

of his bravery; but his fall was followed by the loss of Retimo.

The Turks, by landing fresh troops on the island, introduced the plague, which almost constantly accompanies their armies. This dreadful distemper made a rapid progress from day to day, and, like a devouring flame, exterminated the greatest part of the inhabitants. The remainder, terrified at its ravages, escaped into the Venetian states, and left the island almost a desert.

In 1626 commenced the siege of Candia, of a much longer duration than that of Troy. Were a fertile and brilliant imagination, like that of Homer, to collect into one poem the extraordinary events of this celebrated siege, posterity would be presented with noble deeds of arms, magnificent scenes, and heroes not inferior to those of the Iliad. Memorable actions are not wanting in the history of nations. Every age produces new ones; but a genius like that of the father of poetry, does not arise in many ages. It would be inconsistent with my intention, in these Letters, to enter into long details. I shall confine myself, therefore, to a cursory description of the principal events which occurred during the siege of Candia. The Turks, in 1628, had made but little progress before that place: They were frequently defeated by the Venetians, and sometimes compelled to retire to Retimo. At this period Ibrahim was solemnly deposed, and his eldest son, only nine years of age, placed on the throne, under the name of Mehemet IV. But the Sultan, in the recesses of his prison, still continuing an object of inquietude and alarm to the authors of the revolution, he was strangled on the 19th of August of the same year. The young Emperor, whose advancement to the throne, was thus effected by the murder of his father, was himself, in the end, precipitated from it, to pass the remainder of his days in the obscurity of a dungeon. The whole Ottoman history is nothing but one continued tissue of such murders and treasons; but how important are its lessons for all despots!

In 1649, Ustein Pacha, who continued the blockade of Candia, receiving no succours from the Porte, was obliged to raise the siege, and fly to Canca. The Venetians now kept the sea with a strong squadron, and attacked the Turkish fleet in the bay

of Smyrna; burnt twelve ships, two gallees, and killed six thousand men. But the infidels, some time after, having found means to land an army in Candia, recommenced with still greater fury the siege of that city, and having gained possession of an advanced work, which greatly incommoded the besieged, reduced them to the necessity of blowing it up.

From 1650 to 1658, the Venetians, continuing masters of the sea, waited every year for their enemies at the straits of the Dardanelles, and defeated their numerous fleets in four sea-fights, in which they sunk a great number of their caravelles, took many others, and spread consternation to the very walls of Constantinople, which was filled with tumult and disorder. The Grand Signior in dismay, not thinking himself in safety, abandoned his capital with precipitation.

These glorious successes raised the hopes of the Venetians, and depressed the courage of the Turks. They converted the siege of Candia into a blockade, in which they suffered considerable losses. In 1659, the Sultan, to drive the Venetian fleet from the Dardanelles, and secure a free passage for his ships, ordered two new castles to be built at the entrance of the straits. He commanded the Pacha of Canca to renew the siege of Candia, and make every effort to obtain possession of that important fortress. In the mean time the Republic of Venice, profiting by the advantages already gained, made several attempts upon Canca, which city, in 1660, being vigorously pressed, was on the point of surrendering, when the Pacha of Rhodes, hastening to its succour, threw into it a reinforcement of two thousand men. He safely doubled the point of Cape Melec, in sight of the Venetian fleet, which, lying becalmed off Cape Spada, was unable to make the smallest motion to give battle to an inferior enemy, and rob him of his conquest.

Kiopruli, the son and successor of the Visir of that name, who had so long upheld the declining fortune of the Ottoman empire, knowing that the people murmured loudly at the length of the siege of Candia, and dreading a general revolt, which must have proved fatal to him and to his master, left Constantinople about the end of 1666, at the head of a formidable army. Having eluded the vigilance of the Venetian fleet, which was waiting for him off Canca, he effected his landing at Palio Castro, and formed his lines round Candia. He had under him four Pachas, and the flower of the Ottoman forces. These troops, encouraged by the presence and promises of their commanders, and seconded

* After a reign of thirty-seven years, Mehemet IV. was deposed, and confined in a prison.