flying when none pursued, with fervent devotion and perfect resignation



tion to the divine pleasure Scanderbeg died. His afflicted kingdom and Christian confederates sustained this irreparable loss on the 17th of January 1467, in the 63d year of his age. He was interred with great magnificence in the cathedral church of St. Nicholas at Lyssa. This city about nine years after was taken by the Turks; who, though they hated him living, with much reverence took up his bones; which with great contention (every one striving for a part though ever so small) they divided amongst them; and after every one had set his portion in silver or gold, and adorned it with jewels according to his fancy or ability, they superstitiously wore them as sacred charms or amulets against cowardice and ill fortune.

Scanderbeg was of a fair complexion; his features regular, and his countenance manly and majestic. In short, his face was perfectly handsome without the least unbecoming softness. His stature was high, his limbs proportionably large and exquisitely well made. His constitution naturally good, was so improved by temperance and exercise, that he could bear the extremest vicissitudes of heat and cold and the greatest labour without any apparent inconveniency. His strength was wonderful; of which we have in several authors many surprising instances: as his cutting two men asunder with a single stroke of his scimitar; his cleaving a man at one blow from head to chine; his cutting through head pieces of iron; his killing a wild boar at one stroke, and cutting off the head of a wild and fierce buffalo at another, &c. Mahomet the Great, hearing of these and other instances of the like nature, desired to see Scanderbeg's scimitar, imagining there must be something extraordinary in it; but finding it like others, he complained that Scanderbeg had deceived him, who had sent him  
word,





word, that " he was ready at any time to convince  
 " him of the goodness of his weapon, but then it  
 " must be in his own hand, which he could not yet  
 " spare from the defence of himself and his coun-  
 " try."

The excellency of his mind, his surprizing ge-  
 nius and exalted virtue, are so visible not only in  
 the whole course but almost every action of his life,  
 that it is only repetition to say he was pious, wise,  
 liberal, just and merciful, cautious, not soon of-  
 fended and easily appeased. Of his forgiving tem-  
 per take this instance. A kinsman of his, who  
 had basely betrayed his counsels and joined with his  
 enemies the Turks, after some time returned; and  
 with a halter about his neck threw himself at his  
 feet: Scanderbeg not only raised him from the  
 ground and embraced him with great tenderness,  
 but immediately restored him to his former com-  
 mand and share in his confidence and favour. That  
 his judgment was perfect in his youth without the  
 help of experience, witness his conduct under Amu-  
 rath and his artful recovery of his native dominions:  
 and that time did not in the least abate the  
 ardor of his courage, we have the strongest proof  
 from his behaviour when in the article of death. It  
 is asserted from the undoubted evidence of those  
 who served under him, that in his wars with the  
 Turks he killed above three thousand of them with  
 his own hands, and that his troops were never de-  
 feated in any battle in which he was present. He  
 did not use to say to his soldiers, go on, but follow  
 me. In battle he exerted himself with such violence,  
 that the blood has been seen to burst from his mouth  
 and other parts of his face. He was never known  
 to retreat from a single adversary but once; and  
 that in the following manner. Scanderbeg giving  
 some

some orders to his army, a private soldier, with more petulance perhaps than malice, contradicted him; which he so resented as to draw his sabre; upon which the fellow rode away as fast as he could and Scanderbeg after him, till they came to the brink of a river; when the soldier turned about and drawing his sabre, told Scanderbeg "that he was sorry to oppose his prince, but nature bid him defend his life." This respectful but resolute behaviour so charmed Scanderbeg, that he retired and told the soldier, "he had much rather have such a man for his friend than enemy," and returning with him to the camp immediately advanced and esteemed him ever after. Prosperity never made him vain, nor adversity dejected: he had learned both how to want and how to abound. He had no ambition, no avarice, no luxurious appetite to gratify: he fought not for power but liberty; he spoiled his enemies to humble them, and to subsist his own people, not to enrich himself. When his affairs would permit he kept a sumptuous table for his officers and friends; but he himself eat but once a day, and that but sparingly. He never slept more than five hours in the twenty-four, and in times of danger would satisfy himself with two. His soldiers were richly habited, but their king generally very plain, but upon proper occasions he would appear dressed and attended with the utmost magnificence.

THE





