

HISTORY

OF

THE GREEK REVOLUTION.

BOOK THIRD.

CHAP. I.

Assembly of Astros—Transactions in Peloponnesus, the Archipelago,
and Eastern Greece, till the middle of the year 1823.

SECTION I.

HOWEVER severe the suffering of the insurgent population may appear to have been during the period we have gone over; however small their progress towards a well-constituted polity, yet amidst the confusion, the discord, and the civil wars of a posterior epoch, the Greeks, looking back on the fervour and comparative harmony that reigned amongst them in 1821 and 1822, fondly styled those the two happy years!

Afraid each moment of being overwhelmed by the enemy, their energies had been called into action by the necessity of repelling his attacks; the danger of invasion continually cut short their incipient disputes, and roused them from the lethargy into which they were sometimes disposed to fall. In 1823, their revolution underwent a new phase; excessively elated with the advantages they had gained over the Ottoman fleets and armies, astonished at their own success, many of them (and particularly the Peloponnesians, who were farthest removed from peril), thought less of accom-

plishing their independence, than of securing the principal authority among their countrymen, and converting to their individual use the slender resources of the state. The supineness of the Turks encouraged such ideas; for, as if exhausted by past efforts, the Porte carried on hostilities against her revolted Christian subjects in so languishing and inefficient a way, that it excited as much of contempt as apprehension. In the ordinary Oriental style, the Sultan's ministry boasted and threatened; Salik, Pasha of Adrianople, received orders to invade the Morea with 80,000 men. Mustai (or Mustafa), Vizier of Skodra, was commanded to descend upon Messalonghi with 40,000; Yussuf Pasha, Omer Vriones, &c., were to co-operate with various subsidiary corps, and it was announced that the new Grand Admiral would sweep the seas with 120 ships of war. But the mountain brought forth a mouse; and the nullity of their operations in the subsequent campaign, proved how weak the Moslems really were. The first and most considerable military event that occurred in Peloponnesus, was the retreat from Corinth of the residue of Dramali's forces, whose position at the Isthmus, become useless after the surrender of Napoli, could no longer be maintained for want of supplies, an English merchantman, which was conveying to them 150,000 okes of flour (besides salt and onions), having been cut out of the port of Cenchreæ, by Greek boats from Salamis. Leaving 800 Albanians in the Acrocorinthus, the surviving Pashas, Ali and Hassan, went by sea, with 1000 sick and wounded men, to Patrass, which they reached on the 5th of February. The Delhi Bashee Ahmed led by land towards the same place the rest of the troops, reckoned at 3500, of whom one-third consisted of cavalry, with rations for five days. In order to conceal their plan, and gain time, they made a demonstration on the side of Megaris, as though they had intended to traverse Roumelia. On the 26th of

January, there arrived a courier at Athens, from the Dervend, craving succour, because the advanced posts were attacked by the Turks ; next day, a second despatch intimated that the enemy had withdrawn, and taken the road along the southern shore of the gulf. Seven or eight hundred Greeks pursued and observed their march, keeping the crest of the hills above. The coast of Achaia is generally flat and open to a distance of two or three miles from the sea ; but it is interrupted here and there by bluff promontories, and by many rivers, which, after rain or snow, are broad, full, and rapid. Creeping painfully onwards a space of fourteen leagues, the Turks passed the Cape of Mavra Litharia (or the black rocks), jutting into the sea between Zakouli and Akrata. At that point their progress was arrested by a circumstance which ought to have been propitious to them. The Primates of Vostizza were divided by private quarrels ; and old Zaimis and Meletopoulos had each assembled a body of retainers to decide their differences by force of arms, when they learned the approach of the Mohammedans : they instantly suspended their dispute, united their bands, and intrenching themselves on the slope of a woody mountain, along which the road passes, sent to Kalavryta for reinforcements ; while the corps that had tracked the foe from Corinth, occupied the straits behind Mavra Litharia. Thus enclosed, the Turks, after two spiritless attempts to open a way either in front or rear, resigned themselves to their fate with true Mussulman apathy : they were masters of the plain and Han of Akrata, as well as the bridge over the river Crathis, but they quickly consumed their stock of rations, and the number of their enemies was daily augmenting, Andreas Zaimis, Londos, and Odysseus having crossed the gulf from Messalonghi, and detachments hastening down from the upper valleys of Arcadia. Yussuf Pasha went to their relief with his

flotilla, but was driven off by stormy weather, without being able to do any thing for them ; he then despatched a few boats, laden with provisions, which he was not ashamed to sell at a high price. As these supplies were quite inadequate to their wants, the famished soldiers, after eating all their horses, existed on the flesh of their dead comrades, and even fought over the graves. They bore this misery for six weeks, until hunger and disease reduced them to such a state, that it would have been easy to put them to the sword, if certain Greek captains, wishing to monopolize the spoil, had not objected to an attack. Four Albanian Beys gave themselves up to Odysseus, and the whole body was treating for a capitulation,* when at length, in the middle of March, the Pasha again sending his own flotilla, and three European transports, brought off a remnant of perhaps 2000, more resembling blackened skeletons than men. At Patrass, they died at the rate of twenty a day, so that a very small proportion of those who entered Peloponnesus, under the banners of Dramali, ever quitted that peninsula. As soon as they marched away from Corinth, the Greeks, without loss of time, established a fresh blockade of the Acrocorinthus.

The term of administration allotted to the provisional government installed at Piada, had now expired, and the decree convoking another congress had been issued for some weeks ; but the winter campaign in continental Greece, and the dilatory manner in which the people proceeded to choose their representatives, had hitherto prevented the accomplishment of that measure. At last, in the months of February and March, the Hellenic deputies came together in great numbers at Astros, where they named Petro Bey president, and Theo-

* The capitulation would not have saved their lives, for the insurgents had conceived a design of sending them to perish amongst the snows of Mount Cyllene.

dore Negrís secretary, of the second National Assembly. Business at Piada had been promptly and quietly transacted, but on the present occasion there prevailed a vehement degree of ambitious animosity, and the congress was broken into two fractions of unequal strength. The smaller of the two (the military party), had for its leaders Colocotroni, Ypsilanti, and Odysseus, and its object was to partition the country into districts under the Capitanei, who were to manage the war as they thought fit, and to relegate the civil magistrates to their ancient functions of receiving and paying over the pecuniary contributions, and replenishing the magazines: in other words, to subject Greece to more than thirty companies of robbers, who would have been constantly fighting with each other. The faction of their opponents (the Primates), was headed by the Bey of Mainà, Anagnosti Delhiyani, Andreas Zaimis, and Londos, who commanded the Assembly's guard of 300 soldiers. In the multiplicity of questions submitted to them, and relating to the army, navy, finance, and jurisprudence, it was easy to find specious grounds of controversy; what alone, however, seriously occupied their minds, was the nomination of a new executive council, as on that the issue of the dispute seemed to hinge. A garden of orange and lemon trees was the spot selected for their sittings; and as the two parties refused to mingle, the bed of a brook afforded a line of demarcation, across which they communicated by messages. Frequently they were on the point of coming to blows, and it is hard to say how or when their session might have terminated, had it not been for the opportune arrival of Mavrocordato, who came from Messalonghi, attended by some Roumeliote captains, and 100 armed men. He experienced a flattering mark of public respect, the whole assembly going forth two hours' journey on the Tripolizza road, to meet and

welcome him. This incident turned the scale in favour of the Primates, Mavrocordato's natural allies, on account of his rivalship, and their enmity to Ypsilanti. Several deputies deserted the contrary side, the principal islanders, (Condourioti, Orlando, &c.) who had hitherto stood aloof, now enacted the part of mediators, and Colocotroni pretending to yield, a hollow reconciliation took place. Petro Bey, raised to the highest dignity in the state, exchanged his presidency of the congress for that of the executive power, and Sotiri Karalambi, Andreas Zaimi, and Count Andreas Metaxa (a bosom friend and adviser of Colocotroni), were appointed his colleagues in the supreme council; the nomination of a fifth member being adjourned until after the government should have sat down at Tripolizza, when it was proposed to pay the islanders the compliment of referring to them the choice of a proper person. Mavrocordato accepted the office of Secretary of State. A few slight changes and additions were introduced into the organic law of Epidaurus; of these the most important were, the confirmation of two decrees, one of which (emanating from Corinth, and dated May 12, 1822), suppressed all local and provincial jurisdictions: the other published at Hermione, on the 21st of November, prescribed the mode and forms to be observed in electing representatives. The first, the corner-stone of Mavrocordato's system of centralization, was of course palatable to men in power, but could not be carried into plenary execution, except in the smallest and weakest islands. Indeed, the experience of ages has proved, that if Greeks are to adhere to republican institutions, federalism suits them best, and that monarchy alone can knit them together. The command of the Peloponnesian militia being continued to Colocotroni, Mark Bozzaris was named Generalissimo (Stratarch) of

Western, and Odysseus of Eastern Greece, and the latter received a positive, though insincere promise, that within a month, 9000 men should march to his assistance from the Morea.

The assembly of Astros, the most numerous national congress ever convened in Greece, closed on the 28th of April, after a stormy session ; its acts were signed by upwards of 260 deputies, comprehending the Archbishop of Arta, the Bishops of Modon, Vresthenes, Androussa, and Talanta, the Generals Colocotroni, Odysseus, and Yatrako, all the Moreote Kojabashees, and the Primates of Hydra, Spezzia, and Psarra. So irregularly had the elections been conducted, that while Hydra sent eight, and Crete but seven representatives, eighteen appeared from Kassos, and nineteen from Egina ! The final scene of this turbulent parliament was of a piece with the rest, for, at the moment it broke up, the clamours of a company of its guard which had not been paid, compelled the richer members to subscribe a sum of 4000 piastres.

As the new executive counsellors declined trusting their persons to the discretion of Colocotroni, whose influence was paramount at Nauplia, they went to reside at Tripolizza, that city having fully recovered from its sack and ruin in 1821.

Through their jealousy of each other, both Ypsilanti and Mavrocordato were now lowered from their previous eminence, the first being entirely neglected and laid aside, and his rival holding a second-rate office ; the supreme authority was lodged in natives of the insurgent provinces, and it remained to be seen how far the latter were capable of handling it. At Tripolizza, they were to give the finishing touch to the arrangements left incomplete at Astros ; but it soon became evident that the accommodation so hastily patched up there was but a brief truce, which could

not smother the latent discontents. An understanding existed, that George Condouriotti should assume the post of president of the legislative body ; however, when the day arrived for swearing him in, to the surprise of the spectators, his brother-in-law Orlando presented himself and took the oath. This unexpected alteration mortally offended the Spezziotes and Psarrians, who declared they would rather separate from the confederacy than suffer a Hydriote of such slender repute as Orlando to be chief of the Senate. Perceiving how utterly unpopular his appointment was, he in about a month resigned it, and retired to Hydra, abandoning his functions to the vice-president Theodoret, Bishop of Vresthenes, whose dissolute life gave so much scandal, that in the middle of summer he was glad to skulk away into Laconia, where his diocese lay. Meanwhile Colocotroni retrieved the political defeat he had sustained at Astros ; Metaxa was his coadjutor in every thing, and he had no great difficulty in conciliating Petro Bey, as greedy of money as himself, though more profuse in spending it.

It hath been remarked by attentive observers of the march of faction in Greece, that the party of Primates, when united, was an overmatch for all else, but that it seldom long preserved the requisite harmony, and was always torn by discord a moment after victory. Such was the case in the present instance, for hardly had the government settled itself at Tripolizza, when Anagnosti Delhiyani, a man born for mischief, whose deformed body was an index of his grovelling mind, fell off from his associates, and began to intrigue with Colocotroni, desiring to obtain through the latter's support the presidency of the Senate. Theodore Negris, too, stung to the quick by the omission of his name in the list of offices, inflamed the passions of the Peloponnesian Generalissimo. Seceding with some friends (May

the 30th) to a village beyond Tegea, Colocotroni demanded the convocation of a fresh national assembly, and in order to appease his wrath, it was found necessary to admit him into the Executive with the title of vice-president. Before getting a place in the government, he would not allow any legal authority to be constituted at Nauplia, but now, as a mark of reconciliation, he permitted Vlasi of Argos to enter it as civil governor. Colliopoulo, who commanded the garrison of 300 men, displeased that his brother-in-law should have coalesced with the family of Delhiyani, to which he was personally inimical, evacuated the fortress, and, to liquidate the arrears of his troops, seized the revenue of the province of Katonachaia,* in which it is situated: Panos Colocotroni took upon him in his uncle's stead the military command of Napoli, where many refugees from Scio, Aivali, Smyrna, &c., had domiciliated themselves in the houses and shops left vacant by the Turks.

Indulging their love of power and gold, busied in embezzling the public monies, Petro Bey and Colocotroni thought not of the war; however, the expostulations of the Senate, and the remonstrances of the Roumeliote captains, having obliged them to affect an appearance of activity, Nikitas received orders to lead 3000 soldiers into Northern Greece, and it was agreed that Zaimis and Metaxa should besiege Patrass, while the other three members of the Executive went towards Attica. They set forth accordingly for their different destinations; but Metaxa, without assigning any reason, suddenly turned back from Kalavryta, and rejoined his three colleagues at Klementi, a village of Corinthia. At the same time, Colocotroni, learning that in Karitena Colliopoulo was fighting with the Delhiyanei, made that a pretext for going thither to assuage their

* Under this barbarous appellation are included the territories of Trœzene, Hermione, and Asine.

feud; and as he was determined never to pass the bounds of Peloponnesus, the Executive body granted him an ample delegation to administer its civil and military affairs, in return for which he engaged to forward troops and provisions; the Bey of Maina, Sotiri, and Metaxa, proceeded to Salamis. While Colocotroni strove in vain to pacify the hostile parties in Karitena, where a petty civil war continued till near the end of this year, a serious misunderstanding occurred at Tripolizza. In opposition to the pretensions of Anagnosti Delhiyani, the legislative council wished to put at its head Mavrocordato, who, although he really aspired to that dignity, was yet so much intimidated by the outcries of the military faction, that he declined the presidency until summoned to the bar of the Senate, July the 23d, and threatened with a prosecution. Three days afterwards the furious menaces of Colocotroni's partisans induced him to tender his resignation, and even to fly to Hydra, judging his person to be no longer safe at Tripolizza. Indeed, it is probable that he would not have been allowed to depart unmolested, if Zaimis had not hastened from Kalavryta with an armed force for his protection. The Hydriotes treated him as a friend, espoused his quarrel, and did not thenceforth dissemble their hatred of the Moreotes, and especially of Colocotroni. Murmuring and discontented, the legislative body slowly followed the Executive to Salamis, still persisting to consider Mavrocordato as their president, and to address him as such in their official correspondence. In the summer of 1823, the Greeks began to revolve the question of inviting a foreign prince; one Mavrocordato, (a Sciote merchant,) coming from Trieste, mentioned the name of Jerome Bonaparte, adding the absurd proposal that a ship should be sent to bring him away in disguise. However preposterous the idea of electing a Sovereign who possessed neither