

Book IV

Reign of Hassan II., Son of Mohammed, the Son of Busurgomid, known by the name of Ala-sikrihi-es-selam—that is, Hail to his memory—and his Son, Mohammed II.

In the preceding books, we traced the mysteries of irreligion and immorality up to their source, and stripped the secret doctrine of the Ismailites of the mask of pretended sanctity, under which it concealed itself from the eyes of the people. A doubt may, perhaps, have arisen in the minds of our readers, whether we have not scrutinized the system of the order too closely; and whether, as it was constantly kept secret, it may not have been somewhat slandered by the uninitiated and its enemies. The effects of the secret doctrine had, indeed, manifested themselves in the bloody traces of the dagger; nevertheless, these multiplied horrors might, perhaps, be attributed to accident, or private feuds, rather than to a regular system of infidelity and homicide. Even in our own days, the secret doctrines of many degenerate orders has been lauded as pure and innocent, although their results have appeared in the crimes of regicide and rebellion.

The Jesuits and the illuminati, though otherwise opposed as to their spirit—the former protecting, the latter undermining, thrones—have both been accused of profligate doctrines: the former, of permitting the killing of popes and kings; and the latter, of dispensing with thrones and religion. In the writings of individual members, the maxim may be found, that it is lawful to kill kings, and to strangle the last of them with the intestines of the last priest: these horrors, however, were never publicly taught, or acknowledged by the order at large. The regicide, imputed by Pombal to the Jesuits, and the poisoning of Ganganelli, have not been sufficiently proved; and even were this the case, the Jesuits have as little confessed the guilt of Malagrida, as have the Illuminati approved of Jean de Brie's proposition of establishing a propaganda of Assassins.

As little is the secret doctrine of the Templars convicted of profligacy, by the confessions wrung from them by the torture; and if they have been accused of it by cotemporary writers, others, of later date, have, on the other hand, defended them.

In this matter, however, the case of the Assassins is very different from that of the Templars, Jesuits, or Illuminati. All that has hitherto been said of their secret doctrine of systematic infidelity and sedition, is by no means founded on untenable conjectures, historical accusations, or forced confessions; but on the free acknowledgment of their teachers and masters; who, after having long concealed the atrocities of impiety from the eyes of the world, under the mask of the most profound hypocrisy, on a sudden lifted the veil, and published, to the profane, the mysteries of atheism and immorality, hitherto the inheritance of the initiated. This was a most inconsiderate slip; most destructive to the order, and entirely adverse to the profound policy of its founder, who had formed the well-grounded opinion that the edifice of domination and civil society can be held together only by the doctrines of faith and duty; that the open abolition of all religion and morality would necessarily entail the universal destruction of the existing order of things; and that the strongest security for blind obedience is to give reins to the wildness of the passions. Moreover, besides that, by such a desecration, the secret of the few became the property of the many, the leaders and their dupes changed parts, and the system of the order caused its own destruction from within: it also exposed itself, in all its nakedness, to its external enemies; and, by its own avowal, roused up the world to vengeance, and justified the anathemas of priests—the persecution of kings, and the curses of nations. All this had been well and thoroughly considered by

the son of Sabah; not so, however, by his namesake, and third successor, Hassan the Second, the son of Mohammed, the son of Busurgomid.

He had, as we have seen already, during his father's life, stood forward, with innovations, as a prophet, and had only preserved his life from the executioner's sword by the deepest dissimulation. As soon, however, as he succeeded to the grand-mastership, he threw off the burthensome mask, and not only gave way himself to all possible extravagances, but also permitted the same license to all others with impunity. Not content with this, he could not resist the desire to mount the pulpit himself, as a popular preacher. Had he been as enlightened as his predecessors in the grand-mastership, and had the maturity of his judgment kept pace with the riches of his attainments, he would have forborne to hurl the flaming brand of infidelity and lawlessness among the people. It was of small advantage to himself, and still less for the order, that he was considered learned, and possessed of intellect, and his father heavy and ignorant.

Preservative ignorance is better than destructive erudition, and darkness itself is to be preferred to the lurid glare of a conflagration. Hassan, the son of Mohammed, determined, at whatever cost, to be an expositor, and to favour the impunity of vice, not merely by example, but also to preach from his own mouth the irreprehensibility of crime. In Ramadan, of the 559th year of the Hegira,¹⁶² the inhabitants of the province of Rudbar were collected, by his orders, at the castle of Alamut. On the place Mossella (*the place of prayers*, situated at the foot of the castle, like the suburbs of Shiras, celebrated by Hafez),¹⁶³ a pulpit was placed, looking towards Kibla (*i. e.* the country of Mecca), to which the Moslemim turn in praying, and in the four corners, four different coloured flags were planted—a white, a red, a yellow, and a green.

Oh the seventeenth of Ramadan,¹⁶⁴ the people were assembled on this place: Hassan ascended the pulpit, and commenced by involving his hearers in error and confusion, by dark and puzzling expressions. He made them believe that an envoy of the imam (the phantom of a khalif still tottering on the Egyptian throne) had come to him, and brought an epistle, addressed to all Ismailites, by which the fundamental maxims of the sect were renovated and fortified. He declared that, according to this letter, the gates of mercy and grace were open to all who would follow and obey him; that those were the peculiarly elect; that they should be freed from all obligations of the law; released from the burthen of all commands and prohibitions; that he had brought them now to the day of the resurrection (*i. e.* the manifestation of the imam). Upon this, he began to recite, in Arabic, the khutbe, or prayer, which he pretended to have just received from the imam. An interpreter, standing at the foot of the pulpit, translated to the audience in the following words:—"Hassan, the son of Mohammed, the son of Busurgomid, is our khalif, dai, and hudshet (our successor, missionary, and proof), to whom all who profess our doctrine are to yield obedience in spiritual, as well as temporal, affairs; executing his commands, and considering his words as inspired, and must not transgress his prohibitions, but observe his behests as our own. Know all, that our Lord has mercy on them, and has led them to the most high God." He then descended from the pulpit, caused tables to be covered, and commanded the people to break the fast, and to give themselves up to all kinds of pleasure, to music, and play, as on feast days; "for to-day," said he, "is the day of the resurrection" (*i. e.* the revelation of the imam).

From this day, on which crime manifested itself undisguisedly to the world, the name of Mullahid, or Impious, which hitherto had been given to the disciples of Karmath, and other disturbers of social order, by the lawyers, was now bestowed upon all the Ismailites of Asia in general. The seventeenth of Ramadan was celebrated with games and banquets; not only as the feast of the revelation, but also as the proper epoch of the publication of their doctrine. As the Moslimin reckoned their time from the

flight of the prophet, so did the Mulahid, or Impious, from the revelation of the imam (*i. e.* the 17th Ramadan, in the 559th year of the Hegira.) And as the name of Mohammed was never mentioned without the addition of the “Blessed,” so, henceforth, was added to that of Hassan, the words “Blessed be his Memory,” which history, instead of blessing, curses. The historian Mirkhond, tells us, that he had heard from Yusuf-shah Kiatib, on the authority of credible persons who had read it, that the following inscription was over the door of the library in the castle of Alamut:—

“With the help of God,
The ruler of the world
Loosened the bands of the law.
Blessed be his name.”

Hitherto, the grand-masters had always represented themselves as only the precursors of the imam, as his missionaries and envoys, and severe censors of observance of the rules of Islamism. Hassan, however, now at once asserted that he was himself the imam, in whose hand all power lay to loosen the band of the law. By abolishing them he accredited himself with the blind multitude as lawgiver and khalif.

In this character, he wrote to the presidents and envoys of the different provinces. His letter of credentials to Reis Mosaffer, the grand-prior of Kuhistan, as his namesake had been in Irak, under the founder, Hassan Sabah, was of the following tenor: “I, Hassan, tell you that I am God’s vice-gerent on earth; and mine, in Kuhistan, is the Reis Mosaffer, whom the men of that province are to obey, and whose words they are to listen to as mine.” The reis caused a pulpit to be erected in the castle of Muminabad, the residence of the grand-prior of Kuhistan, from which he read the letter of the grand-master to the people. The majority of the inhabitants heard the perusal with joy. They played the pipe and drum, danced and drank wine at the foot of the pulpit, and made known their contempt of law, and their libertinism in every possible way. Some few, who remained true to the doctrines of Islamism, emigrated; others, who could not resolve upon this step, stayed, and shared with the rest the reputation of impiety.

Thus the standard of the freest infidelity and most daring libertinism floated on all the castles of Rudbar and Kuhistan, as the insignia of the new doctrine; and instead of the name of the Egyptian khalif, that of Hassan resounded from all the pulpits, as that of the true successor of the prophet. Since prejudices are often more deeply rooted in the breast than religious rites and moral laws, it was easier for Hassan to assume the character of legislator than that of imam, whom the people hitherto only acknowledged in the Egyptian khalif.

In order to support his pretensions to this title, he at length found it necessary to deduce his descent in blood from the Fatimite khalifs; and although he had, in the public assembly of the 17th Ramadan, called himself the son of Mohammed Ben Busurgomid, he endeavoured to prove, partly by dark intimations, partly by ambiguous writings, the opinion that he was a son of Nesar’s and grandson of the Khalif Mostanssur, during whose reign the founder, Hassan Ben Sabah, had been at Cairo, and had, in the political dissensions of the Ismailites, espoused the party of Mostanssur’s elder son against his younger brother, Nesar; on which account he had been compelled by the generalissimo, Bedr Jemali, to quit Egypt, as we have before related more at length. The rumour which his adherents dispersed

abroad in confirmation of his descent was to this effect. A certain Abulhassan Seide, a confidant of the Khalif Mostanssur, had come from Egypt to Alamut a year after his patron's death, and had brought with him a son of Nesar's, whom he confided to the care of Hassan Ben Sabah, who received the envoy with great respect, and had assigned to the young imam a village at the foot of the castle as a residence, where he, after a time, married, and gave his son the name, "Blessed be his Memory."

At the same time that the imam's wife was delivered of this child, the wife of the grand-master, Mohammed, son of Busurgomid, was in her accouchement. A confidential female servant carried the young "Blessed be his Memory" into the castle, and substituted him in the place of the son of Mohammed. As this tale was too absurd to meet with easy credence, and as, according to their pure doctrine, that all was indifferent and nothing forbidden, the assertors of this genealogy were not ashamed subsequently to maintain that the young imam had had clandestine intercourse with Mohammed's wife, the fruit of which was the reigning grand-master, imam, and khalif, Blessed be his Memory. Thus, Hassan preferred being thought a bastard of the blood of the khalifs, to being deemed his father's legitimate child. The honour of the mother was sacrificed to the ambition of the son; and because adultery afforded grounds to his pretensions, the sanctity of the harem was forced to give place to the merit of ambition.

The Ismailites, who, in this manner, made Hassan a descendant of Nesar, the son of Khalif Mostanssur, were called Nesari, a name considered synonymous with the Impious or the Assassins. They gave Hassan the name of Kaimolkiamet (i. e. *Lord of the Resurrection*), and called themselves the sect of the Resurrection or Revelation; for, by the epoch of the resurrection they understood the time when the one about to rise (Kaim, i. e. *the imam*), should bring them near to God by the removal of all laws. This period had, according to their pernicious opinion, occurred during the imamat of Hassan, who, on that account, emancipated the people from all legal obligations. Thus were the bounds of duty and morals at once and openly violated. Undismayed, and with heads erect, Vice and Crime stalked over the ruins of Religion and social order; and Murder, which hitherto had felled the destined victims under the mask of blind obedience, and as the executioner of a secret tribunal, now raged in indiscriminate massacres.¹⁶⁵

Hassan, as might have been expected, died a martyr to his new doctrine. In the fourth year of his licentious reign, he fell at the castle of Lamsir, by the dagger of his brother-in-law, a descendant of the family Buyeb. In this murder, the historian views not so much the visitation of celestial wrath on so many crimes (which, indeed, both his predecessors and successors had better merited), as the natural punishment of insulted prudence, which, in the ordinary course of human affairs, is sooner or later avenged equally with the greatest viciousness. It was the height of imprudence in Hassan, the learned explainer, to surrender the most recondite doctrines of the order to the many-headed hydra, the people; and he sealed with his own blood the universally accorded liberty of murder.

Reign of Mohammed II., Son of Hassan II.

The conflagration which Hassan had kindled, by the revelation of the secret doctrine, was not extinguished by his blood, but, on the contrary, extended its flames through all Asia during the reign of his son and successor, Mohammed II. The first act of his government was to revenge his father's death; whose murderer, Hassan Nanwer, together with all his kindred, both male and female, bled under the executioner's axe. Instead of profiting by this bloody example, to strike into a better road, he constantly pursued the same path. He preached, even more loudly than his father, the doctrine of impiety; and, like him, asserted his rights to the dignity of supreme imam. Deeply versed in

philosophical studies, he considered himself to be in these, as in other branches of knowledge, alone and unequalled. Many of his philosophical and legal apothegms have been handed down by tradition; we shall not, however, cite them in this history. He did homage by these studies, not only to the institution of the founder of the order, who, profoundly acquainted with the mathematical and metaphysical sciences, had collected books and instruments in his castle of Alamut, but also to the spirit of the ages in which the civilization of modern Persia approached the summit of its splendour; and philosophy as well as poetry were at the epoch of their greatest glory in that country. Cotemporary with his long reign of forty-six years (for so long did the clemency of heaven endure the monster on earth), lived and died a pleiad of Persian poets, greater and more illustrious than that of the Alexandrines under the Ptolemies, or that of the French poets under Francis the First.¹⁶⁶

During this period flourished the lyric poets, Suseni¹⁶⁷ and Watwat,¹⁶⁸ of whom the former may be considered the creator of the metrical system, and the latter as the legislator of Persian poetry; the two great panegyrist, Khakani¹⁶⁹ and Sohair Faryabi,¹⁷⁰ who, together with their predecessor, Enweri, stand the great columns of the splendid edifice of oriental eulogium; the two great mystics, Senayi¹⁷¹ and Attar,¹⁷² the former writer of the “Ornamental Garden,” Kadikat, which the well-known author of the “Garden of Roses and Fruit,” Saadi, seems to have kept in view; the latter the composer of the “Dialogues of Birds” (Mantikettair) and other celebrated works, in whose footsteps trod Jelealaddin Rumi,¹⁷³ the great mystic poet of the east; lastly, Nisami, the greatest romantic poet of the Persians, the immortal bard of Khosru and Shirin.

Besides this pleiad of poets, other stars of the first magnitude shone in the hemisphere of juridical and metaphysical science. The Sheikh Abdolkadir-Ghilani,¹⁷⁴ the founder of one of the most respectable orders of dervises, and whose monument at Bagdad is, to this day, visited by pilgrims no less frequently than that of the great Imam Ebu Hanife; the two great jurists, Ahmed Ibn Mahmud Gasnewi¹⁷⁵ and Imam Borhaneddin Ali Ben Ebibekr Almaraghainani;¹⁷⁶ the former, author of the “Mokademme” (*Prolegomena*), the latter of the “Hedayet” (Guide), two classical works of practical jurisprudence; the secretary Amad,¹⁷⁷ immortal in the annals of calligraphy; the great historian Ibn Essir Jeseri,¹⁷⁸ the composer of the “Kamil;” and, to conclude, the philosopher Shehabeddin Sehrwerdi,¹⁷⁹ and the Imam Fakhr Rasi,¹⁸⁰ who must not be confounded with their namesakes, the former with the sheikh, nor the latter with the poet nor the physician Rhases. Both of them are remarkable, not only in the history of literature, on account of their opinions, but also in that of the Assassins, by reason of their fate, as presenting, both by their lives and their deaths, examples of the danger which the literati incurred, who either openly reprovved or combatted the doctrines of infidelity.

The former, namely, the philosopher Abufeth-Yahya Ben Hanosh Ben Emirek, commonly celebrated as Shehabeddin Sehrwerdi, the writer of several metaphysical works, was put to death at Aleppo by the son of Salaheddin, by order of his father, because his doctrines had been condemned by the College of Jurists as philosophical, or, in other words, as atheistical, and the shedding his blood was declared to be lawful. The Imam Fakhreddin Rasi being menaced with the same fate, escaped it, but not without great danger. During the grand-mastership of Mohammed II., the son of Hassan II., he taught jurisprudence publicly in his native city, Rei. Having been slandered by some who envied his reputation, as being secretly a disciple of the Ismailitic doctrine, and even one of their missionaries and envoys, he mounted the pulpit, and in order to clear himself from the imputation, he abused and anathematized the Ismailites. As soon as the grand-master received information of this, through his emissaries, he sent a Fedavi, or initiated Assassin, to Rei with special instructions. This man appeared as a student of law, and in that character visited the imam’s college. Seven months elapsed ere he found a fitting opportunity of executing his commission. At length he watched an instant when the

imam's servant was absent in quest of food, and his master alone in his cabinet.

The Fedavi entered, locked the door, and throwing the imam to the ground, placed himself with his drawn dagger on his breast. The imam demanded his purpose. "To tear out thy heart and bowels!"—"And wherefore?"—"Because thou hast spoken evil of the Ismailites in the public pulpit." The imam conjured the Assassin to spare his life, and swore most solemnly never to slander the Ismailites again. "If I leave thee," said the murderer, "thou wilt fall back into thy old ways, and consider thyself released from thy oath by artful sophistries." The imam renounced all explaining away of the oath, and was willing to abide the penalties of perjury. "I had no commands to slay thee, or I had not been wanting in the execution. Mohammed, the son of Hassan, greets thee, and requests thee to honour him with a visit at his castle. Thou shalt there receive unbounded power, and we will obey thee as honest servants. 'We despise,' says the grand-master, 'the rumours of the people, which glide from our ears like nuts from a globe; but you shall not insult us, because your words are graven as with a graver on stone.'" The imam replied that he could not go to Alamut, but that, in future, he would not permit himself to utter a word against the lord of that fortress. Upon this the Fedavi drew three hundred pieces of gold from his girdle, which he gave him, saying, "Behold thy pension; and by a decree of the divan, thou wilt receive the same sum annually from the Reis Mosaffer. I also leave thee two dresses of Yemen for thy servant; these also the grand-master sends thee." At the same instant the Fedavi disappeared. The imam took the dresses and the money, and for four or five years the same sum was scrupulously paid him. Prior to this occurrence, he was wont, whenever he mentioned the Ismailites in a discussion, to express himself thus: "Whatever the Ismailites (whom may God curse and destroy) may say." After he had received the pension, he always said briefly: "Whatever the Ismailites may say." He answered one of his pupils, who asked him the cause of this change: "We may not curse the Ismailites; their arguments are too convincing and pointed."

This singular occurrence, which is related by several Persian historians,¹⁸¹ circumstantially and concordantly, shows that the grand-master's policy did not consider murder only as the most effective measure, but also frequently deemed the fear of it, and money, preferable. It shows also that the divan, or assembly of the order, studied less the removal of their foes than the converting them into friends, especially where they were men of learning and celebrity, as their lives being spared was of far more advantage to the order in public opinion, than their violent deaths could have been.

With the exception of this anecdote of the Imam Fakhr Rasi, history mentions little or nothing of what occurred to the order during the reign of Mohammed, in the Persian provinces of Jebal and Kuhistan. It is, however, much more fertile in events of immediate interest in the history of the Assassins, if we turn our eyes towards Syria, which was, at the same time, the celebrated stage of the glorious deeds of the Crusaders and Salaheddin. As this great prince seems to be chosen as the instrument in the hands of Providence, of the downfall of the khalifat of the Fatimites, whose partisans and missionaries the Ismailites were; so was he, likewise, very early selected by the latter as a mark for their daggers. In order to become more intimately acquainted with the man whom they marked out as their victim, and to know to what a pitch his power had risen when they made the first attempt upon his life, we shall here give, as a sequel to what has been said in the former book concerning the reign of Nureddin, a short outline of the increasing greatness of Salaheddin.

Invested after the death of his uncle, Esededdin Shirkuh, with the highest dignity in the realm, under the name of Melek Ennassir, he received from his lord, the Atabeg Nureddin, a confirmatory diploma, together with the title of Emir al Isfahlar, which means the same in Persian as the Arabic Emir al Juyush, that is, Prince of Armies. Shortly afterwards, the khalif of Bagdad sent him also a diploma,

dress of honour, and present, as an acknowledgement to him for having transferred the highest prerogative of Islam, the prayer from the pulpit on Friday, from the family of Fatima to that of Abbas. At Cairo stood the treasury, in which, for two centuries, the Fatimites had amassed the wealth of Moghreb,¹⁸² Egypt, Syria, and Arabia; its riches, surpassing all belief, was but too small for the magnanimity of Salaheddin.¹⁸³ According to Aini, an otherwise trustworthy writer, there were in this treasury alone, seven hundred pearls, each of which was, from its great size, of inestimable value; an emerald, a span long and as thick as the finger; a collection of 2,600,000 books, which, even if there is a superfluous cipher, surpassed the largest library in Europe; gold, coined and in bars; aloes, amber, and arms without end. A considerable part of this treasure Salaheddin divided immediately among the chiefs of his army. He appointed guardians to the library; the remainder of the collection being put for sale for ten years in succession, produced the sums requisite for the campaigns against the Crusaders, and for the buildings in Cairo.

He built the citadel and walls of that city, constructed the large aqueduct which brings the waters of the Nile to the fortress, and the noble halls, amongst whose beautifully arranged colonnades, stripped as they are of their roofs, the writer of this work has, more than once, indulged in airy visions of Salaheddin's greatness. Added to these, are an academy at the tomb of Shafii, an hospital at Cairo the modern, and a magazine of corn at Missr, the ancient capital of Egypt under the Arabians. All these architectural works bear the stamp of their founder's greatness, and on them is inscribed his name, Yusuf, which the ignorance of the present inhabitants of Cairo and Missr confounds with that of the Egyptian Joseph. Thus, in this case, as with the heroes of Grecian antiquity, the feats of several great men are united under one name. The space of centuries, which intervenes between two landmarks of human greatness, is lost to the thought of posterity, and the common name becomes the more prominent as a monument of antiquity on the wide plain of history. Thus it is with the Egyptian Yusuf, whether he be the Joseph of ancient history, the minister of Pharoah and grandson of Abraham, or the Yusuf of modern history, the lieutenant of Nureddin, Salaheddin, the grandson of Eyub.

Nureddin, indeed, viewed Salaheddin's increasing greatness with a jealous eye; and felt that it was no longer in his power to recall at his pleasure the master of the treasure of the Fatimites; yet was he politic enough to confirm his lieutenant, whom he could not remove, and the latter sufficiently grateful, at least nominally, to acknowledge Nureddin as his liege lord. As he did not wish to appear in open opposition to him, and yet, in case of necessity, desired to provide himself with a place of refuge, he undertook the campaign against Yemen,¹⁸⁴ whither he sent his elder brother, Turanshah, with an army. This region was, at the time, governed by Abdennebi, son of Mehdi, a disciple of the impious sect of Karmath, who exhausted the country with his extortions and oppression. The plundered treasure he collected at the tomb of his father Mehdi, at Sobeid. The walls were covered with gold, and likewise the cupola, which dazzled the eyes at some miles distance. Gold, silver, pearls, and precious stones were heaped in profusion. Abdennebi wished to make this tomb the resort of pilgrims, instead of the kaaba, and for this reason he plundered the caravans going to Mecca, and added their goods to the accumulated booty of injustice and rapine.

In the sequel, several princes, and particularly those of Persia, have, from political motives, attempted to prevent the pilgrimage to Mecca, and to turn the devotion of the people rather to other burial places, as Meshed Ali's, on the Euphrates, which was also covered with plates of gold by Shah Abbas; or Meshed Ben Mussa's, at Tuss, in Khorassan, in order that, with the caravans, the money may remain in the country. Mecca, however, retained its superiority as the true and only shrine of Islamism, which triumphed over the conquests of the Karmathites and Wahabites; and whose gates, spite of the wide-spread portals of infidelity and impiety, remained to the last ever open to the pilgrim. Turanshah

defeated and killed Abdennebi, the protector of unbelief, razed his father's monument, and added the treasures to those of his brother Salaheddin, in Egypt; by command of the latter he caused prayers to be repeated from the pulpit for the khalif of Bagdad and Nureddin.

After the death of Nureddin,¹⁸⁵ the prayers as well as the coinage were continued by Salaheddin, in Egypt and Arabia, in the name of Saleh, a boy of eleven years of age, the son of Nureddin, who, himself incapable as yet of governing, was in the power of his grandees, and particularly of the eunuch Gumushteghin, who transferred the young prince's residence to Aleppo, leaving Ibn al Mokaddem governor of Damascus. The Crusaders, who desired, after Nureddin's demise, to avail themselves of the favourable circumstance of his son's minority, threatened Damascus, the siege of which was only raised on the governor's disbursing to them large sums of money. Enraged at this, and being invited by some of the chief men, Salaheddin repaired in all haste to Damascus with only seven hundred horse. He reproached the governor with his unworthy conduct, and wrote to the young atabeg a respectful letter, in which he did homage to him as his lord, and averred that he had come into Syria only for his defence, his possessions being assailed on two sides, by the Crusaders and his nephew Seifeddin, lord of Mossul. The answer which was drawn up by his enemies, contained, instead of thanks, accusations of ingratitude and disobedience, and threats of very shortly removing him from the vice-royalty of Egypt.

Provoked at this, Salaheddin declared to Nial, the lord of Manbedj, bearer of the missive, that the inviolability of an ambassador alone preserved his head, and marched with his troops to Aleppo, in order, as he said, to have a personal interview with his young prince. On his way he took Hama and Hemss, and encamped in the vicinity of Aleppo. The inhabitants and the young prince, led by his guardian, the eunuch Gumushteghin, instead of coming to a peaceful conference with Salaheddin, advanced against him in arms. "God is my witness," exclaimed he, "that I wish it not to come to arms! but since ye will have it so, they shall decide." The troops of Aleppo were defeated, and fled in disorder to the city, which their opponents now began to besiege in due form.¹⁸⁶

Gumushteghin, who saw no protection at hand from the swords of his valiant besiegers, had recourse to the daggers of the Assassins. At that period reigned, as grand-prior at Massiat, the point, as we have seen, of the Syrian power of the Ismailites, Rashideddin Sinan,¹⁸⁷ a man, whose name and deeds are to this day remembered in their annals.¹⁸⁸

Massiat lies in the mountain range Semak, which, running parallel with the coast of the Mediterranean, unites itself with that of Lebanon.¹⁸⁹ This village, with eighteen others, belongs to the territory of Hama (Epiphania). At that time it was the chief of ten mountain forts, forming the strength of the Ismailites, whose numbers are reckoned by the cotemporary annalists of the Crusaders to amount to more than sixty thousand men.¹⁹⁰ The names of these places are found in Hadji Khalifa's Geography; ¹⁹¹ three have already been mentioned in this history; namely, Massiat, Kadmus, and Kahaf; the seven others were, Akkar, Hossnalekiad, Safita, Alik, Hossnalkarnin, Sihinn, and Sarmin, and were the first colonies of the Ismailites in Syria.¹⁹² By means of these strongholds, and the daggers of the Assassins, Rashideddin Sinan was supreme in the mountainous parts of the north of Syria. Salaheddin, the proper defender of the faith, who had given the final blow to the Fatimite khalifate in Egypt, and whose increasing power threatened to ingulph that of the Atabegs in Syria, was the natural and most dangerous enemy of the order, and consequently their daggers were unceasingly aimed against him. A large sum of money contributed to procure easier access to the grand-prior Sinan, for the prayer of Gumushteghin, that Salaheddin should be the victim of their mutual revenge. Three Assassins attacked him in the camp before Aleppo; fortunately, they inflicted no mortal wound, and were themselves cut

While the eunuch was concerting Salaheddin's fall, he scarcely escaped his own; which his enemies, the vizier Shehabeddin Abu Saleh, and the emirs Jemaleddin, Shadbakht, and Mojahid, had conspired to ensure, in order to deprive him of the favour of Meleksaleh. To anticipate their purpose, he had recourse to the usual means dictated by his policy. As the young prince was starting on a hunting excursion, Gumushteghin presented him with a blank sheet of paper, desiring his signature for the despatch of some pressing business. Meleksaleh signed unsuspectingly, and his minister filled the paper with a letter from his master to Sinan, the grand-prior of the Assassins, requesting agents from him, for the purpose of despatching the three emirs above-mentioned. Sinan, thinking that Meleksaleh wished, by this deed, to remove some obstacles to his unbounded power, sent several murderers. Two of them, who attacked the vizier as he was proceeding to a mosque, lying near his house, without the eastern gate, were killed on the spot.

Soon after, Mojahid was set upon by three others: one seized the skirt of his mantle, to stab with more certainty; but Mojahid spurred his horse, and escaped the fatal blow, leaving his mantle behind. The people seized the Assassins, two of whom were accustomed frequently to visit Mojahid's groom. One of them was crucified; and the same was the fate of the groom, on whose breast was fixed the inscription, "This is the reward of the concealers of villains." The other Assassin was dragged to the citadel, and beaten on the pierced soles of his feet, to compel him to confess the motives of his crime. In the midst of the torture, he called out to the young prince: "Thou desirest from our lord Sinan, the death of thy slaves, and now thou punishest us for the execution of thy orders."

Indignant at this, Meleksaleh wrote a letter, full of reproaches, to Sinan, who returned him one subscribed by himself as his answer. This was the origin of a kind of correspondence between them. Rashideddin had frequently applied to the prince, for the restoration of the district of Hajira, of which the Ismailites had been deprived. As his writing had been fruitless, he had recourse, this time, not from the pen to the dagger, but to the still more destructive means, fire. The Assassins appeared as incendiaries, who set fire to several bazaars of Aleppo, with burning naphtha. All the efforts of the governor and his people to extinguish the conflagration were fruitless, which being produced by means similar to the celebrated Greek fire, resisted pertinaciously the action of water. Many buildings were entirely consumed, and an immense quantity of rich stuffs and commodities of all kinds fell a prey to the flames. The Assassins threw burning naphtha into the streets, from the terraces of the houses, and, in the midst of the confusion, escaped the popular rage unhurt.¹⁹⁴

Meleksaleh Ismail, Prince of Aleppo, whose favourite, Gumushteghin, had in vain unsheathed the dagger of the Assassins against Salaheddin, now sought assistance from the Crusaders, and his nephew Seifeddin, Lord of Mossul. The former laid siege to Emessa, but retired on the approach of Salaheddin; but Seifeddin, and Aseddin, his brother, united their forces with those of Ismail, at Aleppo. Salaheddin once more attempted to come to an amicable arrangement with the latter. He offered him, in a submissive letter, the restoration of Hama, Hemss, and Baalbek; and stipulated only for the vice-royalty of Egypt, and the possession of Damascus. His liberality was deemed weakness. A great battle was fought at Hama, in which the combined forces of Mossul and Aleppo were completely routed.¹⁹⁵

From that day forward, he advanced with steady steps in the path of sovereignty, as he transferred to his own name the two prerogatives of coinage and prayer, which hitherto had remained, in Egypt and Syria, in the name of Saleh. The latter received peaceful possession of Aleppo, only by humble supplication, and the lord of Mossul, who again took the field, with those of Hossn Keif and Maradin,

lost at Tell, near Hama, both his camp and army. Salaheddin divided the booty among his soldiers, set the prisoners free, and took the fortresses of Asas, Manbedj, and Bosaa.

During the siege he was, a second time, attacked by an Assassin, who wounded him in the head. Salaheddin seized his hand in time, and struck him down. Another immediately rushed forward, but was cut down by the guards; two others followed with no better success.¹⁹⁶ Having before their eyes the example of their three precursors, who had fallen in a similar attempt, they hoped the better to attain their object by rushing on successively, and, by throwing the sultan and his guard into consternation, succeed in taking his life. The first part of their plan was more successful than the last. Salaheddin, terrified by these repeated attacks, retired to his tent, mustered his army, and drove away all strangers.¹⁹⁷

The following year,¹⁹⁸ however, as soon as he had concluded a peace with the lords of Mossul and Aleppo, he attacked the territory of the Ismailites, ravaged it, and blockaded the fortress, Massiat. He would have carried it, and would have annihilated the power of the Ismailites in Syria, had not his uncle, Shehabeddin, Lord of Hama, moved by the entreaties of the grand-prior, Sinan, interposed, and induced his nephew to make peace, on condition that he should, in future, be secured from the Assassin's dagger; and, in fact, Salaheddin reigned fifteen years afterwards, carried on his campaigns in Egypt and Syria, and captured the strongest places of the Crusaders, even Jerusalem itself, without experiencing another murderous attack.

Whether it was that the double failure of the Assassins, restrained them from a third attempt, or that the order considered it necessary to preserve Salaheddin, the greatest enemy of the Crusaders, as a counterpoise to the growing power of the latter; or, lastly, that, contrary to the fundamental maxims of the order, some idea of the sanctity of a treaty floated in the mind of the grand-prior, though most improbably,—all the ties of religion and morality having been loosened, and the mysteries of impiety publicly divulged by the grand-masters, Hassan and Mohammed; it nevertheless appears, that Rashideddin Sinan struck out a path for himself, both in respect of doctrine and policy; one, too, which varied somewhat from that of his predecessors, and of the reigning grand-master. The former, as we have seen above, were the secret friends of the order of the Templars, the latter trampled on all religion. Sinan's faith and policy, however, took another direction, as is clearly shown in the unanimous accounts of cotemporary historians of the Crusaders.¹⁹⁹

What William, Bishop of Tyre, and James, Bishop of Acca, on the occasion of an embassy, despatched from the Old Man of the Mountain to the king of Jerusalem, in the year 1172, relate concerning the origin, system, and discipline of the Assassins, agrees very well with that which we have derived from oriental sources, and presented to our readers in the former books: "The Assassins," say they, "were formerly the strictest observers of the laws of Mohammedanism, till the epoch when a grand-master of genius and erudition, and intimately acquainted with the Christian tenets, and doctrine of the Gospel, abolished the prayers of Mohammed, annulled the fasts, and allowed all, without distinction, to drink wine and eat pork. The fundamental rule of their religion, consists in blind submission to their abbot, by which alone they could attain eternal life. This lord and master, who is generally called the Old Man, resides in the Persian province, lying beyond Bagdad (Jebal or Irak-Ajemi). There (at Alamut) young men are educated in secret tenets and pleasures, instructed in various languages, and then sent, armed with their daggers, throughout the world, to murder Christians and Saracens without distinction; either from hatred, as being enemies of their order, or to please its friends, or for the sake of a rich reward. Those, who had sacrificed their lives in the fulfilment of this duty, were adjudged to greater happiness in paradise, as being martyrs; their surviving relations were loaded with gifts, or, if slaves,

set at liberty. Thus was the world overrun by these miserably misled youths, who, devoted to murder, issued joyfully from their brethren's convent, to execute the sanguinary commands they had received; appearing in different forms and disguises, sometimes as monks, sometimes as merchants; in fact, in such a variety of shapes, and with so much prudence and caution, that it was impossible for the destined victims to escape their daggers. The low and mean mob of the people are safe, inasmuch as the Assassins deem it beneath their dignity to assail them; but for the great, and for princes, no remedy remains but to ransom their lives at a heavy price; or to be constantly armed and surrounded by their guards, and exist in a continued state of alarm."

On an attentive comparison of these passages, in the works of the two learned bishops, which agree in point of meaning, with the narratives of oriental writers, much is found wanting, but nothing erroneous. The strict observance of the duties of Islamism at first, the abrogation of all commandments under the last grand-masters, Hassan II., and Mohammed II., the vow of blind obedience, the bands of Assassins devoted to death, their noviciate, the institution of the order, and its murderous policy, are here comprised in a few words. It is, indeed, difficult to conceive how European historians, who, hitherto, drew from no other sources than the Byzantine and Crusading annalists, how such orientalist as D'Herbelot and Deguignes, could have regarded the Assassins as an usual dynasty of princes; whereas, here, every thing points to an order, inasmuch as they clearly speak of the abbot, convent, grand-master, rule of the order, and religion; as we should concerning the Knights-Hospitallers, the Teutonic knights, and the Templars. Every thing harmonizes with the contents of the preceding books of this history: one circumstance only, that of the superior, who sent the embassy, being inclined to Christianity, and desirous of conversion, does not agree with the systematic plan of irreligion of the then reigning grand-master. Either the Crusaders deceived themselves with the pious error, that because the grand-master had abjured Islamism, he must assent to Christianity; or, his policy induced him to preserve the king of Jerusalem in this opinion, and, consequently, as the friend of the order; or, lastly, what appears more probable than either of these conjectures, this mission did not proceed from the grand-master at Alamut, but from the grand-prior of the order in Syria, Rashideddin Sinan, Lord of Massiat.

It must have been the latter, and not the former, who paid the Templars the annual tribute, to effect the removal of which was the chief object of the embassy; and what gives our opinion the highest degree of probability, is the contents of Rashideddin's writings, which are to this day preserved in Syria, by the remainder of the Ismailites.²⁰⁰ In them appear evident traces of Christianity, and of an acquaintance with its sacred books.²⁰¹

Rashideddin Abulhasher Sinan, son of Suleiman of Basra, pretended that he was himself an incarnation of the Deity.²⁰² He never shewed himself but in coarse dresses of hair; he was never seen to eat, or drink, or sleep, or spit. From the top of a rock, he preached to the people, from sunrise to sunset, and was long considered by his audience as a superior being. When, however, they discovered that he limped, from having been wounded by a stone in a great earthquake,²⁰³ he was near losing both the sanctity of his character, and his life, the people wishing to murder him as an impostor. He exhorted them to patience, descended from the rock, where he had preached so long as a Stylite, invited his hearers to a banquet, and succeeded, by the power of his eloquence, in inducing them unanimously to swear obedience and fealty to him as their superior.²⁰⁴ He seized the moment when the grand-master of the Ismailites in Persia had exposed all the mysteries, and by that means sapped the foundations of the order, to envelope himself in the halo of an apostle, and confirm his dominion in Syria.

For this reason, he is unanimously considered by oriental historians as the chief of the Ismailitic doctrine in Syria;²⁰⁵ and even to this day, his writings are esteemed canonical by the Ismailites still remaining in that country. They consist of a shapeless chaos of contradictory articles of faith, which probably are all to be understood only allegorically; a host of mutilated passages from the Koran and the Gospels, hymns, litanies, sermons, prayers, and ritual ordinances. These can hardly have been preserved in their original purity, but must have descended to us intermixed with the superstition and ignorance of later centuries, like the books of the Druses, who, now as little acquainted as the Ismailites with the spirit of their founder, possess but a very imperfect knowledge of their original dogmas, and have lost the tradition of the allegorical doctrine.

It was Rashideddin Sinan, therefore, the grand-prior of Massiat, and not the cotemporary grand-master of Alamut, who sent, in the latter years of the reign of Amaury, King of Jerusalem, the envoy Behaeddeulet, a skilful, prudent, and eloquent man, with the secret offer, that he and his followers would undergo baptism, providing the Templars, their nearest neighbours on the mountains, would release them from the annual sum of two thousand ducats, and live in brotherly and peaceful union with them. King Amaury received the envoy with joy, promised to pay the Templars, out of his own purse, the two thousand ducats from which they begged to be released, and sent him, after keeping him for some time, back with guides and an escort, as far as the Ismailite confines. They had already crossed the territory of Tripoli, and had, therefore, arrived in the vicinity of their first castles, which are situated on the mountains in the environs of Tortossa, or Antoradus, when suddenly a body of Templars rushed from an ambush, and killed the envoy.²⁰⁶

Thus, these knights, who were suspected of being secretly allied to the Ismailites, and followers of their doctrine, openly proclaimed themselves likewise as Assassins: the religion of both had a bond of union in the guilt of wilful murder. The actor of this tragedy was Walter de Dumesnil, a vicious, one-eyed man; who, however, did not perform this act of atrocity from motives of private malice, but with the knowledge of the brethren, and by the command of the grand-master, Odo de St. Amand, and to avenge the order. The inducement seems to have been no other, than the Assassins having endeavoured to relieve themselves from the annual tribute of two thousand ducats to the Templars, either to purchase peace with the neighbours, or for the recompense of services performed: as, for example, as is mentioned in its place, their refusal to participate in the campaign against the Egyptian sultan, their natural protector.²⁰⁷

The king, violently enraged at this atrocity, by which the honour of the Christian name, and his own dignity, suffered so severe a blow, assembled the princes of his realm, in order to consult with them, concerning the measures proper to be adopted. Their unanimous decision was, that religion, and the royal authority, had equally suffered an affront, and could not permit this murder to pass unpunished. Seiher, of Mamedun, and Gottschalk, of Turholdt, were despatched by the council, in the name of the king and the realm, to demand satisfaction from Odo de St. Amand, for so flagitious a deed. Odo, haughty and wicked, fearing neither God nor man, replied, bursting with arrogance and rage,²⁰⁸ that he had already imposed a penance on Brother Dumesnil, and should send him to the holy father, by whom it was forbidden to lay violent hands on him; and more in the same strain, suggested by his passion. But the king, meeting the grand-master and several Templars afterwards, at Sidon, held a council, and had the murderer, as guilty of high treason, dragged from their hospital, and thrown, fettered, into a dungeon at Tyre.²⁰⁹ The death of the king, which followed soon after, saved him from well-merited punishment.

The grand-master, however, met with his, by being taken prisoner by Salaheddin, in the battle of Sidon,²¹⁰ the loss of which was attributed to his fault, and dying, the same year, unpitied in his dungeon. The king, indeed, seemed absolved in the eyes of the Assassins; but the hope of converting them to Christianity was gone; and their daggers were now again unsheathed against the princes of the Crusaders, as they had already long been against the chiefs of the Moslimin. Forty-two years had elapsed, since they stabbed Raymond, the young Count of Tripoli,²¹¹ as he was kneeling at prayer, and stained the altar with his blood. This long truce of the dagger, with the Christian chieftains, was at once raised by the atrocious murder of Conrad, Lord of Tyre and Marquess of Montferrat. Richard, King of England, is accused, both in European and Asiatic histories, of having been the accomplice, or instigator of this action, by means of the daggers of the Assassins.

It is with a reluctant pen that we indicate the circumstances and motives of this crime, which attaches to the splendid reputation of one of the first heroes of the Crusaders, a stain, which neither his military glory, nor forged documents, can obliterate from the sight of an impartial writer. The pretended letter of the Old Man of the Mountain, composed by Richard's partisans, to acquit him of the guilt of this murder, stands rather as a proof against him, since it has been proved to be a manifest invention and forgery.²¹² This letter commences with an oath in the name of the law, and ends by being dated according to the era of the Seleucidæ, both entirely strange and unknown to the Ismailites; for, at this time, they publicly trampled on the law, and had substituted, for the chronology of the Hegira (which besides is the only one used in the countries of Islamism), that from the accession of Hassan II.; making it the epoch of the abrogation of the law. The writer's making the Old Man of the Mountain date from Massiat, proves, in fact, nothing, either for or against Richard; but it rather heightens the probability of the opinion we have advanced, that the Crusaders were not aware of the existence of the distant grand-master at Alamut, but considered the grand-prior of Massiat, as the Old Man of the Mountain to a certainty. According to the purport of this apocryphal work of partiality for the hero, this so much celebrated murder was only an instance of the order's revenge; the marquess having pillaged, and put to death, a brother, who was shipwrecked at Tyre; and instead of giving the order's envoy the required satisfaction, threatening to throw him into the sea. From that time, the death of the marquess was determined on; and executed, at Tyre, by two brothers, in the presence of the whole people.

All that is true in this Latin production of Nicolas of Treveth, which was either written by himself, and accepted as credible by Richard's party, consists in the circumstances of the murder. The marquess was attacked by two Assassins, disguised as monks,²¹³ who had approached him unobserved, in the market-place of Tyre. Not only do western, but also oriental historians, name Richard Cœur de Lion, King of England, as the instigator of the murderers. Alberic des Troisfontaines expressly affirms it,²¹⁴ but with those who doubt, the contradiction of Nicolas of Treveth might be equiponderant to his charges, if the scale did not turn against Richard, with the heavy weight of the impartial testimony of oriental historians. The writer of the history of Jerusalem and Hebron, a classical work for the history of the Crusades, says, under the title of the murder of the marquess, clearly and distinctly: "The marquess had gone, on the 13th of the month Rebi-ul-ewel, to visit the bishop of Tyre; on coming out, he was attacked by two murderers, who stabbed him with their daggers. Being seized, and put to the torture, they confessed that they were employed by the king of England. They were put to death with torments."²¹⁵

The same work contains still farther traits of Richard's craft and perfidy, which stain his character but too deeply, and justify but too much the suspicion of his being accessory to this murder. Thus, his imprisonment by Leopold of Austria, a near relation of the marquess of Tyre, seems to have been but a

measure of reprisal, for the death of his kinsman.

While the English, to remove from their monarch the suspicion of this assassination, and to liberate him the sooner from his captivity, forged the above-mentioned letter²¹⁶ of the Old Man of the Mountain, to Leopold of Austria; they, at the same time, and with the same view, concocted a second, which is mentioned by William of Newbury, as having been sent by the grand-master to Philip Augustus, King of France. This letter, like the first, bears the marks of a counterfeit on its front.²¹⁷

The grand-master of the Assassins is made to call himself "*simplicitas nostra;*" which we cannot allow our simplicity to err so far as to believe. In this palpably apocryphal writing, the Old Man of the Mountain assures the king of France, that it had never entered into his thoughts to send to France, at the desire of Richard, Assassins with regicidal designs.

This letter, the falsehood of which is still more manifest than that of the former one, proves, instead of acquitting Richard, that the murder of the marquess of Montferrat had drawn upon him the suspicion of a similar attempt against the king of France. Rigord,²¹⁸ the historian of Philip Augustus, relates, that while the king was in Pontoise, in the year 1192, being apprised by letters from Palestine, that Richard meditated his assassination, he established, for his security, a body-guard, armed with iron maces; and William Quiart,²¹⁹ who, a century after, wrote a rhyming history, openly ascribes the whole murderous system of the Assassins to the king of England, who had young men educated in the principles of blind obedience to his cruel commands, in order to sacrifice the king of France; upon which, the latter instituted his guard of *sergens à masses*. Even if these precautions were groundless and exaggerated, they, nevertheless, were occasioned by the known deeds and character of Richard. The murder of Conrad of Montferrat, thus gave rise to the English king's captivity in Austria; and, likewise, to the institution of the first royal body-guard in France.

It may, perhaps, appear a thankless and vain labour, to wish to justify the order of the Assassins, who are charged with a thousand manifest murders, from the guilt of the thousand and first; but the duty of impartiality imposes this task on the historian who remains faithful to truth, although it may neither acquit, nor condemn. Whether the order, in the person of Philip Augustus, attempted the life of one prince more or less—whether the grand-master directed the poniards of the murderers, who slew the marquess of Montferrat, moved by private revenge, or by the desire of Richard, is of little consequence; participation in murder does not lessen the guilt of the crime.

We shall not, therefore, stop to inquire whether the Arab Assassin, found in the camp of Frederic Barbarossa, at the siege of Milan, in the year 1158,²²⁰ and against whom the emperor received timely warning, came from Spain or Syria; whether he was in the pay of the pope, or the grand-master of the Ismailites; or, whether Frederic was destined to fall a victim to the Old Man of the Mountain, or to him of the seven hills. He was, on account of his campaigns in Palestine and Italy,—his enterprises against the infidels and the papal chair, equally dreaded by the supreme pontiffs, both of Bagdad and Rome; and the khalif on the Tigris, would have had no less cause to rejoice at his death, than the khalif on the Tiber.

He, however, who profits by the commission of an atrocity, is not always to be accused of being its author. Barbarossa's grandson, Frederic II., was accused by Pope Innocent IV., in the synod of Lyons,²²¹ of having employed Assassins to murder the duke of Bavaria, and was excommunicated; while Frederic, in a letter to the king of Bohemia, charges the duke of Austria with having entertained similar designs against himself.²²² These accusations, however, do not prove the guilt of the accused, but only the crime of the Assassins.

Two years after²²³ the death of Conrad, Marquess of Montferrat and Tyre, and that of Rashideddin Sinan, Henry, Count of Champagne, passed, on his journey to Armenia, near the territory of the Assassins; the grand-prior, the successor of Rashideddin Sinan, sent deputies to welcome him, and to invite him to visit his fortress on his return. The count accepted the invitation, and came; the grand-prior hastened to meet him, and received him with great honours. He took him to several castles and fortresses, and brought him at last to one having very lofty turrets. On each look-out stood two guards, dressed in white, consequently initiated in the secret doctrines. The grand-prior told the count that these men obeyed him better than the Christians did their princes; and, giving a signal, two of them instantly threw themselves from the top of the tower, and were dashed to pieces at its foot. "If you desire it," said the grand-prior to the astonished count, "all my whites shall throw themselves down from the battlements in the same way." The latter declined, and confessed, that he could not calculate upon such obedience in his servants.

After staying some time at the castle, he was, at his departure, loaded with presents; and the grand-prior told him, on taking leave, that by means of these faithful servants, he removed the enemies of the order.²²⁴ By this horrible example of blind submission, the prior showed that he trod exactly in the footsteps of the founder of the order, who had given the ambassador of Melekshah a similar proof of the devotion of his faithful followers.²²⁵ Jelaleddin Melekshah, Sultan of the Seljuks, having sent an ambassador to him, to require his obedience and fealty, the son of Sabah called into his presence several of his initiated. Beckoning to one of them, he said, "Kill thyself!" and he instantly stabbed himself; to another, "Throw thyself down from the rampart!"—the next instant he lay a mutilated corpse in the moat. On this, the grand-master turning to the envoy, who was unnerved by terror, said, "In this way am I obeyed by seventy thousand faithful subjects. Be that my answer to thy master."

As the historians of the east, as well as those of the Crusaders, agree in their relation, we cannot, except with regard to the extravagant amount of seventy thousand Assassins, (stated by William, Bishop of Tyre, at sixty thousand, and James, Bishop of Acca, at forty thousand, in which number must be included not only the initiated, but also the profane subjects of the order), raise a tenable doubt concerning the truth of the event, any more than with respect to the noviciate and discipline of the catechumens of murder, of whom, the Venetian traveller, Marco Polo, was the first²²⁶ to give accounts, discredited in his time, and doubted, even lately, by men of eminence. Since, however, this narrative has been found to agree in every point with oriental sources,²²⁷ Marco Polo's relation receives new authority; and after his veracity, like that of Herodotus, has been doubted by the sceptical for centuries, the fidelity of the father of ancient history, and of the father of modern travels, shines, from day to day, with a still brighter lustre, from the unanimous testimony of eastern writers.

In the centre of the Persian, as well as of the Assyrian, territory of the Assassins, that is to say, both at Alamut and Massiat, were situated, in a space surrounded by walls, splendid gardens,—true eastern paradises. There were flower beds, and thickets of fruit trees, intersected by canals; shady walks, and verdant glades, where the sparkling stream bubbled at every step; bowers of roses, and vineyards; luxurious halls, and porcelain kiosks, adorned with Persian carpets and Grecian stuffs; where drinking-vessels of gold, silver, and crystal, glittered on trays of the same costly materials; charming maidens and handsome boys, black-eyed and seductive as the houris and boys of Mohammed's paradise, soft as the cushions on which they reposed, and intoxicating as the wine which they presented. The music of the harp was mingled with the songs of the birds, and the melodious tones of the songstress, harmonized with the murmur of the brooks. Every thing breathed pleasure, rapture, and sensuality.

A youth, who was deemed worthy, by his strength and resolution, to be initiated into the Assassin service, was invited to the table and conversation of the grand-master, or grand-prior: he was then intoxicated with henbane²²⁸ (*hashishe*), and carried into the garden, which, on awakening, he believed to be in Paradise: every thing around him, the houris in particular, contributed to confirm his delusion. After he had experienced as much of the pleasures of Paradise, which the prophet has promised to the blessed, as his strength would admit, after quaffing enervating delight from the eyes of the houris, and intoxicating wine from the glittering goblets, he sunk into the lethargy produced by debility and the opiate; on awakening from which, after a few hours, he again found himself by the side of his superior. The latter endeavoured to convince him, that corporeally he had not left his side, but that spiritually he had been wrapped into Paradise, and had then enjoyed a foretaste of the bliss which awaits the faithful, who devote their lives to the service of the faith, and the obedience of their chiefs. Thus did these infatuated youths blindly dedicate themselves as the tools of murder, and eagerly sought an opportunity to sacrifice their terrestrial, in order to become the partakers of eternal, life. What Mohammed had promised in the Koran to the Moslimin, but which to many might appear a fine dream and empty promises, they had enjoyed in reality; and the joys of heaven animated them to deeds worthy of hell. This imposture could not remain undiscovered; and the fourth grand-master, after unveiling all the mysteries of impiety to the people, probably revealed also to them the joys of Paradise, which could, besides, have but little charms for them, to whom already every thing was permitted on earth. That which hitherto had served as a means to produce pleasure, became now itself an object; and the effects of the intoxication of opium, were the earnest of celestial delight, which they wanted strength to enjoy.

To this day, Constantinople and Cairo show what an incredible charm opium with henbane exerts on the drowsy indolence of the Turk, and the fiery imagination of the Arab; and explains the fury with which those youths sought the enjoyment of these rich pastiles (*hashishe*), and the confidence produced in them, that they are able to undertake anything or everything. From the use of these pastiles, they were called *Hashishin* (herb-eaters),²²⁹ which, in the mouths of Greeks and Crusaders, has been transformed into the word Assassin; and, as synonymous with murder, has immortalized the history of the order in all the languages of Europe.

END OF BOOK IV.

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1. A.D. 1163.
 2. Hafez, letter Alif.
 3. According to Mirkhond and Wassah; according to the Nokhbetet tevarikh, the seventh.
 4. Mirkhond.
 5. Devletshah. Heerens Geschichte der Classischen Litteratur. Bouterwek Geschichte der französischen Dichtkunst.
 6. A. D. 1175; A. H. 569.
 7. A. D. 1177; A. H. 573.
 8. A. D. 1186; A. H. 582.
 9. A. D. 1201; A. H. 598.
 10. A. D. 1180; A. H. 576.
 11. A. D. 1190; A. H. 586.
 12. A. D. 1180; A. H. 576.
 13. A. D. 1170; A. H. 566.
 14. A. D. 1196; A. H. 593.
 15. A. D. 1196; A. H. 593.
 16. A. D. 1200; A. H. 597.
 17. A. D. 1209; A. H. 606.
 18. A. D. 1172; A. H. 568.

19. A. D. 1209; A. H. 606.
20. Mirkhond. Devletshah. Ghaffari.
21. Western Africa. T.
22. From the Okdet-ol-jeman in the Nokhbetet-tevarikh.
23. A. D. 1173; A. H. 569.
24. A. D. 1174; A. H. 570.
25. Nokhbetet-tevarikh.
26. Nokhbetet-tevarikh. Jehannuma.
27. Rousseau, Mémoire sur les Ismailis, p. 13.
28. Ibid. Ibid, p. 1.
29. William of Tyre, p. 994.
30. Jehannuma, pp. 591, 592.
31. Macrisi. Abulfeda.
32. Nokhbetet-tevarikh.
33. Ibn Forat.
34. A. D. 1175; A. H. 571.
35. Nokhbetet-tevarikh.
36. Abulfeda, ad ann. 571.
37. A. D. 1176; A. H. 572.
38. William of Tyre, Gesta Dei per Francos, p. 994. Jacobi de Vitriaco Historia Hierosolymæ, p. 1062.
39. Extraits d'un Livre des Ismailis, par M. Rousseau, tiré du 52 Cahier des Annales des Voyages.
40. Mémoire sur les Ismailis, par la même, tiré du 42 Cahier des Annales des Voyages, p. 13. See note (A)) at the end of this volume.
41. Extraits d'un Livre des Ismailis, p. 10.
42. A. D. 1157; A. H. 552.
43. Ibn Forat.
44. Hadji Khalifa, in the Jehannuma, and Abulfeda, ad. ann. 588.
45. Gesta Dei per Francos, p. 994 and 1143.
46. Ibid., p. 978.
47. Gesta Dei per Francos, p. 1215.
48. A. D. 1173; A. H. 569.
49. A. D. 1178; A. H. 574.
50. A. D. 1149; A. H. 544.
51. Eclaircissement sur quelques circonstances de l'histoire du vieux de la Montagne. Mem: Acad. des Inscriptions, XVI., 155. Note (B) at the end of this volume.
52. Abulfeda, ad ann. 588. Nokhbetet-tevarikh.
53. Chron: Alberic itrium fontium, ann. 1192.
54. Enis-ol-jelil ji kuda vel khalil. See Mines de l'Orient, vol. IV.
55. See note (C) at the end.
56. Wilhelmus Neobrigensis; vide Dissertation sur les Assassins, par M. Falconet, dans les Mémoires de l'Acad. XVII., p. 167.
57. Rigord in du Chesne, V., p. 35.
58. Mém. de l'Acad. des Inscriptions, XVI., p. 161.
59. Radevicus Frisingensis, l. II., c. 37. Sigonius Guntherus.
60. Franciscus Pagus Breviarum hist. chron. crit. ad ann. 1244.
61. Epistolæ Petri de Vineis, l. III. cap. 5.
62. A. D. 1194.
63. Marinus Sanutus, l. III., part X., c. 8.
64. Elmacini Hist. Saracencia, l. III., p. 286.
65. Marco Polo, De Regionibus Orientalibus, lib. I. c. 28.
66. Siret Hakem biemrillah in Mines de l'Orient, Part III., p. 201, Arabic and French.
67. This appears to be a mistake, as the *hashishe* is found to consist chiefly of hemp; see notes (D) and (E)), at the end of this vol. T.
68. See the circumstantial proof of this indubitable genealogy, in the Mémoire sur la Dynastie des Assassins, et sur l'Origine de leur Nom; by M. Silvestre de Sacy; read at the Institute, 7th July, 1809. And a letter of M. Silvestre de Sacy to the Editor of the Moniteur, on the Etymology of the name of the Assassins.—Moniteur, No. 359, year 1809. The reader will find both translated, in notes (D) and (E), at

the end of the volume.

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