

P R E F A C E.

THE following Studies, from CHARACTER in TURKEY and ITALY, were taken by Mr. ALLOM during a residence of some months in those delightful regions, while the brightest skies of the East and the West looked down upon the work of the painter, and imparted a portion of their own life and beauty to the efforts of his pencil; they are portraits of things and individuals as they exist, and claim at least the merit of fidelity. The series consists of twelve Italian subjects, and eight of Turkey, embodying many peculiarities of custom, manners, and dress, which have been seldom referred to by travellers, and never given to the public in a form like the present.

Memorials of the lands from whence these subjects are drawn, have always possessed attractions alike for the scholar and the seeker of novelty; but now, when the Moslem power, that burst upon the world a resistless flame above the ashes of the second Roman empire, moulders in the faint embers of expiring life, we turn with renewed eagerness to the records of the past, and the altered image of the present; a melancholy interest is excited by the remembrance of a star set in the darkness of degradation for ever; while the meteor, whose rising a world beheld with terror, wanes in its orbit, and trembles to its utter extinction.

The death of Sultan Mahmood, an event that occurred since the commencement of this work, has directed universal attention towards the tottering State, which was principally upheld by his powerful hand. Mahmood has been compared to the unfortunate Constantine, last Christian emperor of the East; both were men whose minds advanced beyond their times, both were born an age too late, to waste the energies of their vigorous intellect in support of an exhausted cause; one perished with his country; the other having seen his fairest and most extensive provinces wrested from his grasp, having overcome difficulties no other man could have vanquished, yet beholding the rise of fresh and still more insurmountable obstacles, died in the midst of his arduous and almost hopeless struggle. How long the Empire will survive its late and greatest master, is a question to which time only can reply.

Mahmoud II. expired on the 30th of June, 1839, aged 54; he has left legitimate issue, four daughters and three sons, of whom the eldest, Abdul Medjid, succeeds to the dismembered kingdom of his father—a dangerous heritage for a youth of seventeen.