

midst of Russian victories. Potemkin, the most powerful subject in the world, sunk into shade, probably from the detection of his designs, and Ali's dream vanished for the time. Yet his sagacity saw where his own strength and the weakness of Turkey lay; and from that period he kept up a correspondence with Russia until he was master of Epirus without its aid; and if he had nothing to fear from its hostility, he had nothing to hope from its friendship.

Human nature may justly shrink from the mingled ferocity and cunning, the contempt of faith, and the furious passions, that characterise the career of this memorable barbarian. But it is impossible not to be struck by the display of vigorous and original ability, that throws a kind of sullen splendour over his whole gloomy and precipitous track. His purpose from the beginning is power; he is repeatedly baffled, but he rises again from the ground with fresh resolution; he hunts his prey through every difficulty with the fierce stanchness of a bloodhound. Treachery and valour, bribery and generosity, are alike unsparingly his instruments; where craft and labour will carry him through, he is perfidious without measure; but when he cannot wind round the rock, he tries some bold expedient, he blasts the rock, and finally makes a royal road to the throne.

By his conduct at the head of the Albanians, Ali had gained eminence as a soldier with both the Russian and Turkish armies. His reward was a Pashalik of two tails. He chose his new province with that political eye whose keenness never failed him.—He was appointed to the government of Triccala in Thessaly. This appointment showed at once the habitual blindness of the Porte in its remoter possessions, and the unwearied sagacity of its new favourite.—Triccala was chosen with the skill of a first rate tactician. By its position on the Great Passes between Western Greece and Constantinople, it

threw the corn trade into its viceroy's hands. It equally intercepted the commerce of the districts of Joannina and the whole mountain country of the west. Ali was in fact master of Thessaly, the most productive province of Greece; and by the same step was raised within sight of the sovereignty of the whole western dominions of the Ottoman. He now lost no time in the consummation of his bold project.

The Beys in the neighbourhood of Joannina, whether from their native turbulence, or, as is equally probable, excited by his intrigues, had burst into sudden tumult. Assassination, robbery, and open conflict, raged through the country. The people groaned under the multitude of petty tyrants, and grew ripe for the authority of one. In the midst of the perpetual sound of battle and misery, Ali's trumpets were heard from the hills. The civil conflict ceased, for the rival Beys knew that when he advanced all were equally a prey. They joined their troops, and fought a fierce battle with the invader at the head of the Lake of Joannina. The discipline of Ali's Albanians broke their irregular force, and after a long struggle, they were utterly defeated, and driven into the city. But it was among the characteristics of this extraordinary man never to run an unnecessary hazard. The walls of Joannina, garrisoned by a dispirited army, would probably have been mastered by his troops, however untrained to sieges. But he had a more secure, though a more circuitous way to victory. By threats and money he formed a party in the country, and induced them to send a deputation to Constantinople, proposing him for the government. The Beys, aware of the mission, instantly sent to deprecate the appointment. They succeeded. Ali's talents had already rendered him formidable at Constantinople, and his deputation returned with a Firman, commanding him to the bitter measure of withdrawing from the prize already within his