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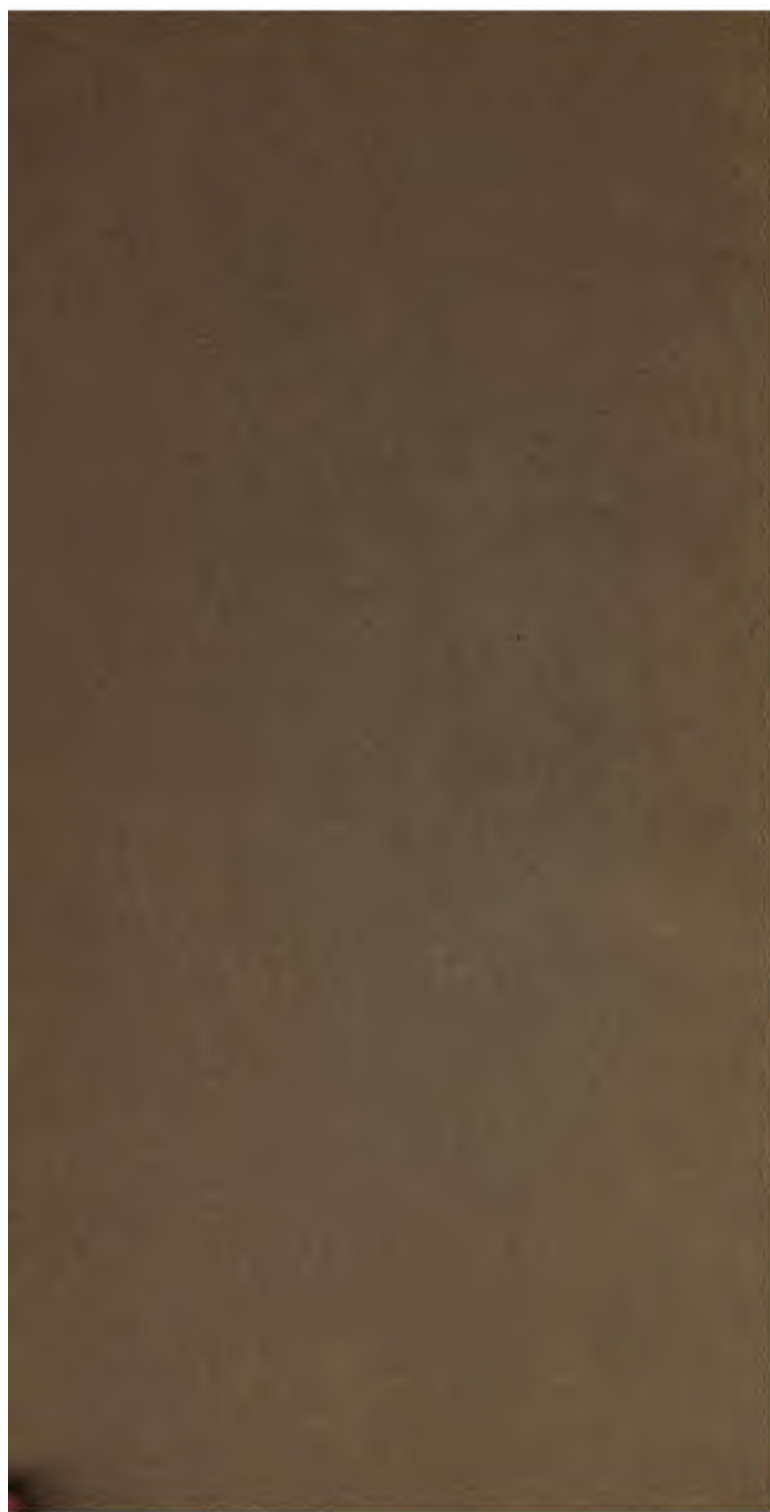
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VOL. LVIII.

AYESHA.

DAVID
TVC

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AYESHA,

THE MAID OF KARS.

BY
JUSTINIAN
J. MORIER,

AUTHOR OF "ZOHRAH," "HAJJI BABA," &c.

Il y a plaisir d'être dans un vaisseau battu de l'orage lorsqu'on est sûr qu'il ne périra point.

Pensées de Blaise Pascal. **AVE**

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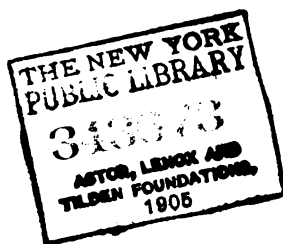
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1834.



WEL
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TIL
ASST

DEDICATION

TO THE TRAVELLERS IN THE EAST.

It has frequently occurred to me, who humbly presume to class myself among your number, that a tale of no common interest might be woven from the adventures of those who have ventured to explore the countries, in a portion of which the scene of the following narrative is laid.

It is with much diffidence that I offer the fruits of my labours to your notice, for I feel that you, who are best able to judge of their merits, are likewise most capable of detecting any failure. The presumption that there is any merit, I acknowledge to be great; but whatever may be your verdict, to your tribunal I appeal, and by you I am desirous that sentence may be pronounced.

You have come from the East, and therefore I may be allowed to call you "Wise Men;" but although you are such, yet I conclude that, adopting an Eastern custom, you must occasionally have mounted on a house-top to take the evening air, and consequently have very probably seen an Ayesha on your neighbour's terrace. You have also, no doubt, been attended by your Mustafa and your Stasso, to warn you of your danger; and may yourselves have been placed in some awkward predicament, Giaours as you are, with the Turkish authorities.

Manuscript from Circ. Dept. MAY 27 1905

"I imagine also that you may have felt much of the enthusiasm and ardour with which I have endowed my hero, in the pursuit of the investigations which led him to adopt the imprudent conduct of which I have made him culpable; and should you have been involved in one of the hair-breadth scrapes which befell him, I sincerely hope that the same *kismet*, or fate, which befriended him, was equally your portion.

You have, I dare say, heard of many such a character as Cara Bey. Let me refer you on that subject to Monsieur Amédée Jaubert's "*Voyages en Arménie et en Perse*," for certain adventures in a well, which he encountered during his sojourn with a Kûrdish chief; and should you be interested in the history of the Yezidies, or worshippers of Satan, I beg leave to refer you to the account given of them by the Père Maurice Garzoni, an Italian missionary, published by the Abbate Sestini, from whom I have extracted the short history of them which appears in this volume.

When on the spot, I was assured that the stories characteristic of the Turks, related in chap. xxxvi. were true. Of the truth of one which I have taken the liberty to insert, so much in consonance with the ignorance of Turks in naval matters, I can fully vouch, because I heard it from one of your own body, to whom I beg leave particularly to dedicate it.

To those who have visited Athens, from a page out of the history of one of whom I have taken the circumstance which forms part of the groundwork of my story, I venture to ask, whether probabilities have been sacrificed? I feel satisfied that such events as I have ventured to introduce might have occurred; and in a novel, we are told, what is not utterly impossible, may be liberally adopted.

Trusting to the neglect with which dedications and prefaces are commonly treated by the generality of readers, I would have disclosed more concerning the materials which I have

adopted in the composition of my story; but fearful of saying a word which might forestall in the smallest tittle any of the interest which it may possess, I think it right to stop short, merely adding, that the events therein recorded, are supposed to have taken place some twenty years ago.

Thus abruptly taking my leave, and throwing myself upon your indulgence, I have the honour to subscribe myself,

Your very obedient and devoted servant,

THE AUTHOR.

London, 20th May, 1834.



AYESHA,

THE MAID OF KARS.

CHAPTER I.

But natheles while I have time and space
Or that I forther in this talè pace,
Me thinketh it accordant to resòn,
To tellen you alle the condition
Of eche of hem, so as it seemed to me,
And whiche they weren, and of what degre.

CHAUCER.

It was about an hour before sunrise, on a fine spring morning, that the great gates of the celebrated Armenian monastery of Etch Miazin, or the Three Churches, situated at the foot of Mount Ararat, on the confines of Persia and Turkey, were thrown open, preparatory to the departure of a company of travellers, who had enjoyed the hospitality of its venerable patriarch for the preceding night. A waning moon still shed sufficient light to exhibit the sublime form of the mountain, with its snow-capped summit, its undefined protuberance of crags and rocks, its mysterious and shadowy declivities of landscape, to those who stood within the court-yard; the arch of the gate forming, as it were, the frame of the picture. A covering of snow extended not only over all its great cone, but spread itself, although in lighter tints, even to the limits of the plain, subduing its inequalities, and apparently increasing, its dimensions. At this solemn and still hour, it reared its head into the skies like the apparition of some giant mountain, increasing in the mind of the beholder, the natural awe which would be inspired by the sacred character of its history, by the

fabulous traditions attached to it, and by the lawless and dangerous character of its present possessors.

In a short time after the opening of the gates, the procession of the departing travellers, marshalled according to Turkish etiquette, was seen to wind slowly through the portal, the noise of the rattling hoofs reverberating under the arch, whilst the words "*Oghour ola*—a prosperous road betide you!" and "*Allaha es marladek*—may Allah take you under his holy keeping!" were freely bandied between those who were taking their leave and those who remained behind. The gates being again closed, the travellers could just distinguish, amidst the clatter of their horses' hoofs, the solemn chant of the good monks, who at this early hour were wont to break the stillness of the morning by their appointed orisons.

The *Surugi*, or guide, leading two baggage-horses, opened the procession; the *Tatar*, or Turkish courier, followed; whilst the master, the traveller in person, with his servant and such others as might choose to join the cavalcade, closed the line of march.

The master here was a young English nobleman, one of those spirited and enterprising youths whom it has occasionally been our good fortune to know, who, although born to every luxury and every advantage which the highest civilization can bestow, have voluntarily submitted to severe privations, regardless of danger, amongst an ignorant, barbarous, and fanatic people, in order to unshackle their minds from those prejudices which may be acquired by only a partial view of mankind. The individual, in this instance, was the youthful Lord Osmond, the heir of a noble house. After an absence of several years, he was now on his return, anxiously expected by parents who doated upon him, of whom he was the pride and the consolation. Distinguished among the youths of the day by every sort of excellence, it is not surprising that they looked for his return with impatience and anxiety.

Lord Osmond was eminently distinguished in his person; he was of rather a delicate complexion, which was shaded by rich dark brown hair, growing crisp and short, round a beautifully modelled head; his nose was strongly arched; his eyes, which were situated deep in their sockets, were almost dark blue, and full of softness, as well as brilliancy; his mouth was at once the

seat of seriousness and smiles, and, when not compressed, exhibited the whitest and most symmetrical teeth. He had a broad, open forehead, which at times would exhibit thoughtfulness, but always frankness and candour. In his person he was rather tall; his limbs were fitted with perfect symmetry to his body, and in his shoulders and general frame he displayed a more than common appearance of strength. His manners were rather more grave and imposing than is usual to men of his age; and, so far, they were adapted to the habits of Asiatics. He displayed great natural dignity in every word and action; at the same time, he was not deficient in a certain joyfulness and buoyancy of address, which went far in engaging the goodwill of those with whom he conversed.

He had quitted the university with honour; and great were the expectations raised of his future fame by his early conduct and acquirements. But not satisfied with what he had merely read, he was determined to follow up, by actual investigation, such parts of his studies as had most engaged his attention, and he had chalked out for himself an extensive journey through those countries and nations which had created most interest in his mind. Consequently, with the consent of his parents, plentifully supplied with letters of introduction and of credit, he first made the tour of the southern countries of Europe, and in the course of time found himself an inmate in the palace of the English Embassy at Constantinople. Here he laid the plan of his Asiatic tour, but previously applied himself most assiduously to acquire the Turkish language, which he found would be of general use as long as he travelled in the Sultan's dominions, as well as in the northern parts of Persia.

During his stay with the Embassy, he formed a friendship with one of its *attachés*, Edward Wortley by name, a youth of great worth and amiability, who promised to correspond with him upon all occasions. He was the eldest son of Sir Edward Wortley, an old Yorkshire baronet, celebrated for his classical learning, and his enthusiasm for every thing that related to ancient Greece.

Lord Osmond having, in succession, visited Athens and most parts of the Morea, the Islands of the Archipelago, Egypt, Syria, and Palestine, traversed the desert to Bagdad and Basorah, whence crossing the Persian Gulf to Bushire, he turned

his steps northward to Shiraz, Persepolis, and Ispahan. He visited the Shah's Court at Tehran, and was now on his return to England, by Constantinople. During this long journey, he had principally adopted the Turkish costume, which gave him an appearance so truly Eastern, that even Turks themselves were deceived, and, before he was known to be a Christian, generally received him as a true believer. In Persia, where a Turk meets with but a sorry reception, he did not adhere to this dress; but once again about entering Turkey, our narrative finds him clothed partly as a Tatar, his head covered with a snow-white muslin turban instead of the usual cap, and his girdle ornamented with a pair of brilliantly-mounted pistols, whilst a broad Mameluke sword swung by his side. A short pelisse trimmed with sable hung over his shoulder, and he looked so entirely like a Turk, which, we will say, with his great admiration of the picturesque appearance of that nation, he was ambitious of doing, that wherever he went, he received the attention and salutations due to a man of consequence. Great advantages attended this, at the same time that it was the cause of much inconvenience, and even of danger. The advantages were, that he was enabled to travel unmolested by observation and impertinent curiosity, and to make his remarks upon men and places with more security than if he had appeared in his own character. The inconveniences were, that he was open to all the exactions and vexations by which the natives are frequently visited by their despotic governors; and that he lost the protection of those governors, when once he abandoned the dress and characteristics of his nation. Of this perhaps, he was not sufficiently aware; for he had been bitten by the *turcomania* to such a degree, that he had determined to forsake all appearance of an Englishman, fearing in that character that he would be deprived of opportunities of investigating the peculiarities of the natives, and acquiring a more accurate knowledge of their manners.

Before he left Constantinople, he had discarded his European servants, who he found would thwart the object he had in view during his Asiatic travels; and had taken into his service a Greek, as his own valet, and a Turk, who was to serve him as his Tatar and purveyor on the road. The Greek was a native of the village of Sedikieu, near Smvrna, who, in appear-

ance, might have passed for one of the ancient heroes of his race. He was tall and erect, of the finest proportions, of great strength and agility, and dexterous in all manly exercises. His face was peculiarly handsome, his nose aquiline, his eyes full of intelligence, and, when fully dressed and armed, he was a most imposing personage. His name was Anastassio, which had been abbreviated into *Stasso*; and so he was usually called. He possessed all the acuteness of his nation, was brave as a lion, and, although he had that veneration and awe for his Turkish superiors, which are inherent in the Asiatic Greeks, aping them in dress and manner upon all occasions, yet he never allowed such feelings to stand in the way of his duty towards his master, to whom he was devotedly attached.

To the Turk, if such he might be called, was attached a curious and interesting story. He was a native of one of the German provinces of Switzerland. When quite a lad, he had been taken prisoner by the Algerines, and sold as a slave to an Egyptian merchant, who had made a Mussulman of him, called him *Mustafa*, and, in the course of time, set him free. He became a *Tatar*, or courier, of whom several are always attached to Pashas and men of power, and, finding his way to Constantinople, entered the service of the English Embassy in that capacity, where, with several others, he had performed the duties of his office with zeal and fidelity. He still talked his own language, and had sufficiently retained his European habits to form a strange mixture of Frank and Turk, both in language and appearance. He was short and fair: he willingly would have cherished a beard to increase his dignity, but nothing would coax the ungrateful hairs to appear. A scanty mustache graced his upper lip, which, however, was too sandy in its hue to stand out in proper relief upon his pale complexion; and although he had adopted the ponderous step, slow gesture, and phlegmatic bearing of an Osmanli, smoking the never-failing chibouk, and precluding every speech with the ever ready *Allah*, and *Inshallah*, and *Mashallah*, still, all would not do; the European leaven would appear, and render that caricature in him, which in a Turk is impressive and dignified. Although the good *Mustafa* was always working himself up to be a Turk, yet he generally fell short of his mark;

as one may sometimes have seen a turnspit place himself on the same rank as a mastiff. And although he would willingly have made the world believe he was a thorough Osmanli in courage and assurance, yet it was evident that nature had kneaded as much cowardice in his earthly dough, as was necessary to make his perceptions peculiarly keen upon the most distant approach of danger. Lord Osmond had, upon his Asiatic journey, begged the loan of Mustafa from the Ambassador, having taken a great liking to him during the necessary excursions made to explore the wonders of Constantinople and the Bosphorus, in which Mustafa had accompanied him both as cicerone and protector; and as he promised to pay him well, and to return him to his post in safety, the request was easily granted. But we must return to our story.

During the early part of the morning, when the plain was overspread with a grey mist, and the mountains were undefined in outline, our travellers paced onward in silence, each apparently absorbed in thought, or in the less intellectual operation of inhaling and emitting smoke from their pipes. The Surugi pushed on with the indifference of one who has a specific portion of country to travel over, with which he is well acquainted. Osmond had already turned his thoughts, as he had his horse's head, towards England, and was anticipating a joyful meeting with his parents and friends, discussing in his own mind what might be his future destiny, whilst he pondered over the many events which might have occurred during his absence. Stasso was endeavouring to recollect whether he had left any thing behind him, among the venerable monks of Etch Miazin, which might be missed by his master at their next stage; and Mustafa was constantly looking about him, sometimes towards the verge of the horizon, sometimes in the direction of the dark mountain shades, and, again, behind every rock, apprehensive of some lurking danger, of some prowling robber, or some supernatural *ghol*. As the day began to dawn, two mysterious-looking objects appeared at a distance, in the direction of the road upon which they were travelling, which first called forth all Mustafa's attention. They looked like horsemen. He had eyed them for some time without uttering a word; at length in a low tone, and applying his shoveled stirrup to his horse's

side, as he advanced some paces towards the Surugi, he said to him, "*Bana bak!*—Look at me! What devilry is that coming this way?"

"What do I know?" said the guide; "they may be stones, or trees, or men."

Mustafa, who suspected everything and everybody, when danger was in the wind, said, "What say you, man? a stone is one thing, a tree is another, and a man is another! I think it is more than one man."

"Perhaps yes, and perhaps no," said the unconcerned guide; "*Bakalum*—we shall see."

By this time Osmond's attention was roused, and he exclaimed to Mustafa, "What are you pointing at? What is the matter?" He generally spoke to him in English, a language which Mustafa had acquired during his service in the Embassy, and which he talked with an amusing admixture of Oriental idiom and German accent.

Mustafa willingly answered in English when Turks were not in company, but otherwise, nothing could cheat him out of any word or look that did not denote a true believer. On this occasion he answered Lord Osmond, saying, "This is a bad place: we are near Cara Bey's country, and we must look well with our eyes; don't you see those things yonder?" pointing to the objects under contemplation.

Osmond turned his head in the direction pointed out, and perceiving what he meant, said, "They are probably travellers like ourselves: suppose they be men, what then?"

Mustafa replied, "Ah! you don't know; this country is not an English country! Here are Kúrds, Yezidies, Armenians, Lesgies, all big rogues together. The Sultan of Turkey and the Shah of Persia are both of them as one bit of dung in their eyes; and when they cut throats, they say, '*Bismillah!*—In the name of the Prophet!' as if they were slaying a lamb."

By this time, the first streaks of day began to shine in the East, and gradually brought into light the different objects which had hitherto remained concealed. Still the supposed horsemen continued to look as such, although they had not changed their position, when the sharp-eyed Greek all at once exclaimed, "*Ti diavolo!*—What the devil! men do you call

them? why, they are trees! Mustafa Aga, you! what say you?"

Upon this discovery, Mustafa's face cleared up, his apprehension for the present subsided, and, in token of his satisfaction, he filled his pipe afresh; and now, seeing his way before him, he flogged on the baggage-horses with all the authority of his office, leaving at the same time a long train of newly-emitted smoke behind him.

The whole party passed the harmless trees, two stunted willows growing near an ancient watercourse, at a trot, the Surugi breaking the clear atmosphere with a song, which sounded more like the howl of a jackall than any thing like melody; whilst Mustafa exclaimed, as he held the tip of his mustache between his finger and thumb, "That this should have grown thus long, and that I should not have distinguished between a man and a tree!"

"Who is the Cara Bey whom you mentioned just now?" said Osmond to Mustafa; "I have heard of him before, but I did not know that we were near his territory."

Upon this question, Mustafa turned his horse's head round, and joined his master, riding by his side, stirrup to stirrup; for such sort of apparent familiarity between master and man is common in the East, although, be it known, a real Turkish Tatar never allows himself to be any man's menial. Mustafa, I say, fearful lest the Surugi should hear any allusion made to Cara Bey, although he spoke in English, lowered his voice, and said, apparently in a shudder,

"Cara Bey! *Aman! Aman!*—pity! pity!" at the same time taking hold of the lappel of his jacket, and shaking it as if he would throw off an impurity: "Cara Bey! *oof!* he is a *Sheitan*, he is Satan, he is a black Yezidi, a worshipper of the devil! he is without commiseration, without law; cares neither for Sultan nor Shah; if he catches you, he leaves you clean naked," at the same time showing the palm of his hand, "that is, if he does not murder you first. He is a thief; his father was a thief; his grandfather was a thief; all his children will be thieves, and all his grandchildren the same! What more can I say?"

"Where does this fellow dwell?" said Osmond, smiling at

the hereditary honours, up and down, which Mustafa had conferred upon the devoted Cara Bey : shall we travel any way through his country ?”

“He lives,” said Mustafa, “in a castle,” as he pointed his hand in a northerly slant, “close to the Russian border, in a castle which is like my cap.”

The simile was excellent, inasmuch as he intended to say that the castle was situated on an almost perpendicular cone ; because a Tatar’s cap, which is a cylinder emanating from the head, terminates at the top by a round yellow knob, which may well stand for a castle, and which did so in Mustafa’s mind, when he made the simile.

“Nobody has ever taken the castle, nobody can take it,” continued Mustafa. “The Turk has tried—the Kizzilbash has tried—the Moscovite has tried—all have come to nothing—all *bosh* ! There he sits, like the black eagle, on his rock, looking for prey.”

“And what have we to fear from him ?” said Osmond ; “he lives far from our road ; and I suppose that the Turkish government keep a look-out upon him.”

“Fear !” said Mustapha, shrugging up his shoulders, apparently in contempt ; “fear ! there is no fear ! but one must cross Savanlu mountain always with the beard upon the shoulder, because it is there he sends his thieves, and he is often with them himself :—there he robs caravans, there he kills, there he impales. Mustafa continued the list of Cara Bey’s different modes of disposing of his victims, until his mustaches dropped two perpendiculars on each side of his mouth through apprehension, and his face turned into a most suspicious paleness.

“But, as I said before, the Turkish government, I suppose, keep a guard on the road, to clear the mountain passes ?” said Osmond.

“*Ey vah* ?” exclaimed the Tatar in a lengthened squeak ; “Turkish government, indeed ! The Turks are all jackasses. Their mothers and fathers, from the beginning of the world to this day, have all been jackasses, and they will always be asses. Turkish government, indeed ! What do ye say ? Cara Bey laughs, and does thus to the Turkish government.” Upon which Mustafa struck his left hand on his right elbow, which

is the most approved mode amongst the Turks of showing the greatest contempt from one man to another.

Osmond was highly amused by his companion's description ; and the more he heard, the more his desire was excited to become acquainted with this celebrated robber chieftain, particularly as it had often been his wish to gain an insight into the modes of life, the religious rites, the frame of community of those extraordinary and mysterious people the Yezidies, of whom he had heard so many contradictory accounts.

"What do you know of the Yezidies?" said he to Mustafa; "is it true they worship the devil?"

"This people," said Mustafa, "are a tribe of Kurds; they live mostly in the Kurdish mountains; they dress like them, and speak their language. It is known that if you say '*Lahnet be sheitan!*—Curse on the devil!' to a Yezidi, he will jump and kill you if he can. They do not pray to Allah; but their only desire is to make friends with the devil, and they will fight for him sword in hand. They never mention the word *sheitan*, or any word approaching to it in sound. Instead of using the word *shat*, which means a river in their language, they call it 'a great water.' Instead of the word *nal*, which is 'curse' in their language, and which also means a 'horse-shoe,' they say 'sole of the foot;' and they call a *nalbend*,—'farrier,' 'a soler of shoes.' That's what I have picked up on the road, when carrying despatches between Constantinople and Persia. But if the Turks hate one people more than another, it is these fellows."

During this explanation, Stasso had lent an attentive ear to such words as he could distinguish, and finding that his master was making inquiries about the Yezidies, with the characteristic officiousness of a Greek he said to him "I once tried a trick upon a man who I was told was a Yezidi, and that was by drawing a circle round him, and saying '*Lahnet be sheitan!*' As I kiss your eyes, you ought to have seen his rage. He would not cross the line of the circle for the world, but his eyes flashed fire, he plucked his hair, and he would have torn me to pieces, had he got at me. This I know," said Stasso; "what else can I say?"

"And have they no religious observances, no festivals?" said Osmond.

"Allah send them misfortunes!" cried Mustafa, at the same time lowering his voice lest the Surugi should hear him: "there is only one of which I have heard, but perhaps the story is false. On a certain day in the autumn, they meet from all parts of the Kurdistan, men and women together; they pass the night first in eating and drinking in one room, and then all at once they put out the lights, and nothing more is spoken till the morning, when they all return whence they came,—may Allah speed curses on their road! This I have heard," said Mustafa; "Heaven only knows whether it be true, because they are very secret, and allow no stranger to partake of either their evil or their good."

Thus did our travellers beguile the tediousness of the long and dreary road, which winds through the bleak tract of country at the base of the chain of Ararat, until they reached the miserable village of Hajjibiramlû, which is situated upon the frontiers of Persia and Turkey. Here the party took up their quarters for the night. Stasso, after having spread the carpets, and prepared his master's bed, performed the office of cook, serving him up for his dinner a smoking hot pillau, accompanied by a pair of tough fowls; whilst Mustafa took himself to the post-house, to prepare the horses and secure a guide for the ensuing day's journey.

CHAPTER II.

S'il est possible de marquer aujourd'hui l'endroit où Adam et Eve ont pris naissance, c'est certainement le pays où nous sommes. — TOURNEFORT, Lettre XIX.

THE Arpachai is a rapid river flowing close to the village of Hajjibiramlû, which, after winding round the base of an abrupt rock, adds its waters to the Araxes, and ultimately, with the Cyrus, falls into the Caspian Sea. At all times of the year it is a difficult river to ford (and there is no

the two wet men merely wringing the water from their soaked garments.

Having crossed the river in safety, they resumed their journey. They entered upon an abrupt ascent of the mountain, along which they wound their way for a considerable distance. During their progress Mustafa did not cease deploring the help which Osmond had afforded the drowning Surugi; for he felt sure that he was nothing more nor less than one of Cara Bey's spies, of whom he was supposed to keep many in pay, in order to inform him where he might best lie in wait to surprise and rob a traveller worth the enterprise. Osmond endeavoured to make his Tatar understand the Christian doctrine of "Do unto others as you would that others should do unto you," but in vain; for Mustafa argued thus: "I know that man intends to take away my life; why, then, shall I not take his when I can?"—"But," said his master, "we are taught another rule, 'Do not evil, that good may come!' Am I to let a fellow-creature perish, because I suspect he is plotting my death? You will see, Mustafa, that some good will accrue to us from my mode of acting."—"Allah best knows!" answered the unbelieving Tatar; "*kismet*—fate, after all, is what we must look to!"

Osmond never lost an opportunity of enlightening poor Mustafa's mind when he was able; but the Turkish doctrine of predestination, which settles every thing so easily to the Mahomedan's satisfaction, had taken such possession of him, that he delivered himself over to it with the most unbounded trust, and did not care to have his mind unsettled by any other. "*Bakalum*—we shall see!" the last refuge of every Turk's argument, was Mustafa's exclamation as Lord Osmond stopped his horse to enjoy a view of the junction of the Arpachai and the Araxes, which takes place at the base of a high projecting summit which they had just reached. The Surugi was pushing on, when Mustafa repeated his morning's admonition to his master, not to leave himself behind; adding, "This is a bad place—this is full of bad men."

They were now journeying over the highest part of Armenia, as the snow, which still lay on the ground, proved; and this was one of the spots most celebrated for robberies, and particularly for the depredations of Cara Bey's gang. Mustafa

here began to look very full of apprehension ; he cast his eyes about him in all directions, every distant black spot appearing to him a man, every noise, as he thought, denoting some approaching attack. The Surugi, Hassan by name, whose face had relaxed into great humility, and who did not cease evincing his desire to show his gratitude, seeing Mustafa thus full of anxiety, exclaimed to him, “ *Korkma*—fear not ; *bir chey yok*—there is nothing.”

“ What do you mean by *korkma* ?” said Mustafa to him ; “ we are not children to fear. Praise be to Allah ! we are always ready ; whatever fate ordains, in the name of the Prophet we shall be found ready. Be the Bey* who robs on this mountain black or white, we are always ready to meet him with a white face.”

Hassan looked at Mustafa with a scowl which stopped his garrulity, as if he would have said, “ You are beneath my notice ;” but, turning towards Stasso, he made signs for him to come near him, and then said, “ By your head ! by the soul of your master ! I who am Hassan, a poor cattle-driver, I am nothing ; but, praise be to Allah ! I can this day render your master a service. Do not allow that foolish Osmanli to interfere ; but should the Beyzadeh† see horsemen approach, let him not be alarmed. By this poor head which he has saved ! I swear that nothing shall harm him. Upon my head ! I will take him to Kars. If Cara Bey were to appear in person, he would only say, ‘ *Salam aleikum*—peace be unto you,’ and allow us to proceed. Let him therefore show no resistance, let him not even take a pistol in hand, for, if he does, it may be the worse for him : if he remains passive, I will answer with my life that he passes unmolested.”

Stasso immediately made this report to his master, who, having paid due attention to it, called Mustafa to him, and asked his opinion upon what it would be best to do, for it was now plain that they would meet those whom Mustafa feared.

“ Did not I say that there is some devilry in this ?” said the Tatar, whilst his cheek became pale with apprehension. “ Let us turn back. Oh ! why did not you let him be drowned ?

* *Cara Bey*, in Turkish, means the ‘ Black Lord.’

† So English travellers are usually called in Turkey, *Beyzadeh* meaning the son of a lord.

If fate had only been left to itself, it would have saved us in drowning him."

Osmond now immediately made up his mind how to act. He plainly perceived that he was in a pass where individual courage could be of little avail, that some plan of attack had been concerted against him, and that his guide was a party concerned. He judged that it would be wiser to trust in Hassan's words, than to prepare for defence. And it was very fortunate for him and his party that he made this decision; for, very shortly after, turning an elbow of the mountain, they came full upon two well-mounted horsemen in Kurdish dresses, men of the fiercest aspect, whom Hassan no sooner perceived than, leaving the baggage-horses to themselves, he urged on his horse directly towards them. Mustafa upon this began to look in great dismay; Osmond put the boldest face upon it, and pushed forward; whilst Stasso, by a motion natural to him, thrust his hand by his side to seek the blunderbuss which always hung there in readiness. Osmond carefully observed what was taking place between the Surugi and the horsemen: they seemed impatient at being stopped, whilst he, by his gestures, was evidently relating some story full of interest and importance; they then all at once turned their horses' heads in the direction whence they came, whilst Hassan resumed his place of guide to the party.

"What has happened?" said Mustafa, placing himself square in his saddle, now that the danger appeared over: "What did those dogs want?"

Hassan, little heeding what he said, rode up to Osmond, and seizing the hem of his cloak kissed it, and then explained that the men to whom he had spoken were in fact two of Cara Bey's horsemen; that their chief was close at hand; and that they had returned to give him a full account of what they had heard, particularly of what had happened in the morning, on account of which he would forfeit his head if they were molested.

Osmond appeared to put the fullest trust in Hassan's words, but at the same time he thought they might as well take advantage of the present moment to push on in all Tatar diligence, lest Cara Bey's magnanimity and forbearance might not second Hassan's gratitude to the full extent which the poor man really intended; and thus they proceeded at a quick pace, whilst

Mustafa, whose fears increased faster than they galloped, did not cease exerting his heavy-thonged whip to the utmost of his power. They passed through the Armenian village of Ekrek, where its unprotected inhabitants, like a flock of sparrows who espy a hawk at a distance, were awaiting with fear and apprehension a visit from the awful black lord. These people anxiously inquired what news they had concerning him, and at the same time seemed astonished that they should have passed apparently so unmolested.

Mustafa did not cease looking behind him as they rode on, and, upon scaling the heights which rise above Ekrek, he perceived a body of horse descending towards that village from the opposite side, evidently the so much dreaded chieftain and his party. Urging on the Surugi and the baggage-horses to their utmost speed, he had reached the extreme summit of the mountain, and was beginning to descend it at a gallop, when, on casting his eyes behind him, to his dismay, he perceived that Osmond had come to a full stop, had taken out his sketch-book, and was looking about him with the greatest unconcern, as if neither danger nor Cara Bey were at hand.

In fact the view over which his eye wandered was perhaps one of the sublimest in Asia in point of extent, and one of the most interesting in point of locality. It encompassed a region which might be called the scene of man's first appearance upon earth; and brought to his mind that portion of Scriptural geography which has been traced by no less a geographer than Moses. Whilst his eyes wandered towards the magnificent and verdant Georgia, watered by the Gihon, the second river, and the Euphrates, the fourth,* he asked himself, Could this have been the chosen garden of Eden? He saw the sublime Ararat towering before him in unrivalled grandeur; whilst the misty plains of Erivan, and the three churches, vanished in the distance: he could distinguish the green and swelling pasturages of Aberan, the heights of Aligez (the rival of Ararat), and could trace the windings of the flowing Araxes and its junction with the Arpachai. What eye could behold such a scene and remain unmoved! and, contemplated by Osmond, whose mind was awake to the most solemn impressions both by reflection

* Gen. chap. ii. v. 13 and 14.

and instruction, it caused the most lively and unmixed delight. But as the first impression began to fade, another succeeded : he recollected that over the region which was then spread at his feet like a map, had wandered the ten thousand Greeks on their return to their own country; and he now learned the full value of that portion of his education which in his schoolboy days had stored his memory with the interesting narrative of Xenophon. He had begun to trace the principal features of the great view in his book, in order to carry away the impression, when his ears caught the voice of Mustafa, who was quickly exclaiming, half in entreaty, half in anger, "Why do you leave yourself behind? This is a bad country: Allah! Allah! are you mad? Cara Bey is here, and you stop!"

Stasso had remained with his master, his blunderbuss on the cock, and with his eyes sharply turned in the direction whence the robbers would most likely approach, and, to speak truly, shaking in his saddle with impatience at this untimely fit of mental absorption and admiration which had seized his master.

Neither Mustafa's exclamation nor Stasso's impatience could hasten Osmond's operation, or unrivet his eyes from the fascinating view; but, in truth, there was no cause for apprehending an attack from Cara Bey, for that redoubted personage, satisfied with the report made by his spies, had settled himself for the day in the village of Ekrek, and thought of nothing but making merry at the expense of its wretched inhabitants. It was his custom to prowl about the country when he could do so with impunity (for he was at enmity with all the surrounding authorities, Turks, Persians, and Russians), and, attended by his dancers and buffoons, to pass whole days and nights in drunkenness and debauchery.

Osmond at length ceded to the impatience of his followers, and slowly began the descent from the heights on which they stood, his eyes still wandering over the immense expanse which was spread before him. Mustafa would again have put the whole party on the full gallop in spite of the dangerous inequalities of the road, but was prevented by his master's curiosity to ascertain more precisely the names and position of the many places of interest which he knew existed on the surface of the landscape. The Tatar pointed out to him the

city of Kars, the frontier fortress of Turkey, where they were to rest that night, and which was conspicuous even at this distance, owing to the darkness of its walls, and the towers of its castle overhanging the town. Hassan's eyes, however, were constantly turned in a more northerly direction, a circumstance which attracted Osmond's attention, who earnestly inquired at what he gazed. The guide at first, with a sort of mysterious look of ignorance, said "*Bir chey yok*—there is nothing," when Mustafa, approaching his master, said, "He is looking at his own house, the devil's house." "How?" said Osmond.—"There is Cara Bey's castle," said Mustafa, pointing with his hand to a distant spot in the direction of the chain of Aligez.

Upon this, Osmond called Hassan to him, and said, "I hear, my friend, that one can perceive Cara Bey's residence from this spot: is it so?"

"What do I know?" said the Surugi; "perhaps yes."

"In what direction is it?" said Osmond.

"*Bak*—see," said Hassan, with some little hesitation, holding his hand over his eyes; "do you see this hill with a rock on its summit?"

"I do," said Osmond.

"Well," said the other, "that's not it: do you see the little rise beyond the river?"

"Yes," answered Osmond.

"Well, that's not it; but look a little farther, and you will see some ruins under the hill."

"I see them," said Osmond.

"Well that's not it; but carry your eyes immediately beyond, over the crest of the high land, and you will discover a black spot,—that is it."

"I see it not," said Osmond, straining all his eyes at the same time.

"*Deh!*" exclaimed his guide, with a very lengthened accent on the word, finishing with a falsetto squeak, and throwing his hand forward as if he would reach it—"look as if you were looking to the end of the world, and you will see it."

"I do! I do!" exclaimed Osmond, at length.

"*Na to ne*—there, there it is!" cried out Stasso.

"*Allah bela versin*—may Heaven send it misfortunes!"

mumbled Mustafa in an undertoned growl: "I see it but too well."

"So, that is Cara Bey's cattle, is it?" said Osmond. "Is it in the Shah's territories, or does it belong to the Sultan?"

"What do I know?" said Hassan; "it is a castle—it is God's work."

"What name does it go by?" said Osmond.

"What do I know?" said Hassan; "it is the *kasr* — the castle."

"As Allah is great," said Mustafa, "it is called *Tepeh dive* —the Devil's-hill."

Upon this, the Yezidi turned his horse's head down the declivity, throwing a fierce look at the true believer, and continued his road.

But Osmond, turning his head a little to the left, inquired again, "Tell me, is that a town which I see yonder? it appears to be a large place."

"That is a Giaour city in ruins," said Mustafa; "it is called Anni; *bosh der*—it is nothing."

"Anni!" exclaimed Osmond, with the greatest interest; "is that the famous Anni? we must see it. Cannot we go now?"

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed Mustafa with horror. "What do you say? It is the head-quarters of all the thieves and rogues in the country. A man's head would not be worth a para who would venture to go there. I won't go," said he doggedly.

Osmond did not urge his wish at present, seeing that the sorry animals which they bestrode could scarcely carry them to the end of their stage; but he mentally promised himself not to leave this part of the country without visiting the remains of a city almost unknown to European travellers, and which in its prosperity is described as having been the seat of a people more civilized and prosperous than any of those which now occupy the soil.

They now pushed on for Kars. The day was beginning to draw to a close when they reached the plain upon which that place is situated. Mustafa by this time had entirely forgotten his fears, and having again resumed the airs and dignity of the Tatar, placed himself well upon his perpendicular on the saddle, squared his elbows, and belaboured the rumps of the baggage-horses before him, with as much zeal as if the devoted

Cara Bey in person were there instead. The vigour of his whip was occasionally arrested by a scowling look which the mysterious Hassan threw behind him; but even that did not stay his hand, when he contemplated the comforts awaiting him at Kars, for he already enjoyed in imagination, the bath, the shave, the plentiful pillau, and the consequential strut into the coffee-house—all delights of the first importance to a Turk.

At length the Surugi set up the long howl announcing the arrival of travellers to the *Menzil khaneh*, or post-house. Osmond, tired and jaded with his long day's journey, joyfully greeted this sound as the harbinger of approaching rest; and Stasso began to twist his mustaches, to look at the pistols in his girdle, and to consider how he might best pass off as an Osmanli among the new people he was so shortly to visit.

The sun was about to set as the party crossed the bridge which is thrown over the Kars river, and its last rays lighted up the dark castellated walls of the city, which rose in sombre and picturesque forms before them. The wearied horses had scarcely strength enough left to scramble over the narrow and ill-paved streets, slipping at every step, and were only kept on their feet by the never-ceasing application of Mustafa's whip, and the shovel stirrups of their riders. The Surugi was directing his steps to the post-house, when Stasso, after communicating with his master, ordered Mustafa to conduct them to some good private house, where they might enjoy more cleanliness and comfort than are usually to be found at the *Menzil khaneh*. In consequence, he bade the unwilling Hassan proceed straight to a house which belonged to an Armenian of consideration in the city, a dyer, who he knew was always happy to receive a Frank guest. After threading some of the bazaars and bezestens, they struck into a narrow street, bordered by houses of considerable height, as strong as castles, paved with such broad flagged stones that the horses could scarcely find a footing.

The Surugi with the baggage-horses, followed by Mustafa, had just turned the sharp angle of a street, previously to entering into the court-yard of the Armenian's house, when Osmond, followed close by Stasso, drew in his horse's rein

almost instinctively at the apparition of two females standing at a doorway into which they were about to enter, but who had turned to steal a look at the passing strangers. One of them was rather tall and of a commanding figure. Her veil escaped from her hand as Osmond stopped to gaze, and exhibited to his eyes beauty of such astonishing perfection that at first he thought a being of superhuman excellence stood before him. There was a radiancy in the brilliant cast of her features, complexion, and countenance, that struck into his heart at once, whilst the most angelic and maidenlike modesty beamed over her whole manner and appearance. He gazed with all his eyes; his heart expanded into a feeling which hitherto he had never known; and but for the impossibility of making his enjoyment permanent, his journey would have finished there. This lovely creature was accompanied by a black slave, whose good-humoured face seemed to testify all the pleasure she took in the arrival of strangers. A row of the whitest ivory teeth grinned through the coral of her lips, backed by the ebony of her face, and produced the strongest contrast to the dazzling whiteness and rising blushes of her youthful mistress. As they began to withdraw more into the house, Osmond put his horse again into motion, but, in so doing, the jaded beast made a false step, and attempting to retrieve it on the slippery stones, he fell, and threw his rider upon the angle of the very step which led into the house of the fair object of his admiration. This abrupt action produced a half shriek of fear and alarm from the maiden, who, instead of running off, as most Turkish maidens would have done, rushed forward to his assistance. The tone of her voice, the most silvery and harmonious which ever issued from under a veil, completed the fascination into which he had been thrown, and as he slowly raised the fallen brute, he made a profound obeisance, indicating his feeling of admiration; an action so unusual to one of her own countrymen, that she, on her side, was sensibly impressed by it. She immediately retired when she saw him again seated on his horse; but not till then did he feel the intenseness of the pain caused by the bruise which he had received on his knee.

Having reached his resting-place, he with difficulty dismounted, and, with the help of Stasso and Mustafa, clambered up a flight of high steps which led to the room destined for his

reception. And here he began to discover, for the first time, certain slight shiverings, and other indications of fever, which, but for the excitement of the day's journey, he might have felt before, and which were not long in making themselves manifest; showing that it is seldom even the strongest and most healthy can travel a whole day with wet clothes on their back, without sooner or later feeling the dire effects of such imprudence.

CHAPTER III.

Non seulement Kars est une ville dangereuse pour les voleurs, mais les officiers Turcs y font ordinairement de grandes avanies aux étrangers, et en tirent tout ce qu'ils peuvent.—TOURNEFORT, *Lettre XVIII.*

LITTLE had Lord Osmond anticipated, after once having passed the Turkish and Persian frontier in the manner we have described, when every difficulty and danger was apparently cleared away between him and his own home, that his *kismet*—his destiny, as the Turks would immediately pronounce it, should lead him into adventures upon which were to hang his future lot in life, and stop him where he was least inclined to be detained, however ready he might be to meet and even to seek any event which would give him an insight into the manners and polity of the people among whom he sojourned.

Such, however, was the case; and we arrest the course of our narrative for a short time, in order to make our readers acquainted with the state of affairs at and about the place of his detention.

Kars, although its origin be of remote antiquity, is at the present day a place of comparatively little importance, and is principally remarkable for being the extreme frontier town belonging to Turkey on the north-east Persian border. It is built upon a rocky bank, exposed to the south-east. A

castle upon a steep rock, in a picturesque and commanding position, overlooks it; and its dark towers, which are now ruinous and running into decay, give it an appearance at a distance of more strength than it really possesses. The ground by which it is surrounded forms itself into a sort of amphitheatre, behind which runs a deep valley, precipitous on all sides, through which winds the river. A stone wall, with square turrets at stated intervals, encompasses it on every side, and it is furnished with gates, which, according to Asiatic custom, are closed at sun-set and opened at sun-rise.

Its inhabitants are a race of bigoted Mussulmans, intermixed with Armenians, and it enjoys the reputation of being a place of call for the many thieves and marauders, Kurds, Yezidies, and others, who at various times and seasons infest the highways, and who are and have been from time immemorial the dread of caravans and travellers. The exactions made upon passengers, and the petty despotism to which they are exposed from the authorities, render a visit to Kars disagreeable and even dangerous; the men in power, in proportion to their distance from the seat of government, feeling secure in their villany; whilst the unprotected sufferers feel, in the same proportion, how unavailing would be their resistance.

A pasha is the chief officer, and his appointment to his distant and dreary post is generally looked upon as a sort of honourable exile. He is nominated at the Porte, and is independent in his jurisdiction, although he is enjoined to look up to the Pasha of Erzeroum as his superior, inasmuch as he is the appointed chief and protector of the frontier, as opposed to the Shah of Persia, the sultan's neighbour; as well as to the Russian authority, which trenches close upon the limits of his pashalik.

At the time of Osmond's sojourn, the Pasha was a man of low origin and coarse habits: he had once been a *pehlivan*, or prize-wrestler, and was consequently called Pehlivan Pasha; thereby recording his ignoble origin,—an act of humility from which no Turk ever shrinks, however exalted may be his subsequent rank. He was a man of immense personal strength, and his chief enjoyment consisted in witnessing the combats of pehlivans, by whom he was constantly surrounded, and with whom, as occasion offered, he would not refrain from

trying to fall himself. He was not accused of wielding his power with undue severity as a governor, being good-natured, weak, and addicted to sensuality, for he willingly turned over the affairs of legislation to the Mufti,* the civil and religious officer of authority; a crafty, bigoted, and unrelenting Mahomedan, who might be said to hold the principal sway in the city, and who, in proportion to his blind devotion to the laws of his Prophet, bore a corresponding hatred to all infidels. There was, besides, an Aga of the janissaries, and the usual Ayans, or elders, who were called upon to attend in council on questions connected with the well-being of the place and its inhabitants.

The neighbourhood of the Kurdistan was one of the principal causes of the want of safety on the road leading from Turkey into Persia. Its inhabitants, the Kurds, an ancient race, whose marauding practices are coeval with their origin, are not to be kept under control by either the Sultan or the Shah, and indeed are scarcely amenable to the rude government of their own chiefs, who, although nominally dependent upon the two great states, Turkey and Persia, according to the districts which they inhabit, are in fact each independent in their own town or fort, and can be styled little better than chiefs of banditti, although they take to themselves the titles of Pashas. Thus in the city of Bayajid there is a Pasha, but he is a Pasha only to pillage and destroy. At a more distant town, Topra Caley, existed a beg, who was at open war both with Persian and Turk; but at the time in which our history exists, the most notorious offender was Cara Bey, of whom we have already given a hasty sketch, and, as he will again be brought to the reader's notice during the course of our narrative, we will withhold any further digression, and return to our travellers.

Lord Osmond, on the very first night of his rest at the Armenian dyer's, found himself assailed by all the symptoms of fever. Mustafa, who had not failed to assert the Tatar and the true believer the moment he entered the walls of the infidel's dwelling, stepping heavily at every tread with his iron-shod boots,

* The chief man of the law in a Turkish city is generally called Mollah, but this personage chose to take upon himself the higher title of Mufti, which, in fact, only belongs to the great chief of the Turkish law, residing at Constantinople.

throwing a curve of importance into his back and shoulders, and making frequent and indecorous allusions to the Armenian's father and mother in order to quicken his operations, had collected as many comforts for his master as the house afforded. All the softest cushions were brought from the women's apartments, mountains of quilts were piled upon the bed, and a brazier of red-hot charcoal, with an apple in it, was placed in the centre of the floor.

Very soon after these preliminaries, a most plentiful dinner was served up, which, while it did credit to the goodwill and hospitality of the host, almost killed his guest, whose increasing disorder made him loathe the sight of food, and who, from being the most valiant to encounter the thousand ills which travelling in Asia is heir to, all at once sickened and sought his bed. He implored Mustafa to cease his persecutions of the Armenians, to diminish, if possible, the rigour of his authority, to sweep the lamb stuffed with plums and its accompanying pillau from the room, and to leave him alone to his rest. When this was done, he called Stasso, and ordered him to deal kindly and liberally towards Hassan the guide, who, whatever might have been his original intention, had shown by his subsequent conduct an uncommon degree of gratitude for the service which had been rendered to him. He then had recourse to a small medicine chest which always accompanied him, put a proper bandage about his wounded knee, and endeavoured to compose himself to sleep. But this was not so easy to effect, for the image of the beautiful apparition which had recently crossed his path, had so entirely taken possession of his thoughts, that it produced a third disorder, more dangerous to his repose than either his fever or his broken limb.

"What can she be? who is she? I have seen a face like her's, she strongly puts me in mind of some one whom I have met before. But no, nothing was ever so beautiful or bewitching! She cannot belong to these Turkish barbarians! she ought to take place among the great of the world! There is a soul in her eye which is not to be mistaken." In these and such-like thoughts and exclamations did Osmond indulge as he arrested the vision of the beautiful maiden in his mind, and dwelt with unceasing perseverance over the scene which had taken place in the morning. But when he recollected where

he was, in an obscure city of Turkey, among thieves and barbarians, he exclaimed, "What else can she be but a poor be-nighted Turkish girl, some child of ignorance and fanaticism, whose beauty may administer to the will and pleasure of some coarse barbarian, and his barbarous usages? Would that I had never seen her!" he repeated frequently, until he wound himself up into an uncontrollable desire again to behold her exquisite charms, to be acquainted with her history, and to acquire a knowledge of the circumstances which had thrown her away among a people apparently so little likely to appreciate her worth.

We will now leave the sick man, and turn to his attendants, who were in full enjoyment of the plentiful fare which he had rejected. Mustafa had taken into his own hands the whole arrangement of the evening's entertainment. Among the Armenians he reigned without a rival. A true believer on his own soil, among Christians, may be compared to a game-cock in a farm-yard, or a mastiff in a kennel; he swells with arrogance, struts with importance, and exerts his powers of speech with insolence. Our Tatar, preparatory to his meal, had duly tucked up his sleeves, had called to Bogos (for such was the dyer's name) for water wherewith to wash, and squatting himself down over a pewter basin, which was held to him by the Armenian in person, water was poured over his hands, and he thus performed his ablutions with great satisfaction. Having refreshed his weather-beaten face by passing his wet hands over it, he coaxed his small mustaches into as good a spread as they would admit of; and then, wiping his hands with the towel which he took from off his host's shoulder, he proceeded with an important step to seat himself heavily upon a cushion which had been laid for him in the corner of a lower room, and there he awaited the coming meal.

Stasso, having disposed of his master for the night, followed on the same intent, and tucking his legs up, seated himself near his companion, the action of his hands denoting his impatience to begin, the quick turn of his eye towards the avenues of the kitchen evincing whither his thoughts were directed, and a certain restlessness of his jaws showing that roast lamb and pillau were not unknown to them. He interceded for the company of Hassan the guide, to which Mustafa assented, rather as giv-

ing him an opportunity to exhibit the munificent master, than as showing him any good will. At length the *chorba*, soup, smoked upon the board; a dead silence ensued, and nothing but the noise of hot in-draughts, produced by the junction of spoons and mouths, was heard; then came *dolmas*, rice and meat-balls, wrapped up in vine-leaves; then *keftas*, force-meat; *halwah*, sweetmeat; and last, the lamb and the mountain of boiled rice. All disappeared like magic through the medium of powerful fingers and capacious jaws, as one may oftentimes see sacks of coal thrown with precision from the cart, into the orifice of the cellar below. So ate the three travellers; long were their labours, and portentous was their digestion. But let us not omit the wine; the forbidden Armenian's wine, which Bogos ever and anon poured for his guests into a basin, in England called a slop-basin, but which in Turkey is looked upon as the only proper medium to drink with. Many were the cheerings of *agam*, my lord!—*guzum*, my eyes!—*junum*, my soul! with which Bogos enticed on the too willing Mustafa to empty bowl after bowl of this purple resinous wine, until the eyes of his guest, which never were large, almost totally disappeared under the gradual swelling of the cheeks and forehead.

Stasso, a more ruthless and hardy drinker, scarcely acknowledged the passage of wine as it flowed over his gullet; whilst the disciple of Satan, wary and on his guard, hardly admitted it to his lips. Never before had three hungry travellers fulfilled a more agreeable duty than that of emptying the dishes of their host, and attending to their own repletion. Mustafa, like most other Turks who think it part of their religion to bully a Christian, had not ceased to lard the tenor of his speech to Bogos, with certain allusions, all as a matter of course, although offensive, touching his relations and friends. At length, gradually softened by the wine, he glided into expressions such as these:—

“By Allah! you are a good man you! by your father, I love you! Among swine, Armenians are the best. Bogos, my brother, you are a man; Mashallah! you are my father, my uncle. Ah! ah! give me sweet wine and I want nothing more.” As fast as the skin fell in its circumference, so fast did Mustafa's heart soften, until sleep gradually overtook him, and rolling

himself in his cloak he fell like a trunk consumed by fire on the very spot where he had eaten, and remained immoveable for the night.

Stasso was not unmindful of his master's orders, and, previously to the meal just described, had been in close and confidential communication with Hassan; for experience had taught him in his travels never to lose an opportunity of making a friend, however unprofitable that friendship might at the moment appear. When he counted out to the guide, little expectant of such a gift, the sum of money which his master had ordered, Hassan's eyes sparkled with pleasure, and he could not find words sufficiently expressive of his gratitude. "If ever your Aga," said he, "should require aid during his stay here; if ever misfortunes should fall upon his head, let him send for his slave. Do not despise Hassan because he is a Surugi; believe me, he knows more than you can suppose. No fox can creep out of its hole—no jackal can gnaw a carcass—no thief can lay a plan, without its being known to Hassan. Above all, trust not the people of Kars; they are bad, ill-begotten, extortioners, men without souls; keep clear of that *bash pezevenk*—that head procurer, the Mufti; he is a dog without a liver; he is without compassion. Your Aga saved my life! here is my neck," said he, at the same time bending down his head, "let him strike; we are not animals, we are men!" Many more were the protestations which Hassan made to evince his gratitude; and although there was no likelihood that his services could ever be of the least avail to Osmond, or that he would have an opportunity of showing the extent of his thankfulness, still there was that sincerity and hearty good-will in his manner, which made Stasso confident he was a man to adhere to his word; and he ever kept him in mind as one who might possibly be of use to him in some future journey.

On the following morning, Stasso crept quietly into his master's room, but, finding that there was no symptom of his stirring, he took himself below, where the Armenian and his family had long been on foot, in the hope of securing the never-failing cup of hot coffee and the chibouk, without which no Asiatic is ever put into tolerable humour to encounter the events of the day. The first object he saw on entering the room was

Mustafa, who had just risen from his heavy sleep, seated in an attitude of hopeless inactivity, in the very self-same clothes in which he had laid himself down, his eyes unopened, his mouth pregnant with yawns, and an apparent torpor in his whole person, which spoke emphatically of the woful evils attendant upon much wine and much roasted lamb. At length a low moan issued from the torpid man. "Bogos, you Armenian, you! bring coffee:"—and such a desire will be found at the bottom of every Turk's throat, be he in the last throes of despair, or in the height of the greatest joy. The exhilarating drug was soon brought, when Mustafa opened first one eye, and then the other, and straightway began to fill his pipe. With such preliminaries the day's labours commenced; and soon after, he was wide awake. He then began to discuss with Stasso and the dyer, what was necessary to be done in their lord's sick state. Bogos immediately advised that they should call in an old Armenian woman, who was famous for curing all sorts of disorders, and particularly expert in reducing wounds and relieving bruised limbs. "What do you say, pig?" said Mustafa; "what filth are you eating? These Ingliz, Mashallah! praise be to the Prophet! are as stubborn as camels; and they would as soon take an Armenian's physic as they would eat a horse. They are men who carry all the world in the corner of their eye. After that, can you venture to bring an Armenian cow of Kars before an Englishman?"

"But, my pasha, my aga," said the unobtruding Bogos, with all humility, "I suppose an Englishman's leg is like an Armenian's? and I know the old woman has cured many a leg in Kars. Did not she cure Suleiman Aga's broken shin, he who is your next-door neighbour, after every other effort had failed? Talismans had been placed upon it, he was turned towards Mecca, still all would not do, until the old Caterina, with her herbs and her fomentations, put him on his legs again. After all, that is something."

"What are you chattering there with your Caterinas and your Paterinas?" said Mustafa, swelling with importance and evolving smoke. "Allah! Allah! I should like to see my Beyzadeh's leg in the hands of your Caterina. Eh, Stasso!" addressing himself to the Greek, "what do you say?"

"What can I say, Mustafa Aga," answered Stasso; "our Aga knows best what is to be done; we must leave it to him to decide; I will go and see."

Upon this he returned to his master's room, who by this time had awoke from a restless sleep, which only towards the morning had closed his eyes. Upon seeing Stasso, he exclaimed, "My leg is extremely painful. Is there anything like a surgeon in this place? I shall be detained here for ever, if something be not done; to travel in this state is out of the question."

"What do I know, *Effendimou*—oh my master?" said his affectionate valet. "I have heard of an old woman who cures bruises and wounds; what else can I propose? she is an Armenian, and a she ass." Then drawing a deep sigh, he exclaimed, "Where is this miserable and destitute place? and where the comforts and surgeons known to Franks?"

"But perhaps she is better than nothing," said Osmond, writhing with pain, and restless with fever. "Can I have broken a bone?"

"God preserve you from it!" exclaimed Stasso; "that *Arabisa*—that negress must have had an evil eye, when she turned round to look at us—may the *diavolo* take her!—and made your post-horse fall to the ground! May anathemas fall upon her eyes!"

"Don't say so, Stasso," said Osmond, "for if the negress had an evil eye, her companion had an eye that could not fail to bring good luck: tell me, did you ever see such beauty before?"

"As I cherish my faith," said the animated Greek, his eye brightening up into a flame, "I never did before, nor ever shall again. Such beauty!—Oh these Turks!—may their faces be broken up!—animals as they are, yet it must be owned they possess women who have no equals. Did you see, oh *Effendimou*, did you remark her eyes, her hair, her complexion? These women have a pureness of blood in their veins which is not to be found elsewhere."

"But what can she be, Stasso?" said Osmond, warmed with the subject, and thus forgetting his pain. "Have you heard?"

"She is a *Turkisa*—a Turkish girl, that is certain. What else can she be? Her dress was Turkish, the house she en-

tered was a Turk's—that was evident by the painting of it; and none but a Turkish woman can possess a black slave."

"You must find out who she is, Stasso," said Osmond; "I should like amazingly to see her again."

"May heaven prevent you!" exclaimed his servant; "these devils of Turks without entrails, cut off a Christian's head without compunction, and then place it between his legs, if they find him even speaking to one of their women. May the *diavolo* take them!"

"But there can be no harm in inquiring who and what she is," persisted Lord Osmond; "I am curious to know."

"There is no harm in asking," said Stasso, "that's true. She is probably a neighbour, and it is easy to know from the people of this house who she is; but as for seeing or speaking to her, may God preserve us!" added he, whilst he made a sign of the cross.

"But about this old woman," said Osmond; "inquire where she lives; perhaps she may afford me some relief. Go, Stasso, inquire; and moreover, do not forget the Turkisa."

Stasso left the room to perform his master's bidding, at the same time that Mustafa entered. The Tatar had lost no time in going to a barber, who had so trimmed up his head and face that he looked like a new man, and having readjusted his whole dress, inserting his pistols and yatagan in their prescribed places, he stalked on with all the pride and superiority of a true believer.

"Mustafa, sit down," said Osmond, as soon as he saw his Tatar, to whom he did not fail to pay all the attentions due to one of his station, although he discoursed with him as if he were an European, as he in truth was.

"This sickness and bruise of mine," continued he, "is a grievance; but as you Turks say, my *kismet*—my fate must be borne with patience. I fear we must stay where we are at present."

"*Bakalum*—we will see!" said Mustafa; never sorry at any delay in a town, where he would be left at liberty to smoke in a coffee-house, and enjoy the luxury of a good shave, and also of a hot-bath. "I must go to the Pasha."

"True," said Osmond; "make him my respects; tell him I am sick and dying, and then I shall possibly be free from the

torment of his *chaoushes* and *chokhadars* (officers) begging for *backshish*, or presents."

"*Bakalum*—we will see!" said Mustafa again; "backshishes are nothing; leave the rogues to me. Be you well, and all will be well."

"Inshallah!" said Osmond, "I shall soon get the better of my fever, but this leg of mine, I feel, will keep me here some time. I cannot stir, Mustafa!"

"It will be nothing," said the Tatar; "God is great! One of our Tatars once broke his leg as he was leaving Arzeroum; he tied it up, put it into a basket, rode night and day until he got to Constantinople, where the bone was set, and he is as well now as ever he was. Legs break and are mended—such is the world!"

"That is true," said Osmond, smiling at his Tatar's philosophy; "but I want something more than a basket. I am told that there is an old woman here, who understands bruises."

"What do I know?" said Mustafa. "An old woman is often a greater evil than a broken leg: however, you know best; if you do not mind her, I have no objection; but only take care whenever she goes out of the room to burn a bit of paper and blow over each shoulder."

"And wherefore?" said Osmond.

"You will thus destroy the effects of her evil eye," answered the Tatar. "Many is the time that I have lost my way, and got into all sorts of mischief, after meeting an old woman. *Aman! Aman!*—pity! pity!" said he, shaking the lapel of his jacket; "preserve me from an old woman!"

Upon this he left his master, and lighting a fresh pipe, proceeded to the residence of the Pasha, swinging his long robes, and strutting through the streets, with an air of dignity rarely seen among the rustics of Kars.

CHAPTER IV.

All suddenly abash'd she changed her hue,
And with stern horror backward 'gan to start;
But when she better him beheld, she grew
Full of soft passion and unwonted smart;
The point of pity pierced through her tender heart.

SPENSER'S *Faery Queen*.

OSMOND had not waited long after the departure of Mustafa before Stasso appeared, accompanied by Bogos the dyer, introducing Caterina, the old Armenian woman, whose curved back and withered hands denoted an advanced age. She religiously retained her veil, particularly that part of it peculiar to Armenian women, the nose-band, which goes tightly over the middle of the face, and keeps their noses flat. She approached her patient with a certain degree of awe; for during her long career she had never before been so near to a Frank, and that Frank an Ingliz, about whom she and her countrywomen had very vague and undefined notions. He might have "a fish's head and a serpent's tongue," for aught she knew, or he might, as his daily avocation, manufacture penknives, or broad-cloth and chintz, as silk-worms spin silk. But when Osmond addressed her in very good Turkish, all her imaginations fled, and turning up her withered eye, with which she took a good survey of him, she exclaimed to Bogos, making a sign of the cross, "Mashallah! he talks Turkish as well as either you or I;" and having said this, she was restored to full confidence in herself, and forthwith broke into an unceasing flow of words. "We are poor folks," said she, "but we have not lived to eighty years and upwards without having handled many a bruised leg, ay and broken heads too."

"So you are an Ingliz, are you?" she continued, looking at Osmond: "well well! God is great! that I should have lived to dress an English leg!" She then examined the limb, which

was indeed frightfully swollen, and soon began her operations, by fomentations and an application made of cooling herbs and sour milk. "Ah," said she, "I attended your neighbour, Suleiman Aga, for a good month ere his shattered leg began to give way to my skill, and when it did heal, everybody cried, *Aferin, Caterina!*—Well done, Caterina!"

"And who is our neighbour?" said Osmond, thinking it possible that he might receive some information concerning the beautiful maiden, whose image did not for a moment leave his thoughts.

"He is one of the principal Aymans, or elders of this city," said Bogos.

"He is a wonderful man," said the old woman.

"How do you mean wonderful?" inquired Osmond.

"He is a strict and severe Mussulman," said Bogos, explaining the meaning of his country-woman: "he treats us Christians like dogs; we drink wine with fear and trembling in his neighbourhood."

"Akh!" exclaimed Caterina, "were it not for his daughter, we Armenians should have to contend with more difficulties than we do; but she keeps his heart soft."

"What sort of a person is his daughter?" inquired Osmond, with great animation.

"Ey vah!" exclaimed the old woman, turning up her eye and looking into her patient's face whilst she fumbled over the knee before her, "where have you been living all this while, O my soul! that you have never heard of Suleiman Aga's daughter? I myself, I was once something, when I was young, but, as I kiss the cross! she is a creature that has never been heard of out of Paradise. Pity, thousand pities that she belongs to the Turk! Mashallah! she ought to have belonged to Franks—to Christians. Akh! she is as white as you, a great deal taller than I am, and as for teeth, and hair, and eyes, I had mine once, but, bah! she has enough of them for the whole town of Kars! What do I say? the whole world might come to her for beauty, and she would still have enough left to remain without an equal."

This was a subject upon which Caterina would have talked for ever, and one indeed of which Osmond was not soon tired, but he knew the dangers and difficulties attendant upon any communication with Mahomedan women. Although he felt

that to see and speak to her was hopeless, still he could not help weaving in his mind a thread of romance, which led him on to conceive that he might in time be blessed with the possession of this gem of human perfection, improve its lustre, efface any flaws which it might contain, and polish it so effectually that he might produce it as something unequalled in the estimation of his own countrymen. Accordingly he stopped the old woman in her panegyric, but could not refrain inquiring more particulars concerning the maiden's former life.

"Has she a mother? What is her name? Is she about to be married?" asked Osmond, all in a breath.

"O my soul!" exclaimed Caterina, "how you go on. I am old, and cannot answer so many questions at once. You asked, has she a mother? Well may you ask; she has indeed a mother, and we call her a misfortune. How such a daughter sprang from such a mother is not my business to ask, I am silent. She once made the sign of the cross, that's certain, but now she is a *kadûn*—a *khanûm*, a head of a harem, although she preserves her Greek name, Zabetta, Zabetta Khanum. But the daughter, dear little heart! she is called Ayesha; she has a Turkish name, but the soul of a Christian: to do good is her whole delight; to do evil is her mother's only thought. Out upon the she imp! But life is full of good and evil. If you want them both in perfection, go to the next door."

"And is she engaged?" inquired Osmond.

"Engaged!" exclaimed the old woman: "and who is to marry her, in this land of thieves and rogues? there is not a man here fit to hold her slippers. She is only fit for the Sultan's seraglio. Her father cherishes her as he does his own soul: he has taught her everything, and there is not a scribe throughout the whole of Kars who could stand before her. She is famous here, my Aga!—where have you been living that you have not heard of Ayesha, the daughter of Suleiman?"

In this manner did the old Caterina entertain her patient, as he lay on his bed, whilst she performed her operations on his knee. He allowed her to attend him daily, and to exert her ingenuity in the composition of remedies, which, although they did not much hasten his recovery, did not retard it, whilst he was amused with her conversation, and interested by making her descant on that never-ending subject the perfections.

of Ayesha. His fever had yielded to his own remedies; and but for the contusion, which required the greatest quiet, he might again have resumed his journey. Mustafa began to show symptoms of impatience, for he found the remote town of Kars but a poor theatre for the exhibition of his airs of importance, and, as the season began now to be favourable for travelling, he longed once more to be on the saddle.

Weeks had elapsed, and Osmond was still confined to his room, when, tired with breathing the same atmosphere, and feeling that the open air would perhaps do him more good than all Caterina's remedies, he inquired if there was no terrace to the dyer's house, whither he might be conveyed, that he might enjoy a few hours of the breath of heaven. Stasso, having proceeded to take a survey of the premises, soon returned to say that nothing could be more easy, that the steps were wide, terrace sheltered, and that it was in fact used as a frequent resort of the family.

With some difficulty, with the help of Bogos and Mustafa, the faithful Stasso succeeded in conveying his master to the terrace, where, having spread a carpet, a mattress, and cushions, he deposited him, without any more inconvenience than a groan or two, and a few wry faces. No sooner was Osmond restored to the open air, to the sight of the distant mountains, and all the various beauties of nature, than he seemed to be a new man, and his spirits rose with the change.

Caterina, who found that by her applications of herbs and sour milk she had not made the progress she expected in his cure, had at length given birth to a profound thought: no less than to sew up his leg in a sheep's skin, the woolly side innermost. Often had she observed this remedy applied to horses and asses, and the bright question. "Why should it not succeed with man too?" flashed across her, as she saw a sheep led to the slaughterhouse; and straightway she determined to propose the scheme to her patient. When she reached his room at the usual hour of visiting him, to her surprise she found him gone, but she was soon informed of his pilgrimage to the terrace, and thither she followed, dragging with her as much of a sheepskin as would be necessary for her purpose.

As soon as she made her appearance, Osmond greeted her with his usual good-nature, whilst Mustafa, who had long

thought her labour was in vain, and who looked upon her as one of the causes of their detention, could scarcely refrain from indulging in the invectives which Mahomedans so often use towards Christians.

"What are you about, old mother?" said the Tatar; "what filth are you bringing here? I said your eye foreboded no good, from the first time I saw you."

"*Eh, guzum!*—Eh, my eyes!" said she in answer, "what can I do? I bring relief to the Aga: this is for his leg," showing her bit of sheepskin.

"Do you take the Beyzadeh for a horse that you treat him as one? Allah! Allah! are you mad? Evil was the day when we came to Kars!"

"Do not frighten the old woman," said Osmond to the Tatar; "she is at liberty to do with my leg whatever she pleases." Then turning to Caterina, he continued, "Say, what is to be done now? Am I to eat your sheepskin?"

Upon this question the old empiric broke out into an involuntary fit of laughter, which rang though the range of terraces on the adjoining houses, and which, to the astonishment of those present, was echoed by a corresponding peal at a short distance, proceeding, however, from a youthful and merry voice, and denoting thoughtlessness and high spirits.

"That is the voice of the little negress Nourzadeh," exclaimed Caterina, as she turned her ear towards the sound; "what does she laugh at?" Upon which she looked over the adjoining wall, and, having caught sight of her, she cried out at the top of her cracked voice, "*Gel! gel! ai gidi mascara!*—Come, come! oh, you young scaramouch!"

The terraces of the respective houses were separated by a low parapet, part of which was so entirely broken down, that scarcely any division was preserved, and thus the houses of Suleiman Aga and the Armenian, who were next-door neighbours, were under almost one and the same roof. An abrupt wall, behind which rose an arch, skreened the entrance of the Turk's house to the roof from those who stood on the Armenian's terrace; and thus, when Nourzadeh ran to Caterina's call, no one could see who stood behind the wall.

When the young negress, with her merry face and broad-grinning teeth, appeared before the assembled group, she

stopped short, and would have run back, had not the old woman said, "Where is your mistress?"

The girl, without saying a word, pointed archly towards the wall. Caterina, who after the panegyric, the never-ending praises, she had so frequently bestowed upon the daughter of Suleiman Aga, had longed above everything to bring to the eyes of her patient this flower of her city, in order that he might be satisfied of her varacity, at once cried out, "As you love your eyes, *ai khanûm doudou*—oh my young mistress! come, enlighten our countenances, there is here nothing to fear!"

Upon this all at once appeared, before Osmond was in the least prepared for such a vision, the enchanting Ayesha in all her loveliness. She stood before him the personification of virgin modesty; lowly in her bearing, though dignified in look and manner, blushing, though still unembarrassed, she seemed to throw an atmosphere of purity and enchantment around her. To see her thus, none could do otherwise than gaze in admiration, and remain silent for fear of offending. Osmond had never beheld such unrivalled beauty. Travelling where women appear without being so closely veiled that their faces are almost expunged from the catalogue of nature's excellencies, accustomed to deal only with rough and bearded men, and particularly after his long confinement in a sick room, he felt his heart expand at the sight of this piece of human perfection, in the same manner as if an angel had appeared. The thrill of astonishment, admiration, and sudden love, which came over the sick youth as the flash of Ayesha's beauty beamed upon him, produced so lasting an effect that it influenced every action of his future life. Ayesha had obeyed the call of a voice well known to her, little thinking before whom she was about to appear; and such was the suddenness of her feeling at the novelty of her situation, that for a moment she was bewildered to a degree that made her forget her exposure, and thus allowed herself to be fully gazed at before she retreated to her veil, which she had left where she had been seated.

Ayesha had a great partiality for the old Caterina, who was a constant attendant at Suleiman Aga's house, and thus she had not hesitated to attend her call; but when she perceived how she was surrounded, all she could say was, in a tone of

surprise and mortification, "Caterina! this is a crime!" She then retreated whence she came; but, at the same time, not without having remarked the graceful and interesting form of Osmond, stretched on his sick bed, whose ardent and impassioned expression of countenance helped to renew the impression which he had made upon her at their first meeting. The whole action of this incident was almost instantaneous, and took place in nearly as short a time as it has taken to narrate.

The impression which the appearance of Ayesha had made upon Mustafa and Stasso was nearly as great as upon Osmond, although the fascination had worked in a different manner. Upon Mustafa, who was a complete Turk in his ideas and prejudices about women, it produced a sensation of jealousy that so much beauty and charm should have met any man's eyes but his own; and although he was like one bewildered by some sudden flash as he sat in darkness, overpowered with a feeling very much like love, and overjoyed at a sight so rare and unexpected, yet he became angry at what he esteemed a dereliction of the respect due to his own countrywomen. His first impulse was to make an angry exclamation against the old woman.

"What are you about," said he, "you old filth-carrier? Are you turned mad? do you not see that men are present? Fine doings, indeed! In the name of Allah! would you bring the Beyzadeh into trouble, and this daughter of Islam into disgrace?"

"There is no harm done, light of my eyes!" answered Caterina. "It is only Suleiman Aga's daughter. Franks are of no consequence; their women have no veils; their eyes are accustomed to the sight of woman's face. Did not I say true?" she continued, turning towards Lord Osmond; "have I said more than I ought, when I talked to you of the beauty of the maiden?"

"You said too little," answered Osmond, in a serious and musing tone.

"Ah!" continued Caterina, "but she is even better than she looks. You ought to have seen how she attended upon her sick father. As you love your eyes, she knew better how to nurse him than I."

Stasso, who had also been witness to the whole scene, was

thrown into a fever of admiration; but the effect it produced upon him was to engender an explosion of maledictions in his mind upon the whole Mahomedan race, for possessing such a treasure of perfection. "May the devil take them all!" said he, in a low and indistinct tone, as he helped his master to descend into his room. "We also have our beauties; go to the Fanari, go to Tino; but, in truth, this maiden is unlike anything I have ever seen before. She can't be either Greek or Turk; she must be a Frank!"

When Osmond was left alone with his Greek, he said with great earnestness, "Stasso, did you see the maiden? Can she really be a Turkish girl?"

"What do I know, and what can I say?" said Stasso: "how can she be anything but Turkish, unless she be an angel sent to us by the Holy Virgin," crossing himself the while, "by way of compassion, for having detained us so long among these barbarians?"

"Have you seen her mother?" asked Osmond; "they say she was originally a Greek, or an Armenian. Caterina tells me she is a bad woman."

"We will learn how that is," said Stasso: "if she be a Greek, I will find out the she-devil, and cut off my mustaches if I do not make her tell me why and wherefore she has thus damned herself by forsaking her faith."

"Can the maiden really have been angry," inquired his master, "at having been seen by us? Women are not naturally given to hide their charms."

"What can I say, sir?" said Stasso: "these are Turkish women—they will show their faces when there is no one by to witness their so doing; but, otherwise, they will rave and rant when any one ventures to look at them. In truth, this maiden is not like other Turkish maidens. Whence she comes, who can say?"

Stasso left his master with the determination of making acquaintance, if possible, with Ayesha's mother, and conceiving it likely, after what had just taken place on the terrace, that she might have proceeded thither in person, he returned there in the hope of meeting her. The day was drawing to a close when he appeared, and, true enough, the first object which

caught his eye as he looked towards Suleiman Aga's house, was a woman with a veil carelessly thrown over her head, whom he immediately conjectured to be the Lady Zabetta.

"*Kale espera, keramou*,—good evening, my madam," said Stasso, trying her in his own language.

"What!" said she, in a tone of surprise at hearing this address, for Stasso was dressed like a Turk, and gave himself out as a Boshnak, a native of Bosnia, "What! are you a Greek? How came you here? How do you know that I am a Greek?"

She said this with some little asperity and embarrassment, although there was evident pleasure in her manner at having met with a countryman; for modern Greeks very much hang together, whatever may be their places of birth. When she perceived how very handsome the person was who had addressed her, and that he was in every way an object fitted to attract a woman's attention, she was not slow in dropping her shawl and exhibiting to Stasso a face of uncommon attraction. Her nose was aquiline, her eyes were jet black, shadowed by strongly-arched brows, and a profusion of dark hair, tressed and braided and turned up in the manner peculiar to Turkish married women, was arranged about her face and shoulders. She was tall, her person had been finely shaped, but was now coarse and inclining to corpulency; there was a bad and immodest expression in her countenance, and it was evident that she endeavoured to enhance the power of her charms by paint, and by the many patches and ornaments much used in the East.

On approaching her, Stasso thought it right to treat her with all the respect which he would have done had he been addressing a Mahomedan woman.

"Yes," he said, "I am a Greek, and your countryman; I am at your service, and I kiss your hands."

At these words her face relaxed into a coquettish smile, and she answered, "You are welcome; from whence are you?"

"I am a Sedikieuli, near Smyrna," said he; "what can I do?"

"And what are you come to do here?" she inquired.

"I am servant to an English Beyzadeh; we come from Persia, and are travelling onward to Constantinople."

"An English nobleman!" she exclaimed, with an inquiring accent. "And he—wherefore does he travel? Is he an *Elchi*—ambassador, or what?"

"He travels for his pleasure," said Stasso; "he is a rich man, and a great personage in his own country."

"What is his name?" she eagerly inquired.

"His name," said Stasso, "is Osmond; his father is a great Bey among the English. We are detained here by his illness, and if it pleases God, when he is well, we shall proceed on our journey. But you, Kadun! how does it happen, that one so handsome, so superior to Turks, is found living in this wretched place?"

Without heeding his question, although evidently delighted by his flattery, she inquired, "Has he ever been at Athens?"

"At Athens!" said Stasso; "yes, we have been at Athens. Eh! where have we not been? there is neither a hole nor a corner, a stick nor a stone, that we have not seen, in Greece, in Egypt, in Syria, or in Persia. But, Kadun, as you love your eyes, can you be from Athens, for it appears to me by your accent that you must be from the Islands?"

At this question she seemed perplexed and embarrassed, and after a long pause said, "I am a Tiniote—from Tino," and then laughingly added, "I am a *Touchan*."*

"What do you say?" exclaimed Stasso; "are you really from Tino? I am acquainted with almost all the Tiniotes, both at Smyrna and Pera. Of what family are you in Tino?"

With a sigh she answered, "Why should I tell you my name? What can it be to you? I am now a Turkish woman, and the wife of a Mussulman."

"This is strange!" said Stasso, still pressing her to tell her name; "perhaps I may be acquainted with some of your relations, and may be able to give you some account of them."

She persisted in withholding her name, although there was a hesitation in her manner which showed that she had much to say, if she could allow herself to speak. She turned the conversation from herself, as if she feared to have already said too much; and with all the inquisitiveness of a Greek, she

* The Turks have given the nickname of *Touchan*, or hare, to the natives of Tino, owing, we suppose, to their timidity. The Tiniotes furnish servants to the Christians of the East, particularly to Europeans.

plied Stasso with every sort of question relating to Lord Osmond: "Was he handsome? Was he young? Was he rich? How long since had he left England? When would he return? Was he fond of the Greeks? Did he like the Turks better? Who were his friends at Constantinople? Who at Athens? How long did he remain there?"

Stasso gave her every information, but could not help being surprised, and even put on his guard, by her manner, which, in a person who seemed to have devoted herself to Turkish life, was strange and mysterious.

At length she asked him a question which still more astonished him—"Tell me," said she, "has he seen my daughter? I know he has—how did he like her?"

Stasso launched out in her praises in a manner that showed what had been the effect produced by her charms, but again considering that the person who addressed him was a Turkish woman, his astonishment increased.

Their conversation had now lasted until the day had entirely closed; and he who was never backward in his devotion to female charms, fearful of the consequences of further delay, thought it more prudent to take his leave, still with the strongest desire to see her again, for her brilliant eyes and her coquettish manner had gone far in subduing his heart.

"We will meet again," said he, as she was about quitting the terrace. "As you love your daughter, let me see you to-morrow evening."

"Do you forget, brother," said she, "that I am a Mussulman's wife, and that it is unlawful for me to speak to any man, saving to my husband?" This she spoke with a satirical smile on her lips, as if she would say 'I laugh at such nonsense.'

"What!" exclaimed Stasso, "you a Greek's daughter, and care for these bearded Turks! go, go, we will see each other again."

Upon this they parted company; she returned to her harem, whilst he proceeded to give an account of his meeting to his master.

CHAPTER V.

Man is fire, and woman tow; the devil comes and sets them in a blaze.—

FIELDING.

BEFORE we proceed farther in our narrative, it is necessary that the reader should be informed of part of Zabetta's history; the remainder, for the present, must be left in mysterious uncertainty. She was a native of Tino, as she had truly informed Stasso; and, according to the practice of her countrywomen, quitted that island at an early age, when in the full splendour of her beauty, to enter into service. She began her career at Athens, where her extraordinary charms attracted the attention of the youth of the place, who succeeded, by their flattery and devotion, in entirely turning a head which was naturally full of levity. Like most Greeks, she was ambitious of distinction, and, finding that those of her own nation who admired her, were not likely to give her that position in life to which she aspired, she listened to the vows of love whispered by a young Turk, whose manly beauty and commanding manners entirely won her heart. He was in the service of the Governor of Athens, and one of his most distinguished officers; but as it would be impossible for him to marry Zabetta, situated as they both were—she being a servant to a rich and powerful foreign family, and he a dependant upon a despotic Governor—they determined to elope from Athens and take refuge in Asia Minor. Their scheme was most successful; unknown to any one, they embarked in a boat bound to Samos, and soon after landed at Scala Nuova, whence they proceeded to Guzzelhissar, where he had an uncle established, rich in lands, and a man of influence in the country. Here she acceded to her husband's wishes to forsake her faith and embrace Mahomedanism, to which, as she was prevented by no principle, she made no resistance.

Suleiman, for that was his name, was originally from Kars; he became successful in trade, having been noticed and assisted by his uncle at Guzzelhissar; and as soon as he had amassed a sufficient fortune, he determined to settle in his native place. This he did, and became a man of consequence and consideration there. From his youth he had ever been a rigid observer of his faith, and as he advanced in years he increased in reputation for sanctity and severity of discipline. At the time of our history he was esteemed one of the strictest Mussulmans of Kars.

The mysterious part of Zabetta's history was that which related to Ayesha. Neither she nor her husband could claim her as their daughter, although they had brought her up as such from an infant. As she grew up, her mind and person expanded to a degree of perfection so superior to the natives of the Levant in general, that she became an object of surprise and of admiration to all who knew her. Her person was a model of perfect symmetry, full of grace in every movement, for she never gave way to that slouching gait which so frequently indicates the indolent Asiatic. Her face was full of the best expression, beaming with benevolence, and softened by a veil of such modesty, that even the rudest of the Mahomedan tribe could not approach her without a feeling of respect. We have already spoken of her beauty, which would have been but a secondary consideration to the perfections of her mind, were it not of that uncommon kind which made it remarkable as a special caprice or interference of Nature in her favour. The beauty of a Turkish woman when discovered peeping from behind the veil with which it is usually covered, cannot fail to strike the beholder, who sees it by chance or by stealth, as something infinitely greater than perhaps it really is: but Ayesha would have been considered a first-rate beauty either behind a veil, or in the fullest exposure in any country in the world; and when she first was seen by Osmond, she appeared fairer than anything he had ever beheld, perhaps, in Europe or in Asia.

Suleiman Aga, whose nature was kind in the main, although his bigotry was of the fiercest order, adored his adopted daughter, and caused her to be taught everything that belonged to her station. The accomplishments of Turkish women are summed up in a very short list. If they can read and write,

they are esteemed as prodigies. Music and dancing being looked upon as the province of professional performers, who are synonymous with people of loose character, the children of respectable parents are not taught these arts, although by way of amusement many sing and play on the tambourine. They spin and embroider; are instructed in forms of speech and politeness; are taught to say their prayers, and read the koran; but every accomplishment soon falls a victim to the idleness and indolence incidental to their mode of life; for scarcely any other method of passing away time is known except gossiping with a neighbouring harem, going to the hot bath, smoking, and taking a walk to the burying-grounds. Ayesha soon overcame the difficulties of writing, and she rivalled the first Mollahs in the niceties of their art. She read too with facility every different sort of character, from the crabbed *Skekesteh* to the clear *Nustalik*; and, after she had duly digested her koran, the history of the Prophet, his sayings, and every subject relating to her faith, she read poetry and history in a manner that astonished every one. After this it will not be thought extraordinary that old Caterina should have been surprised at Osmond's ignorance of the fame of Suleiman Aga's daughter.

Her reputed father had himself taken great pains to make her a faithful disciple of Islam, and although he was frequently at a loss how to answer her inquiries, and to satisfy her doubts concerning those points in the Mahomedan faith which can never stand before right reason, still he had succeeded in bringing her to observe all the forms of his religion, its ablutions, and its stated hours of prayer, with scrupulous precision.

On the other hand, her mother, who, as she grew older, would often revert to her conversion to Mahomedanism with shame and confusion, and who was acquainted with the rudiments of her own faith sufficiently to enable her to make them a subject of thought, would frequently give vent to her feelings on that subject to her supposed daughter, and instil into her mind all that she knew concerning the Christian religion. She secretly wished that the child might be saved through the intercession of Jesus, rather than trust to the promises of happiness made by Mahomet; and so much did she dwell upon this in her conversations with Ayesha, that the poor maiden's mind

at length became bewildered, and in fact she was left without any fixed principle; for, whilst she performed the genuflections of the Mahomedans, she would frequently address herself mentally to the Virgin and the Saints. Her hatred to unbelievers, prescribed by the Koran, would often be checked by the reflections raised by what she heard from her mother; and when she was told that it was lawful to kill those who disclaimed her Prophet, her own benevolent nature, aided by her good sense, would tell her that such could not be the intention of an all-wise Creator.

Zabetta's character had been truly defined by the old Caterina—she might be called a misfortune. Her liveliness, and the spirit of intrigue common to her nation, shone conspicuous in her actions; the dullness and sameness of the existence which she led as a Mahomedan's wife had produced so much impatience and irritability in her whole being, that she became the torment of those around her—her violence was uncontrollable. From abhorring her mode of life, she was soon led to detest her husband, and to abominate his sect; and so much discontent pervaded every thought and feeling of her mind, that she did nothing but resolve schemes for emancipating herself from her present miseries. At one time she determined upon leaving her husband and returning to her own faith and country, but then she was stopped by fear of the awful consequences of such a step. At another, she would insist upon Suleiman Aga's quitting the exile of Kars, in order to seek the pleasures of Stamboul; but this he always strenuously resisted. She had no one to whom she could open her mind except Ayesha, who, far from encouraging her views, endeavoured only to soften her irritability and to make her contented with her lot. It will not then be thought extraordinary that she should have joyfully seized the opportunity of becoming acquainted with Stasso, and of entering into the conversation with him which we have already repeated.

Upon hearing of Osmond, and finding him so near a neighbour, an undefined hope of being able, through his agency, to leave her present miseries and return once again to the joys of a life of pleasure, rose in her breast. She had in her early youth known and lived among Europeans:—his presence awoke all her recollections of those days, so much happier than

the present; and as fast as she allowed her imagination to devise modes of future enjoyment, so fast did she lose sight of the danger likely to threaten her were her scheme ever to be put into execution.

She was fully sensible of the extent of Ayesha's beauty, and upon its power she laid the principal foundation of her hopes. Could she but lead on the young Englishman to fall in love with her daughter, she conceived that, with the help of his servant Stasso, whose heart she easily saw might become her own, her evasion from Kars, its horrors, and her husband, might easily be effected; and to the furtherance of that object she now determined to bend every effort.

When Zabetta had quitted Stasso after their conversation on the terrace, she retreated to the harem, her imagination all alive upon the views to which that conversation had given rise. Her apartment was a large handsome room, fitted up on three sides with ranges of low ottomans, backed by silken cushions, the windows of which looked upon a small garden filled with flowers, and also enjoyed an extensive view over the adjacent plain and its surrounding mountains. The severity of the winter had now passed away, and had given place to the softness of the opening spring. The shades of the evening were succeeded by the soothing influence of a full moon, which shed its sober light over every object far and wide, and gleamed into the room through the open casements.

Zabetta found Ayesha seated in a corner of the apartment, in a musing attitude; her cheek resting upon her hand, whilst her eyes wandered over the expanse before her. Her thoughts, however, were occupied with the occurrence of the morning, and sensations to which she had hitherto been a stranger filled her breast. Since her first meeting with Osmond, whom she had then taken for one of her own countrymen, she had never ceased to dwell in idea upon his expressive countenance, his commanding person, and, more than all, upon the courtesy and deference of his manner : a proceeding so totally different from that of Turks in general to one of her sex, that she could not help drawing a comparison very much in his favour. Still, whenever she caught her thoughts stealing towards the contemplation of his superior excellence, she would check them ;

for her innate modesty would remind her that they were enemies to a maiden's purity, and her good sense would tell her that it was folly to waste her time upon the recollection of one whom she might never see again. But the event of the morning had completely destroyed all her equanimity, and, passing from that quiet of mind which had hitherto marked the even tenor of her life, she found herself all at once entangled in a labyrinth of conflicting emotions. On the one hand, she had been taught that it was a crime to hold intercourse with unbelievers, and she knew that Osmond was a Christian; moreover, she had been brought up in the idea that no Mahomedan woman could ever show her face to a man. On the other hand, from her mother's counteracting interference, particularly in 'favour of Christians, many of the prejudices which are so strong with Turkish women in general, had been much softened, and she felt herself allowed to look upon Osmond with a more favourable eye than she otherwise would have done. Besides, she had to contend with that propensity to romance which lurks at the bottom of every maiden's heart, and which softens her feelings towards every thing in the shape of man, particularly towards one, whatever might be his faith, having beauty and amiability to recommend him. From what she had already seen of Osmond, a net of such close texture had been worked round her heart, that it was enslaved ere she knew how.

When Zabetta entered the room, Ayesha's mind was absorbed in the minutest investigation of everything which had taken place at her first interview with Osmond in the street; and then at the second on the terrace. She had begun to persuade herself that *kismet*, or fate, that expounder of every Mahomedan's difficulty, had much to do with both these events; and having nearly settled that point to her satisfaction, she was far gone in the speculation whether that same *kismet* would again operate in her favour, and procure her a third interview.

"Ayesha my lamb," said her mother, in a softened and cheering tone of voice, do you know what has happened? I, too, have seen one of the strangers who lives with Bogos the dyer. Is it not most extraordinary? There must be something in it."

"It is strange," answered the maiden, colouring at the same

time. "We are taught that it is a crime to talk to heretics; but what can oppose destiny? Was it the sick stranger?" she inquired in a tremulous voice.

"No," said Zabetta, "it was his servant: and do you know he is one of my own countrymen; he is a Greek, and a *kab paidi*—a good youth. Oh what did I not feel when I spoke to him in my own tongue! my heart beat at my breast as if I had heard the sound of my brother's or my father's voice calling to me from Tino. But what can we do? Here we are in this odious place, living day after day and year after year, like owls in a deserted tower, unseen and unknown, except by a few faces that are grown as common and as familiar to us as chains are to a prisoner. *Ai janum, Stamboul*—oh my soul, Constantinople!" she exclaimed with fervour: "could we but once get there, then Zabetta would have nothing more to wish for."

"*Allah kerim*—God is great!" exclaimed Ayesha, with a profound sigh: "oh, mother, let us be resigned to whatever it may please Allah to dispense to his unworthy creatures."

"*Allah kerim* is all very well," said Zabetta with impatience, "but in the meanwhile here we are at Kars. We must leave it, happen what will. I will no longer be a captive—I will no more waste my life in this odious bondage."

Ayesha became alarmed at the violent, impassioned manner with which Zabetta uttered these words, and in the most soothing tone said, "Times will alter—nothing is stable in this life: see, the winter is gone and spring is come—God directs all for the best. I am young, and ought not to offer advice; but let me intreat my mother to have patience, and, as we may hope for blessing, let us wait with resignation the decrees of unchangeable destiny."

"Ayesha!" exclaimed her mother, making an effort to suppress the violence of her feeling, "did you speak to the Englishman to-day when you saw him upon the terrace?"

"Heaven forbid!" said she; "speak? no: I saw him for a moment—but speak to him? no. Am I not a maiden of Islam? Are we not taught to shun heretics?"

"My heart Ayesha!" said Zabetta, "Musulmans teach such things, and assert that they are proper; but they are but a few compared to the rest of the world. The greatest part of mankind see and converse with women—and they are God's

creatures too—they cannot all be wrong. There can be no sin in conversing with our fellow-creatures.”

“Ahi!” exclaimed Ayesha, after a pause, “one should think that what you say is true; but my father insists otherwise, and he has the Prophet on his side.”

“Let us leave the Prophet to himself awhile,” said Zabetta, with a peevish voice and in evident agitation; “let me tell you one thing, Ayesha, which you have never yet been told—you were not born a child of Islam—you have more to do with Franks than you can suppose.”

“How?” said Ayesha, with the greatest earnestness, and apparently roused from her resigned and passive state, “as you love your child, as you cherish your faith, tell me more—I know nothing about myself. Am I not your child?—have I not a father?—tell me how I am then related to Franks!”

Zabetta felt that she had struck upon the right chord, in thus attempting to draw the maiden’s mind from her devotedness to her Mahomedan duties. Who she really was, was a profound secret only known to herself, and partially to Suleiman Aga, and she had never said so much on that head before to Ayesha; but she felt it necessary, in order to create a great interest in her heart towards Christians, to make this disclosure. “The time is not yet come, my daughter,” she said, “when I can explain to you all that fate has ordained—you are young—there is a time for all things;—but be this known to you, that you must not look upon Franks with the eye of hatred, but, on the contrary, open the heart of friendship to them—they are your brothers. As your mother I tell you this—as a Mahomedan’s wife I order you to keep it secret—it is a secret of the greatest importance to us both. If you can speak to the Englishman our neighbour, do so with caution, but without fear.”

Ayesha at these words became mute with astonishment; such a permission, although it infused a secret and subtle pleasure throughout her whole frame, affected her in the same manner as the prescription of a new physician acts upon a desponding patient who has ever been taught, to look upon wine as prohibited, and is all at once allowed to drink it. She distrusted her mother’s words, and still she clung to them with ecstasy. Whilst the imprecations of the Koran against unbelievers rang

in her ears, the knowledge of having been born one herself, perhaps of having European blood in her veins, acted as an antidote does to poison. It was plain that, had Osmond at that moment stood before her, she would neither have hid her face from him, nor refused to speak to him.

But, instead of Osmond, the silken curtain over the door was thrown up, and in walked Suleiman Aga in person. He was a grave and dignified Turk, of noble appearance, clothed in long robes furnished with light furs adapted to the season, and wearing on his head a *caouk*, that is, a stiff cloth cap, around which was wound a band of white muslin. At the sight of his wife his features assumed an appearance of humility: he had expected only to see Ayesha, and had come with an open and unreserved face and manner, but so afraid was he of exciting Zabetta's violence, that whenever she appeared he adopted the least offensive and most submissive attitude. Turks in general esteem quiet as the greatest of blessings—they hate noise:—a seat in the corner of their couch, listening to the plashing of the never-ceasing fountain; smoking their soothing chibouk and watching the smoke which they emit into the air until it dissolves into nothing, or listening to the conversation of a friend which may afford some little excitement, is the sort of recreation they most relish; and to obtain this they will show powers of endurance to be surpassed by no stoic. Once put them in a fury, they instantly go to extremes—they kill or are killed; to cut a matter short, they order execution right or wrong, and then return to their fountain, as if nothing had happened.

When Zabetta saw her husband enter, the humility of his aspect, instead of softening her feelings towards him, immediately impelled her to place herself in an attitude of open hostility; her brow lowered, her eye became fixed, her head swerved neither to the right nor the left; the recollection of every evil, real or imaginary, which she suffered at his hands, arose uncontrolled in her breast; whatever she might have been the moment before he entered, all at once it occurred to her that she now was an injured woman; she felt that all her griefs were owing to her husband alone—that he had been unjust in loving her—in seducing her to marry him—in dragging her from her own country—in becoming rich—in settling

himself in his native city. This was her usual conduct, whenever the unfortunate Suleiman happened to cross the path of the most susceptible Zabetta.

"What do you want?" said she to him, as soon as he had taken his seat quietly before her on the ottoman; "wherever we least desire your company, you are sure to appear."

"I came to see Ayesha," answered Suleiman with great deference; "had I known you were here, I would have stayed away, since you abhor my presence."

"That is so like you!" exclaimed his wife, in a burst of rage; "you will go any distance to see Ayesha, but wherever I am, you shun me—you love any thing but your wife."

"You said you did not wish to see me," said Suleiman, still in a softer tone; "what can I do?"

"I did—and do," said his wife; "but what has that to do with your neglect of me? Am I not the worst-used woman in Kars?—In Kars, did I say?—in all Turkey?"

"I am always ready, Zabetta," answered the husband, "to act as you desire. Is there anything in reason which you require which I do not immediately grant?"

"That is good! that is true indeed! Allah, Allah!" said Zabetta, "do not I ask you to take me from this horrid place to which you have brought me—where I am shut up like a wild beast in a cage—where I see nothing but Kurds, devil-worshippers, and savages, and do you not refuse me? Answer me that, O man!"

"Light of my eyes!" replied the impassive Suleiman, "how can we leave this place without ruining ourselves? All I have is here. You would have me go to Constantinople, where I know no one; here I am known and respected."

"You, you! all is for *you*," said his wife, "and nothing for me. *Mashallah!*—praise be to Allah! you are to be thought of before everything; that long beard of yours must be worshipped and adored, whilst I am left in a corner like a pair of old slippers! Go, go, I spit upon such a beard."

"You are unjust, Zabetta," said Suleiman; "I say again, is there any thing in reason that you require which I ever refuse? Whatever clothes, whatever food, whatever servants, whatever amusements you wish for, do I not give you? After all, there is such a thing as justice in the world."

"Nonsense—dirt—filth—all you say is such," exclaimed the angry woman. "Was it for this that I forsook my country, my friends, my faith, my all, and then am to be told that like a child I may dress myself in fine clothes, that I may eat sweetmeats to keep me from crying, or may walk in the burying-ground, and sit upon a tombstone by way of cheering my spirits? You are an ass, you are a fool. I was not born a Greek woman for nothing; I know the difference between black and white."

Upon hearing these odious epithets, the colour of the patient man rose a little in his cheeks, there was a slight distension of his beard and mustaches, and there broke out a slender wrinkle on his brow, but still he remained passive. "You say a great deal too much," said he; "if I had beaten you, you could not complain more."

"Beaten me, indeed! beaten me, do you say?" roared out the now furious Zabetta, "I should like to see that! Are you become mad? Will you beat me? Am I to be treated as your slave? You wretch—you vile Osmanli, I will show you that I am a Greek woman. Go, I abhor you, I detest you. There, take that," upon which she pulled off both her slippers, and, one after the other, threw them with all her strength at her husband. She then rushed out of the room, slamming the doors behind her, and knocking and beating about every thing which came in her way, her passage through the house being traced by the stamp of her feet, which at length was heard on the terrace overhead.

One slipper had hit Suleiman on the face, the other on the head,—still he said nothing; he took them up from the ottoman where they had fallen, laid them quietly on the floor, and then turning to Ayesha, who was suffering the deepest anguish at beholding this scene, said with a sigh, as he slowly shook his head, "*Chok chay*—that is much," and then mumbled within his breath his profession of faith, "There is but one Allah and Mahomed is his prophet."

Ayesha rose from her seat, and with the tenderest expression of interest in her face, approached her father, and said, "Be not angry, O my father! — my poor mother is sick in her mind; forgive her, as you love Allah, forgive her."

"It is nothing," said Suleiman, calmly; "be you but well

and happy, Ayesha, and all will be well : God is great — God is merciful!”

Ayesha said nothing more, but sat in silence near the oppressed man, who had before but too frequently been obliged to stifle his feelings at these ebullitions of his wife's ill temper; and as she drew off his mind to other subjects, he gradually resumed his usual calm deportment, and with the help of his never-failing pipe and his resignation to *kismet*, was soon restored to that torpid and indolent state which it was his ambition never to lose.

CHAPTER VI.

Stand, and deceive me not! Oh, noble young man,
I love thee with my soul, but dare not say it!

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

THE account which Stasso gave to Lord Osmond of his interview with Zabetta, had excited all his curiosity. There was something so strange in the circumstance of a Mahomedan woman taking so much apparent interest in an infidel and a Frank, about whom it appeared to him impossible she could know anything, that he became quite uneasy until he had cleared up the mystery. But what most struck him was her anxiety to know whether he had seen her daughter. He could scarcely believe his servant as he dwelt much upon this part of the conversation; the length of time which had elapsed since Zabetta had been at Athens, made it quite improbable that they could have met, or that any part of his conduct there could directly or indirectly have any influence upon her or her daughter at Kars. There was evidently a mystery, of the existence of which Stasso was also convinced; “*Ekhi kateti, Effendi!*” — there is something, my master — there is something,” repeatedly exclaimed Stasso, as he talked the matter over.

“You must discover more this evening,” said Osmond;

“ask the mother what she means, whether I can do anything for either her or her daughter.”

“What do you say, Effendi? she is as cunning as a fox, the she-devil! She will say nothing but what she pleases; but, in truth, there is something, of that I am certain.”

Stasso concluded every phrase upon the subject of his interview with Zabetta, with the words “there is something,” accompanied by a shake of the head; and he promised to himself in succeeding conversations to do his best to discover what that “something” might be. His master ascended the terrace with less difficulty than he had done on the preceding day, and sat there until the dews of the evening drove him below, but he was not fortunate enough to obtain a glimpse of Ayesha. Upon his return to his chamber he waited with impatience for his servant, in order that he might be informed of anything new which he might have discovered, but all he could learn was a repetition of what he had before heard, and nothing which could throw light upon the real history of the maiden.

Zabetta had evidently been exerting herself to make Stasso her admirer, but not a word more did she say touching her own history. The only difference between this interview and the last was, that she brought her daughter with her, who did not open her lips, but remained closely veiled whilst it lasted.

This circumstance set Osmond's imagination on fire; he saw that he too might have the pleasure of her conversation if his health permitted it, and he was delighted to find, upon waking the next morning, how much the swelling in his knee had abated, and how essentially better he felt. He then dismissed the old Caterina, to whom he behaved with a liberality which brought forth all her gratitude; and sent for Mustafa, in order that they might devise plans for leaving Kars. To his surprise, instead of finding that worthy all impatience to depart, he found him full of *Bakalum*—we shall see! *Inshallah*—if it pleases God, and all those little procrastinating phrases behind which a Turk is sure to entrench himself when he wishes to remain *in statu quo*. The fact is, that one glimpse which the too susceptible Mustafa had enjoyed of Ayesha's unrivalled beauty, had so enthralled his heart, that, omitting even to cast a thought upon a certain existing wife and small family whom he had left behind at Constantinople,

he had in his idleness fairly set about inquiring how he might secure to himself, as a second helpmate through life, this precious gem, and had persuaded himself into an assurance, that a Tatar Aga, residing at the Fortunate Gate of Royal Splendour, the confidential messenger of an ambassador of Stamboul, the owner of a comfortable monthly stipend, and one much respected at post-houses, was quite a personage of suitable respectability to solicit in marriage the daughter of an Ayan of Kars. He had in consequence, as a preliminary to further operations, furbished up his weather-beaten face by frequent attendance at the hot-bath. Vainly did he ponder over the scanty allowance of mustache which Nature had doled out to him, and every method which he devised of increasing the store seemed to baffle his ingenuity. If he dyed his few hairs black, he found that, like radishes on a miser's board, they became individuated, and were easily counted; if he abandoned them to their original sandy-coloured insignificance, his face could scarcely assert the man, and he was left that most despised of all creatures in a Turk's estimation, a *sakal-siz* — a no-beard. Then he was short of stature, but that could not be helped; he was also thin, but then he found, by heaping on more garments to his original stock, he might increase in size to any extent he chose. Accordingly, he bought a new furred jacket, duly trimmed and braided; he spread out the circumference of his *shalwars*, or trowsers, to such a size, that his small legs lay hidden within their folds in somewhat the same proportions that a pitchfork has to a haystack, whilst their bulk almost prevented him from walking. A small muslin embroidered handkerchief, which he threw over his shoulder, and an amber-headed pipe in his hand, made him up all together, so he flattered himself, a person of irresistible attraction to the object of his wishes.

Thus equipped, his pistols protruding from his girdle, and his steps measured with more than usual dignity, he betook himself to promenading near the house of Suleiman Aga, hoping that his beautiful daughter might, as she gazed through her latticed window, be smitten with his appearance; or that, if she issued forth to walk, he might meet her and attract her notice. Alas! he laboured in vain; he spread his plumage to no purpose; he might as well have bought neither jacket nor trowsers; nobody came, no one looked from the lattice. At

length he bethought himself of enlisting the old Caterina in his service, for he knew that such things were often done, that marriages were often brought about by intervening old women, and he knew that this aged individual was a constant inmate in Suleiman Aga's harem.

The first time she appeared at the dyer's, he occosted her with more courtesy than he had done on the last occasion when he had seen her as an operator on his master's knee, and said to her, "*Bana hak ai guzum !*—look at me, oh my eyes! *Gal !*—come hither, I have words to say to you!"

The crone, cheered at being thus addressed by a true believer, lent a willing ear to his invitation, and she squatted herself down before him. "What may there be at your service?" said she.

"You are a person of sense," said he, "you understand at a word. That daughter of Suleiman Aga, whom we saw the other day on the terrace, is no indifferent person;—do you understand me?"

"Yes, yes," said the old Caterina, with a dogged sort of nod, "I understand; there is not such another thing in the world—What of her?"

"What of her!" said Mustafa in surprise, "do not you understand me? I thought you were no fool! When a man inquires after a maiden, what thought can he have but of marriage?"

"Do you want Ayesha in marriage?" exclaimed the old woman, in a tone of the greatest surprise, as if Mustapha had proposed to herself:—" *Ey vak !*—look! see! where are you, and where is Ayesha? Are you mad?" Upon which she burst out into a fit of laughter, which put the poor Tatar into a strange embarrassment.

"You are mad," said Mustafa. "A girl, after all, is nothing but a girl; and when she acquires a husband, what can she want more? I am a man—I am a Tatar Aga—find such another in Kars! If you are an ass, I have nothing to say to you; if you are not, speak to Suleiman Aga and his daughter for me, and let me hear what they will answer. I have money, *Mashallah !* and want for nothing."

"Suleiman Aga, do you say?" said Caterina: "where have you lived, when you count Suleiman Aga among men? *Bosh*

der !—he is nothing ! his wife, the *khanûm Zabetta*, if you please ! but *deh* ! she looks for a Pasha at least for her daughter, if not for a Vizir, or a Capudan Pasha. What are you thinking of, O man ?”

Mustafa pulled up his mustache, applied his hand to his chin, looked foolish, looked grand, humble, and indignant by turns, and broke up his conference with the old woman without saying a word more than “*Bakalum* !—we shall see !” But still, as he walked away from her, he did not relinquish his hope of making himself agreeable to the maiden, and treasured up in his mind the knowledge which he had acquired of her transcendant beauty, which cheered his thoughts through the progress of each intervening pipe.

Osmond, finding that he was increasing rapidly in health, began seriously to turn his thoughts towards the prosecution of his journey ; but still he felt himself, as it were, spell-bound by the neighbourhood of the beautiful Ayesha, and he determined to gratify his ardent curiosity to know something more of her history, by getting, if possible, acquainted with her. On that very night he resolved to accompany Stasso to the terrace, in the hope that she would again make her appearance with her mother ; and moreover, he took every precaution that this step should be kept secret, both from Mustafa, and the inmates of the house.

Accordingly, as soon as the last cries of the muezzins from the minarets, calling the faithful to prayers, had died away upon the ear, Stasso, preceding his master, first set foot on the terrace, and to his joy perceived that Zabetta and Ayesha were at their post. Upon this he made a sign to Lord Osmond, who immediately joined him.

Ayesha had evidently not been prepared for this encounter ; and when she saw Osmond appear, she shrank behind her mother, covering herself with her veil, and feeling at his approach an emotion which those who have been assailed by the tender passion for the first time, can alone define. But she was perplexed how to act. Her Mahomedan education would have taught her to fly from the presence of an infidel, whilst the presence of her mother seemed to procure for her every protection that she could require.

Osmond received from Zabetta every encouragement which

flattery and a gracious manner could afford. She laid aside the haughty demeanour of a Mahomedan, and became at once the fawning and cringing Greek. Renegades, he had always heard, were infinitely more intolerant and intemperate in their religious zeal than original Mussulmans, but here he found the contrary; everything he heard from Zabetta tended to show how discontented she was in her present situation, and how much she despised those by whom she was surrounded.

"See," said she, "what a miserable destiny is mine, to have been thrown among such a people, and to be an inhabitant of so ill-conditioned a place as this! You, Effendi, who have seen Constantinople and the world, you will have pity upon us poor castaways, who are cooped up here in hopeless exile;" and then she added, as if in joke, although meant in earnest, "Will you not take us with you?"

Osmond was by her manner and language forcibly impressed with the idea that she was acting a part, and that she had some latent design upon him. There was evidently some mystery attached to her, and he felt that it was principally connected with the history of her supposed daughter. He answered Zabetta with great frankness and courtesy, and whilst he encouraged her confidence, he endeavoured to draw from her such an account of herself as might clear up what he wished to ascertain concerning Ayesha. But she studiously kept from him such parts of her history as were connected with that of the maiden, although she evidently said and did everything which might create in his breast an interest in her favour.

Ayesha, in the meanwhile, had been so struck by the voice, the manner, and the refinement of Osmond, so unlike to anything which she had met with amongst her own countrymen, that her eyes were riveted on his face as he spoke, and her ears open to catch with avidity the words he uttered. Some men have more than others the power of engendering confidence in the breast of woman, and of these Osmond was one. He listened with deference to what Zabetta said; he appeared to take interest in her words, and the answers he gave had reference only to her feelings, and not to his own. His quickness of observation soon enabled him to judge what might be

passing in Ayesha's mind as he addressed her mother, and, fearful of alarming her timidity by too abruptly addressing her, he did not allow himself to speak to her until he perceived that he had made some progress in breaking down her Mahomedan prejudices. He could not prevent himself from occasionally casting a glance upon her beautiful countenance, and she seemed grateful for this tacit respect to her situation. At length, when, in answer to Zabetta's repeated wish of accompanying him to Constantinople, he said, "Would that it were possible for me to put such a scheme into execution! how happy should I be could I but rescue so much beauty and worth from neglect, and exhibit them to my own nation!" Ayesha smiled and shook her head sorrowfully: upon which, Osmond venturing to speak to her, said with great interest in his manner, "But I fear that our destinies have been cast in a different mould!"

"*Allah bilir*—God alone knows!" said Ayesha, with an averted head and a suppressed sigh.

These words caused a thrill to run through the very being of Osmond; he had never before heard so bewitching a voice, whose tones implied so much feeling.

"Could those destinies be changed," said Osmond, "and would one so charming condescend to receive me as her friend and protector, I would bless the hour which led me to Kars!"

"But not the hour," said Ayesha, "which led to that fatal accident."

"What do you say?" exclaimed Osmond; "that accident has been my only joy; without it I should never have seen you; without it I should never have imagined that you could take any interest in my fate. The recollection of that one moment has imprinted your image in my mind for ever."

"What do you say?" said Ayesha, her breast heaving with confusion, whilst crimson blushes overspread her cheeks, at the same time partially drawing her veil across her face; "I surely can never be of so much value to you as you seem to think. You do not, cannot know me."

"Of no value to me," said Osmond, "who have never before seen anything like you! What do you say? my imagination

has never been able to conceive such excellence! No, I do not, and cannot know you, you say true; my weak mind will never be able to appreciate your worth."

"Sir, desist," said Ayesha; "I am a poor weak girl, and am not accustomed to hear such flattering words. We have not been bred in cities, and we are the children of sincerity. Besides," she slowly said with a deep-drawn sigh, "it is improper for me to speak to you—I am a child of Islam! You despise our Prophet and condemn our religion."

Osmond could have caught her in his arms as she uttered these words, there was such thorough humility in her whole manner. Far from that arrogance of the Mahomedan, who holds the Christian in contempt, she, on the contrary, seemed to esteem herself as nothing, and tacitly to imply her inferiority before one whom she felt so much her superior.

"Heaven forbid," said he with animation, "that I should despise any one, or that I should ever venture to condemn a thing so sacred as religion! Are we not all creatures of one God?—Do not think so ill of me."

"I cannot think ill of you," said Ayesha; "but still we have different duties to perform, and I have been taught that it is sinful to talk to a *giaour*—an unbeliever."

"Ah! say not so—do not refuse to talk to me; you would not harm any one, every word and every look of yours tells me that: you cannot refuse to talk to me; you would not make me miserable?"

This argument had a strong effect, for it had never entered the head of Ayesha that she could ever make any one miserable, and she looked up into the face of Osmond as if she would have said—"What am I then to do between my duty and my inclination?" He saw her perplexity and pressed her no more, but, glancing from the subject, drew her on to talk upon other matters, for he was anxious to ascertain what might be the powers of her mind upon such points as were likely to have made up the education of a Turkish girl. He was surprised and delighted to find how true were her observations, what a sense she had of justice, and, notwithstanding the warp which she had received from her religious instruction, how liberal and unprejudiced was the general cast of her mind. She appeared so alive to any words of instruction

which casually fell from Osmond, that she questioned him over and over again, and seemed to cling to him as an oracle, as one who would dissipate that mist of ignorance in which she seemed aware that she had hitherto lived. There was something so endearing in her manner, as with great simplicity she asked questions relating to Europe and Europeans, that Osmond's interest was most sensibly awakened in the desire of administering to her improvement, putting aside his admiration for her unrivalled beauty; and he would willingly have passed away the whole night in giving instruction to such a pupil, but Zabetta announced that it was time to retire.

During the conversation of Osmond with her daughter, Zabetta had been taken up with Stasso, who had again endeavoured to learn more particulars of her history, but to no purpose. She betrayed much alarm when she heard that preparations were making for his master's departure, for that event would destroy the scheme which she had been planning for emancipating herself from her present situation; and she immediately began to revolve in her mind how she could cast impediments in his way. She had heard from the old Caterina the effect which the beauty of her daughter had produced upon Mustafa, and as she knew that Tatars held the issues of departure in their hands, from their influence at post-houses, she soon determined to play him off in furtherance of her scheme.

Upon quitting the terrace that night, she made an appointment for meeting on the ensuing evening, to which Osmond, excited as he had been by his interview with Ayesha, eagerly assented; and as soon as she had returned to her own apartment, she sent a message to Mustafa, that, if he would call at the door of Suleiman Aga's harem early in the morning, she would see and converse with him.

Osmond retired from the terrace perfectly entranced by a feeling of love, pity, and esteem, for the enchanting person with whom he had conversed. He had made acquaintance with a character as novel as it was interesting; he had found a mind capable of the most enlarged and exalted ideas, shackled by prejudice and enveloped in ignorance, it is true, but seemingly bent upon overcoming the obstacles by which it was beset, and even in its present state able almost intuitively

to form conclusions that would overturn all the errors and fallacies which it had been taught. Osmond could not refrain from deploring that so much beauty and excellence should be buried among infidels and barbarians; and with that tincture of adventure and romance which was mixed up in his character, he had already begun to devise some mode by which he might rescue Ayesha from her degradation, and, having rescued her, so renovate her being as to make her the ornament and the admiration of civilized life. Never were the raw materials of a romantic, disinterested, and devoted passion, so suddenly got together as upon this occasion. On both sides the passion, if indulged, was encompassed by dangers and difficulty. The maiden's faith taught her to hold a *giaour* in abhorrence; she was threatened with every indignity, even with death, if she held intercourse with him. On the other side Osmond would have to encounter the ridicule of his friends, the disadvantages of a different religion, the danger attendant upon the enterprise, and, after all, the improbability of ever bringing it to a happy issue. Still, every impediment only the more increased the desire; and we need not inform the gentle reader that both parties left the terrace, to use a common expression on so auspicious an occasion, over head and ears in love with each other.

When Mustafa received, through Caterina, Zabetta's message to attend her call, and at the same time an intimation that it had reference to the object of his desires, the usual torpor of his thoughts received a sudden excitement, and, although he had just filled a fresh pipe, and was enjoying the first whiff, he suddenly stopped, knocked the tobacco from the bowl, and starting upon his legs, exclaimed, "*Gidelim*—let us go!"

"Mashallah!" exclaimed Caterina, "you are all at once grown young?"

"What say you, old one?" said Mustafa; "grown young! How much younger would you have me be?" Upon which he pulled his mustache up towards his eye, and, putting himself into one of his quickest walks, followed his conductress to the door of Suleiman Aga's harem. When they had arrived there, Zabetta soon appeared, and under pretence of having some commission to give to the Tatar, who was to perform it for her at Arzeroum, or Stamboul, she invited him to sit, and,

crouching down opposite to each other, they began to converse.

"You are welcome, Sir Aga," said she; "may you live many years!"

"Well found," answered Mustafa.

"Is your humour good?" said Zabetta.

"Good, thank Allah!" answered Mustafa. "You, what do you do?"

"What can we do? we sit," said Zabetta. "What news have you?"

"There is nothing," answered Mustafa.

"There is one business, however," said Zabetta, who, having thus much beat about the bush, thought it high time to begin—"there is one business of which you are aware, of which the old Armenian woman has informed me,—is there not?"

"What can I say?" said Mustafa, in some embarrassment, "there is—how shall it be?"

"How can it be, do you ask," replied the artful woman, "when you are about setting off immediately? You cannot marry on the full gallop; such a business requires time: you must delay. You are no ass, Mashallah! and can put off going as long as you please."

"My *Beyzadeh*—my master," said Mustafa, "is like fire when once he determines to set off."

"He has not been before the Pasha yet," said Zabetta; "he must go, he cannot start without that ceremony—that will take up time: you must look to that, upon your head be it!"

"Upon my head be it!" answered Mustafa, "and, Inshallah! I will raise delays. But let us speak a little about your daughter."

"Go first upon this business: put off your departure—tell lies—say this thing and that thing—say every thing, provided you make the *Beyzadeh* stay his departure. Have you understood me?"

Mustafa slowly assented that he had understood: he could not, however, quite make out why, in the arrangement of a marriage, not a word on the subject should have been spoken, and why he, being one of the principal parties concerned, should have been treated as if he had nothing to do with it.

He went off consoling himself with the ejaculation "*Ne apalum*—what can I do? *avret der*—it is a woman;" then shaking the lapel of his jacket, he mumbled to himself, "O save me from a woman!"

CHAPTER VII.

Habló el buey, y dixo mío. The ox spoke, and said moo.
CEJUDO, *Refranes Castellanos.*

OSMOND willingly assented to the propriety of Mustafa's proposal of a visit to the Pasha, for he himself was not sorry to frame any excuse which might delay his departure. Accordingly, the etiquette of the visit having been settled, a horse handsomely caparisoned, escorted by two *chokhadars* (literally cloak-bearers), and conducted by a groom, was sent to the gate of the dyer's house, and Osmond was invited to proceed thereupon to the government house. It was a large and unconnected mansion, entered by a pair of folding-gates; an open space or court extended itself to a considerable distance within, in which several fine horses were seen at their pickets, whilst groups of attendants and persons upon business were collected here and there, some seated with their never-failing pipes in hand, others lounging about, waiting for admission to the presence.

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Osmond alighted at the foot of a long flight of stone steps, situated on the outside of the chief body of the building, at the summit of which were the hall of audience and the rooms of attendance. Below, on the ground-floor, Osmond remarked a small iron-grated window, through which he saw some imploring faces, and which he discovered gave light to a cell for prisoners. No sooner had he reached the top of the staircase than he was introduced into the Pasha's reception-room, followed closely by Mustafa and Stasso, by way of swelling the number of his retinue.

In the further corner of the ottoman which surrounded the

apartment, he perceived a mountain of shawls, furs, and tufted beard, through which peered a pair of eyes and a nose. He could scarcely make out what it could be, until he saw it move, when he ascertained that it contained a man, and that man the Pasha. Opposite to him sat a reverend Turk, of respectable and handsome presence, who, he afterwards learned, was Suleiman Aga, Ayesha's reputed father; and lower down was squatted a little sour-faced man, dressed like a priest, the Iman of an adjacent mosque. The end of the room was crowded with *chiboukchies*, or pipe-men, shoe-bearers, cloak-bearers, and other attendants, among whom also stood Mustafa and Stasso.

As soon as Osmond had taken his seat, which he did on a place pointed out to him, the Pasha said, "*Khosh geldin*—you are welcome!"

"*Khosh bulduk*—well found," answered Osmond, nothing abashed.

After about a minute's pause, during which Suleiman Aga looked neither to the right nor left, and the priest had cast a scrutinising eye over Osmond, the Pasha again opened his lips and said, "*Kiefiniz ayi me*—Is your humour good?"

"Good," said Osmond, with a severe gravity.

After another long interval, the Pasha said again, "*Khosh geldin*;" to which Osmond said, "I am your servant."

Upon which, slowly turning up his eyes to his attendants, he said, "*Chibouk, cahveh getir*—bring pipes and coffee," when several long-robed, handsomely dressed men left the room to perform his bidding, the whole being done without the least noise, and as solemnly as if the party assembled were met at a funeral. In a short time after, the same men rushed in, armed with pipes, some six feet in length, and made a direct charge at each of the persons present, placing the amber-mouthed tips in their mouths, and resting the lighted bowls on small round tinned platters on the carpeted floor. Coffee was then served to each, by a servant of superior dress and authority, in small thimble-like cups, which was duly sipped smoking hot.

When the coffee had been disposed of, the voice of the priest was heard in the smoke addressing the Pasha: alluding to Osmond, he said, "*Kim boo*—who is that?"

"This is our friend," said the Pasha, in a good-natured voice; "this is an English *Beyzadeh*, or lord's son. Is it not so?" said he, turning to Mustafa.

"Yes, O Effendi!" said Mustafa.

"Who are you?" said the priest, turning round to Mustafa.

"I am the Tatar Aga," answered Mustafa.

"*Hai! Hai!*" sighed the priest with a sort of recondite sigh, and then stroking down his face, he mumbled his profession of faith, and finished it by ejaculating, "*Shukriur allah!*—praise be to God!" as if he would have said, "Thank heaven I am what I am!"

After another long interval, the Pasha turned to Osmond and inquired, "Have you pipes in your country? have you tobacco?"

"No," said Osmond; "like these, none; we do not generally smoke."

Upon which, the Pasha slowly turning himself towards Suleiman Aga, dropping his features into a look of pity and contempt, said in an under tone, "*Haivan der*—they are animals!"

Suleiman Aga dropped his features into a similar look, shook his head, and said, "What is to be done?"

Several minutes now elapsed, when the Pasha again inquired, "Have you horses in your country?"

"We have horses," answered Osmond.

"*Pek ayi*—very well," said the Pasha.

The *Mir akhor*—the chief of the stable, who was standing among the attendants, a well-dressed man, in a tone of humility said,—“May the Pasha live many years! they have horses, but they make them all *beguirs*—geldings, and they cut their tails off, as Allah is great!”

"Is it so?" said the Pasha, without the least emotion, although he slowly ejaculated, "Allah! Allah!"

Suleiman Aga and the priest also said, "Allah! Allah!"

The Pasha, again turning his eyes towards Suleiman Aga, said, "*Delhi der*—they are madmen!"

"*Ne apalum*—what can we do?" said Suleiman Aga in a tone of resignation.

All at once appeared among the crowd of attendants a man of enormous size, a negro, sufficiently meanly dressed, who was

the Pasha's *pehlivan bashi*, or chief wrestler. At the sight of him the Pasha became animated, he sat up, his eye glanced at him with exultation, and looking towards Osmond, he said, "Have you anything like that in your country?"

"What can I say?" answered Osmond; "we have great as well as little men in my country."

"We shall see!" said the Pasha; upon which he made a sign to the negro to be gone, and, soon after, he was seen in the court below, stripped to the skin, with the exception of a pair of wrestling-trowsers well greased, awaiting the signal from his master to exhibit his strength as opposed to another wrestler, who stood prepared for the encounter, dressed in a similar costume.

The signal having been made, the negro clapped his hands, and so did his opponent, and then went through the ceremonial common to wrestlers before they set to, which consists in a certain mummerly of attitudes and prostrations, accompanied by invocations of "*Bismillah!*—in the name of Allah." They then tried to grapple, which was difficult, inasmuch as both their bodies were covered with oil, and they slipped away, sometimes on, sometimes off each other, like agitated eels. The negro was indeed a powerful man; his muscles displayed themselves in as strong relief as those of the Farnesian Hercules; but he was slow and sluggish, and could scarcely withstand the more active exertions of his antagonist; at length, however, he managed to seize him under the legs, and having, as the sailors say, got a good purchase, threw him over his head, and laid him prone on his back, which is all that is required, and is the signal of victory. After this feat, all out of breath, he ran to a convenient spot underneath the Pasha's window, exclaiming, "May the Pasha live for ever!" upon which the delighted chief threw him out a small piece of gold for his pains, and said, "*Mashallah!*—praise be to Allah!" He then ordered one of the servants to call him up into his presence, for he was anxious to exhibit him to Osmond, and he soon after appeared in the very state in which he had wrestled.

Again the Pasha said exultingly, "Have you anything like him in your country?" to which Osmond made a reply complimentary to the powers of the negro, and at the same time conferred upon him a suitable gift, which was very gratifying to the in-

dividual, and also went a great way in enlisting his master among his friends.

“ *Wallah!*” said the Pasha, turning to Suleiman Aga, “ the Ingliz are good men.”

To which Suleiman Aga answered by addressing himself to Osmond; and said these words, “ You are a *giaour*—an infidel, are you not?”

“ If by *giaour* you mean a disbeliever in the Mussulman’s faith,” said Osmond, “ I am ; but let me say that I am not more a *giaour* than you are, since you do not acknowledge the Christian’s faith.”

The word *giaour*, in a Turk’s estimation, is never used except in an offensive sense, and consequently when those present heard an infidel like Osmond apply it in this manner, and to one of the most respected of their community, they appeared to be struck with astonishment and horror.

The Pasha, who was secretly no friend to holy men, and led a life of pleasure and sensuality, having heard what was said, and fearful of more being elicited, immediately called again for pipes and coffee, which served as a signal for the breaking up of the visit. Osmond then arose and took his departure, but the words which he had uttered made Suleiman Aga his enemy, and excited the wrath of the sour priest, who went home more incensed against Christians than ever, and more pleased with himself for being what he was.

After having satisfied the numerous applications for *backshish*—vails, which are usually made by the officers and attendants of a pasha upon the occasion of a visit such as we have described, Osmond returned home. He felt that he had no longer any excuse for delaying his departure, but still he could not tear himself away from the fascination which was spread over him, like a net, by the charms of Ayesha. He was perplexed how to act in giving his orders to Mustafa, whom he still supposed to be anxious to proceed.

Mustafa, on the other hand, was plotting in his head how he could create further delays, and having on former occasions experienced the difficulty of counteracting his master’s wishes when bent upon departure, he sat down perplexed, and, as a Persian would say, inhaled the pipe of thought, and emitted

the smoke of uncertainty. After various schemes, which proved the one more abortive than the other, he determined to have recourse to the ingenuity of Zabetta; for he was wise enough to know that men are but babes compared to women, when a bit of deception is to be invented and put into execution. Accordingly, he applied at the gate of Suleiman Aga's harem, and was soon admitted to an audience.

"What has happened, Sir Tatar?" said Zabetta, as soon as she saw him; "how does our affair advance?"

"What do I know?" answered Mustafa; "we have been to the Pasha—all went off well; but if the Beyzadeh wishes to depart to-morrow morning, what can I say? I am no liar to my master."

"How is this?" exclaimed Zabetta; "you a man, and no liar! This can never be. Where have you lived all this while? This is the Kurdistan, we are amongst thieves and rogues, this is the very country of lies."

"What can I do, then?" asked Mustafa.

"Do? go tell your Aga that all the post-horses were stolen from the menzil khaneh last night by the Kurds—that occurrence is frequent here; tell him that the Savanlu mountain is impassable on account of Cara Bey's gang; tell him that the Pasha of Arzeroum's troops kill all Franks.—Do you come to me, man, when any child in the street here will help you to half a score of good lies, better than any which I can invent? Go, tell him that he cannot think of leaving Kars for a week at least."

"*Bakalum*—we shall see!" said Mustafa, thoughtfully shaking his head.

"*Bakalum! bakalum!*" exclaimed the irritable woman with impatience, "you Osmanlis have never any thing else but *bakalum* at the bottom of your throats, when you ought to be up and acting."

"But, Khadun!" said Mustafa with humility, when shall we have conversation upon my little affair?"

"Ah, your affair! true," said Zabetta, who had almost forgotten the circumstance of his being a suitor for her daughter, so much was she wrapped up in her own schemes: "leave all to me; Suleiman Aga, my husband, is a difficult man, but,—

Inshallah! the business will go to your satisfaction. Go, make your Aga delay his departure, and then we will converse; go, you have been welcome."

Upon which Mustafa slowly rose, and as slowly putting one foot before the other, he began to perform an operation in his mind, which the honesty of his nature seldom encouraged towards his master, whatever he might do towards Turks, that is, the fabrication of a falsehood. In order to this he stopped at a coffee-house by the road-side, the resort of Tatars and travellers, to refresh his invention by a cup of coffee and to soothe his nerves by a fresh pipe. There he met with a friend, a Tatar, just arrived, who was on his road from Constantinople to Persia, who discussing his journey, informed him, in fact, that he had met with a detachment of Cara Bey's gang, precisely in the defiles of the Savanlu mountain, and that he had escaped from them with the greatest difficulty; but that the day before they had pillaged a caravan proceeding to Arzeroum, and had killed one Armenian merchant. This intelligence cheered Mustafa's heart, and he exclaimed "Praises be to the Prophet!" to the astonishment of the narrator, as well as several others sitting by, who had opened all their ears to hear the history of his escape. But Mustafa, in making this ejaculation, as may be conceived, was far from rejoicing in the act of murder which had been related to him; he only felt relieved inasmuch as he might now boldly face his master without the skreen of a lie, and was sufficiently armed with an excuse for not immediately proceeding on his journey.

Accordingly, having finished his refreshments, and taken leave of his friend, he proceeded to the Armenian dyer's house to seek Lord Osmond. He thought it proper to clothe his face with an appropriate look of sorrow as he entered the room, and squatted himself on the carpet as if he were oppressed with some heavy woe.

"What's the matter, Mustafa?" said Osmond; "has anything happened?"

"Bad news, bad news has just arrived," said Mustafa, shaking his head.

"Has there, indeed?" said Osmond, smiling in his sleeve, for he had studied the characters of Orientals so well that he

was always amused by what their ideas of good or bad news might be. "Has coffee risen in price? or is rice scarce?"

"No," answered Mustafa, sorrowfully; "other miseries are abroad."

"Then perhaps tobacco is scarce; is that it?"

"No, Effendi, no," sighed out the Tatar; "we have plenty of coffee, rice, and tobacco, *Alhemdullilah!*—praises be to Allah! But that head rogue, Cara Bey—I have done the needful to his father and mother—he is now on the Savanlu mountain, and no one can pass. The post-master will not give post-horses, and here we are sitting idle until the fates please to set the road free. Omar Aga, the Tatar, has just arrived, and he left ten Armenian merchants dead on the road. What can we do?"

"That is bad news, indeed," said Osmond, seriously; but he would never have allowed himself to be stopped by such a circumstance, knowing, as he did, how much such sort of stories were exaggerated, had he not himself been inclined to delay his departure. "Cara Bey is a scourge: we must wait a day or two, Mustafa, until we hear that the road is clear—there is no harm in that!—My knee will be quite well by that time; and then, please heaven, whip in hand, we will make up for lost time."

"Inshallah!" said Mustafa, greatly charmed with the success of his scheme, and totally without suspicion how much he had pleased his master by affording him a plausible excuse for remaining where he was.

Osmond felt as if he had received a reprieve from punishment. His passion for Ayesha had made great progress in his breast since his last interview, and he only dreamed of the moment when his eyes might again be blessed with her presence. The more he dwelt upon her image, and brought to his recollection the conversations that had passed between them, the more he became convinced that hers had not been the common destiny of every Turkish girl. He felt assured that her story was involved in some mystery; but, whatever that might be, this he knew, that her nature was so much more refined than that of any other Asiatic whom he had ever seen—her mind so pure, and her intellect so superior, that he felt every inclination, a mount-

ing almost to a fixed resolution, to leave nothing untried in order to ascertain the truth, and to place her, if possible, out of the pale of her present degradation. But the more he turned such a scheme over in his mind, the more difficulties seemed to stand in his way. Could he by any means transplant her to Constantinople, there he made no doubt he might easily evade the Turkish authorities, and bear her off to his own country; but from such a place as Kars, "far in the bowels of the land," unassisted and powerless, a stranger and a Christian withal, he felt it would be next to impossible. He rather clung to the wish of evasion expressed by Zabetta, although it had only been uttered in joke; and he was anxious to hear the same wish repeated, in order that he might discover whether, with her knowledge of the country, aided by woman's ingenuity, she might have devised some practicable mode of effecting it. Accordingly, when the hour for meeting on the terrace came, he proceeded thither, determined to make every investigation in his power, and to ascertain whether it were possible, consistently with prudence and rectitude, to enter into some negotiation which might ultimately draw her from her present situation.

Ayesha met Osmond on this occasion with every appearance of confidence. His words, in their previous conversation, had sunk deep in her mind. She longed to receive further instruction from him, to have her difficulties solved, and to be put into the way of gaining knowledge. Ingenuousness and candour beamed in her countenance as she approached him, whilst the real incentive of her actions, which to this moment had not been revealed to her, that love which creeps so insidiously into the heart, threw an indescribable charm of retiring modesty and bashfulness over her whole person and demeanour. Osmond was more enslaved by her beauty and manner than he had been at the first interview, but, distrustful of his natural ardour and impetuosity, he determined to check his feelings. He was apprehensive lest the beauty, the grace, and the singleness of heart, of one who was in truth a child of nature, might throw him off his guard, and make him avow sentiments destructive to her peace of mind. Her mother, who was present, scarcely acted as a restraint upon him, for both her words and actions were encouraging; and he probably

would at this interview have made a full disclosure of his passion, and given utterance to his feelings, had he not been, perhaps happily been, taken up by Zabetta, who stepped in and engaged him in conversation, with the view of proposing her scheme for escaping from Kars. That artful woman had watched the progress of Osmond's love for her daughter; she saw how much he had been struck by her beauty, and she now thought she had no time to lose in making use of his agency. She accordingly in set terms, preluding what she had to say with those flattering words and abject speeches so common in the mouths of Greeks, proposed that he should leave Kars, but, instead of proceeding to Constantinople, take the shortest road to the frontiers of Georgia, where he would at once come under the protection of Russia; that he should there wait until she and Ayesha joined him, which she asserted they might easily do, by means which she felt confident they could command. She observed, and truly, that should they attempt to proceed to Constantinople direct, either by Trebizond and the Black Sea, or by the post-road, they would inevitably be overtaken, seized, and probably be delivered over to receive the punishment so severely adjudged on such occasions by the Mahomedan law; and she finished her proposal by saying,—“Once protected by the Moscovites, it will then be time to settle whether you will take us to Constantinople, or proceed to your own country through the different states of Frangistan.”

The boldness of this scheme, apparently so feasible, concerted by a woman, the wife of a Mahomedan, astonished Osmond; for he had ever been accustomed to look upon Asiatic women as so helpless, and so much creatures of routine, that he could not but esteem Zabetta a miracle of enterprise. Before, however, he gave his consent, he desired time to reflect, for however great might be his love for Ayesha, he felt that he ought not to rush headlong into an adventure which might involve others as well as himself in, perhaps, fatal and inextricable difficulties. He wished, moreover, to ascertain what might be the sentiments of Ayesha herself upon the subject; for in Zabetta he saw an ardent and reckless woman, whose schemes evidently had reference more to herself than to the well-being of her daughter, and whose vehement character, blinding her judgment, might carry her away into the perpe-

tration of violence and of every species of imprudence. But to do this it was necessary that he should speak to Ayesha without the constraint of her mother's presence, whose wishes it was evident she did not allow herself to oppose, and to whose guidance she ever submitted with meekness. He made an effort to engage her in conversation by herself, but Zabetta, whose hopes of emancipation from her present situation had absorbed every other feeling, had so excited both her powers of speech and her imagination, that she did not cease to importune Osmond with her projects and schemes, until the night had so far advanced as to oblige them to retire.

However, before they parted, he found an opportunity to request Ayesha to meet him by herself on the terrace earlier than usual on the following evening; and although she said nothing, it was evident by her manner that she did not reject his proposal. It need not be said, that in this meeting he made no progress in ascertaining the mystery by which she was encompassed.

CHAPTER VIII.

Jul. My bounty is as boundless as the sea.
My love as deep; the more I give to thee
The more I have, for both are infinite. (*A noise is heard.*)
I hear some noise within; dear love, adieu!

Romeo and Juliet.

OSMOND passed the succeeding day in a state of feverish anxiety. He longed for the evening; he felt as if his future doom was about to be sealed. Ayesha had created in his breast an interest of so intense a nature, that, notwithstanding all his previous resolutions, it overcame every consideration of prudence or expediency. His imagination had taken fire at the mystery in which her history was involved, and he was strengthened in his suspicions that such excellence could never be the offspring of barbarians; for in her conversation,

there beamed through her ignorance a refinement which belonged only to the highest breeding; and in her manners she might vie with those of the most polished nations.

The muezzins had not yet called the faithful to evening prayer from the minarets, when Osmond appeared on the terrace in search of Ayesha. There was a balmy stillness in the air; the sun was about to disappear behind the western hills, and the repose of nature was such as happy lovers prize for being in unison with their own feelings. But the lovers who were about to meet were far from enjoying such a state of tranquillity; doubts, apprehensions, and fears, disturbed their breasts too much to leave them in security, and they were agitated by the tremors of disquietude which will creep into the minds of those who are about to undertake a dangerous and uncertain enterprise. Osmond waited for some time alone; his eyes in vain sought the object of his desire; she did not appear, and he began to doubt whether she would ever have the courage so far to overstep the prejudices of her sect as to meet him alone and unprotected. Long shadows began to cast themselves over the scenery which surrounded him; the sun's lower limb was fast approaching the tips of the mountain behind which it set, and the shades of evening were gradually drawing towards twilight, when he heard a slight rustling behind the wall which stood before the opening of the adjoining terrace. To his delight he perceived the graceful form of Ayesha approaching him with a slow and uncertain step, her heart impelling her onward to her lover, whilst her Mahomedan fears shackled her motions with more than the weight of fetters on the feet of a prisoner. He flew to receive her with an eagerness that almost alarmed her; but when she heard his soothing voice, and was quieted by the respectful tone of his manner, she was restored to all the confidence with which he had inspired her, and, in the pleasure of being at his side, forgot the dangers which impended over their heads.

"This is really kind," said Osmond, as he took her hand into his; "how can I show you my gratitude for thus trusting in me?"

"Allah only knows," said Ayesha, timidly withdrawing her hand, "whether what I am now doing be right. My heart tells me you are good, and that I should be wicked to doubt you;

—but pity me! I have been taught to think you are one of those whom a Mussulman must in duty reject. Oh, what shall I do?"

"Ayesha," said Osmond, "the day will come when you will more clearly see the errors in which you have been brought up. I appeal to your own heart, whether the God whom we both worship, by whom we have both been fashioned, and, in whom we both live—whether the works of his hands be objects of pollution such as Mahomedans esteem Christians to be?"

"I cannot think," said Ayesha, "that there can be pollution in anything you tell me. I feel myself better and happier since I have put into practice what you advised me to do. But when you are gone, who will direct me? must I live without a law?"

"But what if we were never to be separated?" said Osmond, with a tone of the deepest feeling, whilst he fixed his expressive eyes upon her.

"How can that ever be?" exclaimed Ayesha, her face beaming with sudden animation. "Who am I that could venture to hope for so much happiness? Will you become a true believer, and abandon all for me? No; that can never be: do not play with my feelings."

"Ayesha," said Osmond with emotion, "let me not deceive you. I should be unworthy of you if I ever could abandon my faith. You say truly—No; that can never be. But if you trust me in one thing, trust me in all. If you believe that I love you, believe too that I would never urge you to wrong:—I do love, I adore you. You are as necessary to my happiness as the air I breathe. Say, too, that you love me, that you will be mine, and then we will live for each other through life until death, through good and evil, and, as we shall be of one mind and one heart, so we will partake of each other's fortunes, and belong to one country. You must follow me whither I will lead you;—trust in me. As God is in heaven, as I am a true man, trust in my word and my honour, and I swear to live only to make you happy."

This passionate avowal, which was spoken with an honesty of purpose that brought on involuntary conviction, made Ayesha's bosom heave with the agitation of a thousand contending feelings, whilst her cheeks burned with blushes. She

could not utter a word; her heart was full to suffocation. She would have sheltered herself under the protection of some tender parent in whom she could confide, had she not felt that Osmond was superior to every being whom she had ever known, and that his protection and his love was of more worth to her than all the world besides.

"Speak! speak!" said Osmond, with increasing tenderness; "let me hear one word of love from your lips; let me know that I am not indifferent to you."

"Allah knows how much I love you," said the drooping girl, and she would have sunk to the ground in making the avowal, had she not been sustained by her lover, who bent over her with the ecstasy of one who had received a new existence. As they stood thus in silent rapture, their minds heedless of anything but the possession of each other's secret, the eyes of Osmond casually fell upon a necklace which hung at the neck of Ayesha. It was composed of many gold coins, such as are frequently worn in the East, in the centre of which was suspended a sort of locket curiously wrought in gold, upon which, strange to say, he discovered engraved a coat of arms; the whole evidently of English workmanship. On looking more closely at the necklace, he found that it was principally composed of English gold coins, mixed up and strung with sequins and ducats, the common gold coin in circulation throughout Turkey. At the sight of this object, the current of his emotions received a new impulse, and all at once, as if seized by sudden madness, he took it into his hand, inspected it with wild astonishment, and exclaimed,—*"Ayesha, in the name of Allah! what is this? How came you by this?"*

The bewildered maiden, who but the moment before was on the point of dissolving into tears of joy, or fainting with excess of agitation, was struck with fear at his strange action, and, shrinking from him, answered, *"Why do you ask? My mother gave it to me; is it sinful to possess it?"*

"Sinful, my Ayesha—no!" exclaimed Osmond, still gazing at the locket, and endeavouring to make out the coat of arms; *"but, as I live, this came from my country; this has once belonged to my nation; how came your mother to possess it?"*

"I know not indeed," said Ayesha; *"I have worn it ever since I was a child, and was told it was to preserve me from*

the evil-eye : more I cannot say. But why are you so astonished ?”

“ My life !” exclaimed Osmond, “ how can I be otherwise than astonished ? There is mystery in this. Are you Suleiman Aga’s daughter ? Zabetta’s daughter ?— it cannot be : reflect a while. Have you never heard more of this trinket, or of these coins ? they are from my country. Ayesha, you must belong to us. You have been born a Christian ; you cannot have been born a Mahomedan.”

Ayesha’s feelings received a new turn as she heard this from her lover. She knew not what to say ; her head became confused : she felt as if her whole existence was identified with Osmond’s, and that those whom she had ever looked upon as her father and mother, were no longer such. The words of Zabetta, ‘ You are not born a child of Islam,’ which had been engraved on her mind ever since they had been uttered, now flashed across her thoughts, and she was on the point of communicating them to her lover when she recollected the solemn injunction which she had received not to disclose them, and, making an effort, she suppressed any allusion to their meaning, and merely satisfied herself by saying— “ I once heard that my mother had brought these things from Athens. I think I have heard that they belonged to Christians.”

Osmond’s imagination was fired at this discovery, and although he could not make out to what family the coat of arms on the locket belonged, yet there was enough to establish the fact, that Ayesha or Zabetta were in some manner or other identified with English people. It is true, the trinket might have been purchased, and the English gold have found its way into the currency of Turkey ; but it was not likely so to be, since the one never could have been an article of trade, and had evidently belonged to a person of some consequence, and the others were unknown among the bankers and merchants of the country as a coin in use. But how could he discover any trace of the person to whom those things belonged except through Zabetta ? and she evidently had no inclination to give any account of herself or of her daughter, for, as we have seen, she always avoided returning answers to the many questions which both Osmond and his servant had put to her. However, he was so much elated by this discovery, that all the hopes,

and schemes and expectations, of making Ayesha his own, which had so constantly occupied his thoughts, now appeared to him upon the point of being realized. His scruples, if he had any, of drawing her from her parents, so called, were now at rest; his resolutions of exerting himself to release her from her present situation were strengthened, and he gave way to his feelings, heedless of the consequences, and almost forgetful of the difficulties which stood in his way.

The lovers had been so much wrapped up in each other, that they had not noticed the call to evening prayer that was now chanting from most of the minarets in the city. There was a mosque situated at a small distance from Suleiman Aga's house: the minaret attached to it arose in a conspicuous manner on the side of the terrace upon which Osmond and Ayesha were standing. Presently the well-known chant of *La illaha illallah!* rang through the air from its circular gallery; still they heeded it not. When the Imam or priest who was chanting it, with his hand behind his ear, giving to its wild cadence the whole force of his lungs, came round to the side of Suleiman Aga's house, all of a sudden, with the half-finished verse of *Allahu Akbar* on his lips, he stopped, for his eye was arrested by the sight of the lovers, whose attitudes of confiding endearment told him at once the object of their interview, and awoke in his breast all his Mahomedan jealousy. He watched them earnestly for a while, stroked down his face, ejaculated within himself, There is but one Allah! and straight went on again with his chant. The sudden outbreak of the priest's voice, to which was added a more than usual violence, mixed with no little acrimony, startled both Osmond and Ayesha, who, looking up, at once discovered the priest, and then the danger of their situation as quickly flashed across their minds. The frightened Ayesha timidly exclaimed, "Allah! Allah! let me go—we are seen," and with precipitation covered herself entirely with her veil. Osmond, who perhaps did not feel the full extent of their danger, would have detained her, but she was too much scared, and knew too well how fatal might be the consequences to him, whatever they might be to herself, should he be convicted of communicating with a Mussulman's harem. "God protect thee!" exclaimed Ayesha, as she cast a tender look at her lover, and with precipitation retreated into her own

house. Osmond, after looking about him for some time, his mind absorbed in thought, and a vague apprehension of what might be the consequences of this incident passing through it, slowly retreated also, and descended to his own apartment.

It so happened that the Imam of the minaret was the identical sour-looking priest whom Osmond had met at the Pasha's during his visit there. This true son of the faith, a most bigoted and unrelenting champion of Islam, had recognised Osmond at once by his dress and appearance to be the Giaour whom he had met at the Pasha's. The words of his evening call had almost stuck in his throat after he had remarked the lovers, so quick and sudden was the anger which arose in his breast. "Curses be on the Christian dog!" he exclaimed, and he spat upon the ground as he said this, whilst he slowly groped his way down the winding steps of his minaret.

"See," said he, "what pollution these unclean beasts have brought into our city. If Suleiman Aga does not defile that infidel's father and mother, by the soul of the Prophet I will." Upon which, exploding with exclamations of rage, of jealousy, of hatred at Christians in general, and at Osmond in particular, he bent his steps towards Suleiman's house.

He found that personage quietly smoking his pipe and looking out of the window, having just refreshed himself by his evening's prayers and lustration. He was in the most placid of moods. The Imam scarcely allowed himself time to say his "Peace be with you, and may your evening be prosperous!" ere he broke out into the following form of words:—

"Suleiman Aga! here you sit, Mashallah! as if there was nothing else in the world except you and your pipe. You live without news of what is going on, Suleiman Aga."

"What can I do?" said the placid Turk: "I sit."

"You are not a fool, you, Mashallah! your beard has grown white; you are a man, and in fine a Mussulman, and here you sit without news, Suleiman Aga."

"That's true," quietly responded the phlegmatic man.

"*La illaha illallah!*" exclaimed the priest; "you are much—you——! Shall I say then what with these two eyes I have seen, and with this one head I have understood?"

"Speak, let us see," said Suleiman Aga.

"By your head! by Omar! by the blessed Prophet! I have

seen one of your house in company with the Frank infidel who lives at Bogos the dyer's."

"What do you say, man?" exclaimed Suleiman Aga, taking the pipe from his lips, and roused up into unusual animation. "Do you lie, or speak the truth?"

"By that beard of yours!" answered the priest, "I speak the truth."

"Who was the woman?" inquired Suleiman, with increasing anxiety.

"What can I say? who can tell one woman from another under the veil? All I positively know is, that the Frank Giaour was the man."

"So, is it?" said Suleiman after some cogitation: "together you saw them?"

"Yes," answered the other, "and it is plain they love each other. Why should I keep the truth from you?"

"How and where did you see them?" said Suleiman, his agitation and perplexity increasing as he spoke.

"I was chanting the Azan at the usual time," replied the Imam; "I had half gone through it, when, from the minaret which looks upon your terrace, I saw a woman with a man. Curses be on all infidels! May heaven pour misfortunes on their heads!—The man was the Giaour we saw at the Pasha's the other day—of that I will take my oath upon the blessed Koran. The woman, Allah best knows who it was! I have said it, what more can I do?"

Suleiman Aga during this speech was gradually expanding into rage; his naturally placid face became sullen, and occasionally flashed with looks of revenge; low spoken sentences broke from his lips, he cursed in whispers, he clenched his hands, put them by turns on the head of his dagger, and his whole appearance might be compared to a pent-up volcano. He said nothing more to his informer, but seemed to be nailed to the spot upon which he sat, as if he were there ready to receive the announcement of any more misfortunes which might be preparing for him. A long silence ensued, when the priest said in a low voice, "Suleiman Aga, what shall we do?"

The only answer he got was, "I will send ruin to his father and mother," whilst his eyes looked upon vacant space, and his head remained fixed in one position.

"Speak, O man!" continued the priest: "what is to be done?"

"*Pezevenk!*—rogue! wretch! softly breathed the jealous Turk.

"*Ai Gardach,*—brother, are you turned mad?—speak!" said the Imam, louder than before.

"*Kiupek!*—*Giaour!*—dog! infidel!" whispered the other.

At length all of a sudden, as if he had been bitten by a snake, he bounded off the sofa upon which he sat, and without looking either to the right or left, flung out of the room, leaving the man of the minaret in utter amazement at this unexampled feat. All he could say was, "He is mad!" then straightway quitting the house, he proceeded to the Mufti, openmouthed, with the intelligence.

The wretched Suleiman had sprung through the corridors in his way to the women's apartments, when he discovered that he had left his slippers behind him: this little circumstance most providentially broke the violence of his determination. A Turk never loses sight of his dignity; seeing his feet without their papouches, he slowly turned back to seek them, and by the time he had put them on, his mind had in some measure turned also. First, he released the head of his dagger from his fast-clenched hand; then the fury of his wife's temper came to his thoughts, and acted as a check upon his own; and last of all, the charms of the unoffending Ayesha became present to his imagination, and very materially put to the rout that host of satanic impulses which were goading him on to crime and bloodshed.

With less precipitation and more uncertainty of purpose, he now proceeded to the harem. Raising the heavy curtain which hung over the door, the first objects he perceived were his wife and Ayesha talking together with great earnestness. Upon seeing him they retreated into the room before described, whither he followed them. In a manner totally unusual to him, and never before witnessed by his wife, he said,—
"Woman! stand up and speak for yourself; you are a sinner, and if a sinner, God protect you!"

"What do you say, Suleiman Aga?" exclaimed Zabetta;
"are you run out of your senses? I a sinner, indeed? What

abomination are you eating? If I am a sinner, what are you?"

"This is no child's play, woman!" said the angry man; "tell me, as you value your life, as you value that child whom you see there, what devilry has got into your head, that you should leave your husband and seek infidels for your company?"

Zabetta was not quite prepared for this, and as guilt is ever a coward, her usual prowess in an encounter with her husband forsook her, and she turned pale. "I do not understand you," said she: "you are not a man if you come here with a lie in your mouth to oppress a woman."

"A lie, do you say?" exclaimed Suleiman; "men do not dream when with their eyes wide open they see a Mussulman woman and an infidel together: that has been seen this very evening; you are that woman, the Giaour at the next door is the man, do you call that a lie?"

"*Bè hêy*—what's this?" exclaimed Zabetta, regaining her assurance. "A lie! I do call it a lie; whoever said it, is as great an oaf as you are, and that's much. Why do you bring your beard here to be laughed at? Go to the ass that sent you here, and tell him 'I send him a bigger ass back in return.'"

"Woman!" said Suleiman sternly, his wrath rising with her impertinence, "your words are of no avail against proof. You have been seen this very evening before the Azan in company with the Frank infidel: tell me plainly what happened, or, by Allah! the consequences will be fatal to you. Suleiman is not easily excited, but when he is, let me tell you, it is time to place your trust in God—speak!"

Zabetta, seeing that the subject was too grave to be treated lightly, did not answer this question otherwise than by calling out to the black slave. "Nourzadeh," said she, "come hither; say where have I been all this evening until the Azan?" The girl's face, bearing marks of recent tears, and not in the least aware of the importance of the question, answered—"You were asleep the first part, you were flogging me the next, and then you said your prayers. What more can I say?"

"There," said the wife, turning round with exultation to—

wards her husband, "tell me after this that I was on the terrace with an infidel. *Haif! haif!*—shame! shame!"

So fully was Suleiman impressed with the certainty that it was his wife who had been seen with Osmond, that nothing which she could say could destroy it. Like an enraged ox in a pen, when he is balked in breaking it down in one place, rushes headlong at another, so did the angry man persist in accusing his wife. All this while, Ayesha, who was witness to the whole scene, sat almost motionless with fear. She was frequently on the point of delivering herself up to her father's fury, and confessing that she alone was to blame, but she was checked by the apprehension of bringing on the destruction of her lover. The perplexing contest between duty and love threw her into such a state of feverish excitement, that at length, seeing that Suleiman's anger was not in the least abated, but rather increased by Zabetta's conduct and explanation, and fearing that he might break out into some act of unrestrained violence, she summoned up all her courage, and determined that, if the quarrel did not cease, she would make herself the victim, and throw herself upon her father's mercy.

"Zabetta, this is too much," roared out the furious man, overpowered by his feelings and her opposition. "After all, I am a Mussulman—the law protects me—if you have betrayed me, and sought an infidel lover, you must suffer for it!" Rising from his seat, his hand on his dagger, he proceeded towards her—he would have seized her by the hair—his hand was uplifted—the wretched woman shrieked, when Ayesha threw herself forward between them—" *Amān! amān!*—pity! pity!" she cried out with a voice of supplication; "If you want blood, take mine! I alone am guilty! She is innocent! I met the Frank!"

Upon hearing these words, and seeing the attitude of his daughter, the violence of the enraged Turk all at once subsided: he turned away with a slow and sorrowful action, and to his previous vigour succeeded such a prostration of strength that a child might have mastered him.

"Ayesha," said he, "what have you done?"

"Done!" said Zabetta, whose spirit rose with her triumph,—"Can you talk thus to an innocent child? Go—you have

been struck by the evil eye of that unsainted Imam, who, for our misfortune, has come here in a perverse hour, and who watches over your house as a bird of prey does over a sheepcot. Curses be on his white face and deluding eye! What harm can a child do?"

"She is a child and knows no better," said Suleiman in a low voice, happy to skreen his beloved Ayesha from farther imputation—"that is true—I have been in fault!"

"To be sure you have!" screamed Zabetta, with the accent of victory: "And pray when are you ever right? *Mashallah!*—Praise be to Allah! You see an Imam, you come here, you tell me I lie, you would kill me, and then you say you are in fault. *Béhèy!*—fine indeed! And after this you are called the wise Suleiman! You are an ayan of the city too,—an elder! one who can judge between right and wrong! *Pouff! pouff!*" throwing her five fingers opened into his face, "I laugh at such wisdom. And then your daughter, a child scarcely out of swaddling-clothes, she is to be called a woman, forsooth! and then, because an Imam, like an owl peeping out of his hole, tells you he has seen her speaking to a crazy infidel, you are to kill your wife!"

"*Amān! amān!*—pity! pity!" roared out Suleiman Aga in his turn; "hold your peace. What can I say more?"

"Peace indeed! No, you shall never have peace again," said Zabetta, "as long as I live,—never shall you hear the end of this! I am not to be killed for nothing; I will slay in my turn, after the fashion of women. I am a true woman; nobody shall say nay to that. If I can't brandish a dagger, I can wield my tongue; and so I will, and so you shall learn to your cost. I'll talk from this time to the day of judgment, and stop me who can,—not a cow like you!"

"*Amān! amān!*" again exclaimed Suleiman, who, seeing how matters were going with him, made one decided plunge at the door, darted away, and regained his own part of the house shaking the collar of his robe, and exclaiming "*Amān! amān!*"

CHAPTER IX.

Brabantio above at a window.

What is the reason of this terrible summons?

What is the matter there?

Othello.

THE day had scarcely begun to dawn, on the morning after the scene which was been recorded in the last chapter, when the inmates of the house of Bogos, the Armenian dyer, were awakened by certain hard knocks at the door given by means of a heavy stick, which resounded not only throughout the house, but also along the narrow and then deserted street.

The Armenian, who was still in bed with his wife and children, heard this noise with alarm, for, by experience, he was aware that it portended evil (either exactions of the government, or perhaps personal violence). He arose in haste, and before he ventured to open his door, thrust his head through a small latticed window, and looked below into the street. There, to his dismay, he perceived two well-dressed Turks, officers of the Pasha, with their long canes of office in hand, accompanied by a small band of armed men.

"What is there? What has happened?" he inquired in a voice which betrayed at once his fear and respect.

"*Atch, bakallum*—open, let us see!" said one of the officers in a tone of authority.

"What means this *taka tooka*? (for so this sort of noise is called in Turkish) said the Armenian's wife, who had thrust her head out of another window.

"*Atch, pezevenk*—open, wretch!" again was said in the same tone, whilst the blows on the door were repeated with redoubled violence.

Upon this Mustafa, the Tatar, who was sleeping in another room, also groped his way out of his warm bed, and muttering appropriate curses upon those who were the causes of the dis-

turbance, put his head out of a third window, and looking downwards said, "*Ay gardash*—softly, brother!—what do you want? The sun is not risen, and you are run mad already—how is this?"

The officer seeing it was a Mussulman who addressed him this time, varied his speech on the third summons by saying, "*Atch, adam*—open, O man! Our lord the Pasha has sent us—Open!" and then continued such a volley of blows as would have awakened the dead.

Stasso next, who slept in a closet near his master, hearing the commotion, ran to the terrace top, for there was no window in his room, and looking over the parapet exclaimed, "*Ti diavolo!*—what the deuce!" as he rubbed his eyes and looked at the posse in the street; and then, struck with alarm that some danger threatened his master, he hastened to Lord Osmond, and informed him of the circumstance.

Osmond, who was not slow in his conjectures upon what might be the real cause of this visit, communicated the same to his servant, and then dressing himself in haste, with great presence of mind, and in foresight of future contingencies, secreted about his own person, and that of Stasso, as many articles as he imagined might be of use to him (among others a pair of pocket-pistols, which he concealed in his breast), hid others in the by-corners of the apartment, and thus awaited the event.

Bogos by this time, with fear and trembling, had opened the door of his house to the Pasha's officers. The first salutation which he received was a blow over the head for having detained them so long, and then he heard the question, "Where is the Frank infidel who lives here?"

"*Effendi*—Sir," said the poor man, slow in betraying his guest, yet secretly charmed that the visit was not intended for himself—"he sleeps up-stairs. But what is there at your service?—be pleased to sit:" at the same time he roared out to his wife to bring coffee and pipes. "You have done me honour; my house is exalted by your presence."

The Turks, who can never withstand the temptation of a cup of coffee, on this occasion proved themselves true men; and the two chokhadars, heedless of their commission, sat themselves down on the Armenian's cushions, awaiting the pro-

misused treat, thus giving time to the whole household to secrete such things as were likely to be seized if seen by their visitors, and which on such occasions they felt themselves justified in doing. The guard remained stationed at the street-door.

Mustafa, who had the sharpest nose for the smell of coffee of any one of the sons of Islam, no sooner heard the well-known sound of the mortar in which the roasted bean was braying, than he dressed himself in all haste, and making the wonted *Selam aleikum* to the unexpected guests, sat himself down in all dignity by their side, and, lighting his first morning's pipe (ever a great luxury to the true smoker), awaited the coming stimulant with as much unconcern as if that was the first object of consideration, whilst the reason of their visit was apparently quite of secondary importance.

They all sipped in solemn silence, after the coffee had been handed about by the obsequious Bogos, and smoked between whiles. When it was over, Mustafa duly said, "*Affiet ollah*—much good may it do you!" to which the others responded the same, and stroked their whiskers.

After a long interval, in which nothing was said, and little else done than inhaling and emitting smoke, Mustafa bethought himself that it might be as well if he inquired the object of this their early intrusion, so far as it concerned his master.

"Sir," said the head officer with gravity, "I am the head chokhadar of the Pasha, I am come to invite the Frank to take himself to the Pasha's presence."

"I," said the other officer, "I am the deputy chokhadar, I am come to help to invite the Frank to come to the Pasha."

"*Pek ayi*—very well," said Mustafa, "upon our heads be it: *Yavash, yavash*,—slowly, slowly, we will proceed. The Beyzadeh at present sleeps; when he wakes, upon our heads be it, we will go." This, Mustafa said in the full persuasion that these persons were sent on the part of the Pasha to do his master honour, for he was not in the least aware that anything had occurred which could give rise to a different treatment.

The officers, who had an eye to an immediate *backshish* or present, and who had also calculated how much the reversion of future donations or extortions might be worth to them, appeared to agree with Mustafa in taking a conciliatory view of the case; and although the chief, who was also the spokesman,

said "Very well," and "by and by," and "slowly slow," at first; yet, as the day began to show forth, he gradually threw haste into the composition of his speeches, and said "*Haidé, chabouk, gidelim!*—Come along, quick, let us go!" until Mustafa was obliged to proceed to his master, and to inform him of the Pasha's message, and of his wish to see him without loss of time. However, before he went, he thought it right to inquire what might be the real object of the Pasha's wish to see Lord Osmond, since the armed men and the violence of the intrusion produced a doubt in his mind whether it might be honour, or the contrary, which was in preparation.

"*Bak!*—see!" said he to the officer, in a mysterious whisper: "is there any thing wrong?" at the same time winking his eye and shaking his head.

"What do I know?" said the other as mysteriously: then putting his two forefingers together in a parallel line, he said, "The Frank has been seen with a woman."

"Is it so?" said Mustafa, in astonishment; "that is bad," shaking his head at the same time.

"Truly it is bad," answered the officer; "our Mufti is much of a devil, and visits a *zamparalik*—a piece of scandal, with great severity; but, if you will put the affair into my hands, I can do many things."

Mustafa, who easily understood the hint, and who had taken fright at this disclosure, was not backward in putting a gold piece into the hand of his informer, as a retainer for his good offices. He then, with an accelerated step, sought his master, cogitating how the circumstance might have happened, and full of anger at his master's imprudence.

When he entered the room, without waiting to sit, he exclaimed, "Allah! Allah! what have you done? You do not know these men! They are bad men; this is not your country; these are Mussulmans! If you speak to a Mussulman girl, they will kill you without mercy! Why then did you speak?"

"What has happened, Mustafa," said Osmond, coolly; "it is very early to be disturbed in this manner."

"What signifies early, what signifies late? Here are chok-hadars with long sticks, here are rogues with swords and pistols, come from the Pasha to seek you, because you have talked with a Mussulman woman. What for did you talk?"

This it not like your country ; if you even look through a hole at a woman, they will thrust your eye out : —this is very bad.”

“ What is to be done, Mustafa ? ” said Osmond ; “ Women are made to be talked to. I am sorry to have displeased the Turks ; but there can be no offence where none was intended.”

“ Allah ! offence ! ” said Mustafa ; “ offence or no offence, these fellows kill Franks without fear, and say ‘ thanks to God ! ’ when they have done so. Something must be done, or else ashes will fall upon our heads.”

“ I am ready to do what is right,” said Osmond.

“ Then you must tell lies,” answered Mustafa : “ with lies and money we may escape ; if not, there is nothing between us and the stick—The stick, do I say !—Allah ! what is there to prevent the sword from striking our necks ? ”

“ I will tell no lies to please any one, not even the Sultan himself,” said Osmond, “ much less to please the Pasha. I am an Englishman ; let him hurt an Englishman at his peril.”

“ *Eh vah !* ” exclaimed the Tatar in amazement, “ Englishman, indeed ! what do these fellows know about Englishmen ? They can’t tell one Frank from another ; all are Giaours in their sight. They know Kurds, Franks, Moscovs—these they know ; but all they have ever heard of the Ingliz is, that they make watches, and penknives, and cloth. You must lie,—not a little,—but you must lie much. Say you never saw the woman ; give money to the Pasha ; mount your horse, and run away :—that is all that you can do.”

“ We will see what is to be done,” said Osmond, coolly, “ when we have visited the Pasha. Let us go ; I am ready.”

Mustafa looked up at Stasso, who was standing by, and sorrowfully shook his head, as much as to say,—“ We, who know what Turks are, know the misfortune which this event is likely to bring upon our heads ; but he is ignorant and cannot see his danger.”

Osmond, accompanied by Mustafa and Stasso, met the chokhadars at the door of the dyer’s house, and straightway they proceeded in a body to the Pasha’s residence. He was treated with sufficient civility by the officers, in consequence of the present already given, and in expectation of what was to come ; but when he entered the great court of the mansion, he

of the law. His features were stern, his eye keen, and his beard scanty. He never relaxed into compassion, excepting under the pressure of temptation, and that temptation his nature had long determined to be gold and silver. Instead of scanning his person as his compeer had done, he speculated what might be the dimensions of his purse. He surveyed him as the tiger does the hind before he springs, and, with all the virulence of a bigoted Mussulman, he felt much satisfaction at having secured a Christian within his toils. Suleiman Aga's naturally impassive face became animated with an angry expression, as he looked upon the cause of the confusion which had taken place in his house; and the Imam felt that he was elevated into a man of consequence, by having been the means of bringing an offender to justice.

After Osmond had been seated a short time, Mustafa and Stasso standing at the end of the room, the Mufti addressed himself to Mustafa, and having ascertained that he was an Osmanli, and Osmond's attendant, inquired whether he understood Turkish, to which Mustapha answered in the affirmative. The Mufti then turning to Osmond, without making use of any of those common-place phrases of welcome and compliment so usual among Orientals, said,—

“What is your name?”

“My name is Osmond, at your service.”

“Osman?” said the Turk, in an inquiring tone, “how can that be?—you a Frank, and called Osman, that can never be.”

“My name is Osmond,” he answered: “what more can I say?”

“Allah!” said the Mufti, “either your name is Osman,” and you are a true believer, or it is not Osman, and you are a Giaour?”

“I am neither a Mahomedan nor a Giaour,” said Osmond: “notwithstanding that, my name is Osmond.”

Turning round to the Pasha and to the other Turks present, he coolly said, “He lies.” He then continued to Osmond,

“If you are a Frank, wherefore do you wear our clothes? wherefore that unpermitted turban on your head? wherefore those yellow slippers? We are not to be cheated, Mashallah! we have wit in our brain, and eyes in our head.”

"I do not deny that you have wit in your brain, and eyes in your head," answered Osmond; "I do wear a turban; I do wear yellow slippers, and still I am a Frank. If you were to go into my country, and choose to wear a hat and a pair of black boots, nobody would object to that."

The Pasha could not forbear laughing in his sleeve at Osmond's answer. Suleiman Aga, who had not forgotten that he had been called a Giaour, put on an angry countenance, the Imam looked full of malice, and the Mufti became furious.

"Man!" said the latter, "we have not sent for you that you should make play under our beards. We are Mussulmans; this is a Mussulman country. Whoever comes here is subject to its laws. You have seen and spoken to one of our women, deny that if you can!"

"I have," said Osmond boldly—"I have both seen and spoken to one of your women. If you were in my country, you might see and speak to all our women and welcome. What more can I say?"

"Allah! Allah!" exclaimed the Mufti, "what more need be said?"

"What more?" exclaimed the Imam: "this infidel is worthy of death. Is he to come into our city, and laugh at our mothers and daughters? Suleiman Aga, what do you say to this?" said he, addressing that personage; "this can never be!"

Suleiman Aga stroked his beard, and said, "This man is a misfortune. By the prophet! we are not men, if we allow our religion, our laws, and our harems, to be insulted by an infidel. It is not possible that a maiden so timid, and so true to her belief, can have been induced to break through her faith without some potent spell! O Mufti! to you we look for justice; to you," addressing himself to the Pasha—"to you, our Aga, and chief, we look for protection."

These words, spoken with an earnestness and an animation uncommon to him, produced considerable sensation upon the assembly. The Pasha was aware how much it behoved him to second the decisions of the Mufti, who, in fact, possessed the principal share of power in the city; and felt that he could not openly oppose himself to the wishes of Suleiman Aga, who, from the respectability of his character and his wealth, had

acquired considerable influence. He therefore was obliged to assent to whatever sentence might be pronounced against his prisoner, and he was about ordering him into confinement, when Osmond, who had perceived how ill matters were going with him, deemed it high time to do his utmost to protect himself. Therefore, addressing himself to the Pasha, he spoke as follows :—

“ You have power in your hands to act towards me as you please. You have already insulted me ; you may detain my person, you may perhaps offer me violence, and there is nothing to hinder you from putting me to death. But I warn you that you cannot do this with impunity. I am the subject of a King who has the power to demand satisfaction, not only from your Sultan, but from the most powerful of states ; and I shall not die unavenged. Upon your heads the blow will ultimately fall. It will be at your peril if you touch a hair of my head. I am an Englishman ; and although the power of England may not be known here, and although, barbarians as you are, you may infringe every law of that hospitality which you profess to exercise towards the stranger, yet your ignorance will not protect you. The arm of justice will overtake you ; for whatever act of cruelty you inflict upon me, will, sooner or later, be visited upon each of your heads.” Upon which, taking from his breast the firman which he had received from the Sultan on his departure from Constantinople, in which all pashas, governors, and men in authority, were enjoined to protect and help him, he unfolded it, and presenting it to the Pasha, said, “ This is your own Emperor’s order, disobey it at your peril ! ”

This speech, spoken in the best Turkish, and accompanied with an independence of manner quite unknown to the despots to whom it was addressed, produced almost as great an effect as the blow which had been inflicted on the negro wrestler.

The Pasha opened his heavy eyes with astonishment ; the Mufti looked confused, yet still full of wicked intent ; the Imam curled up his lip with disdain ; whilst Suleiman Aga looked straight forward, and seemed thrown into a sudden train of thought and perplexity.

After a considerable pause, the Pasha handed the firman over to the Mufti, who began its perusal with intense interest,

throwing incredulity into the cast of his features, and reading with the air of a man seeking for a plea of accusation. He stopped on a sudden, whilst a malicious smile broke out upon his sallow face, and said, "This firman is *bosh*—nothing. It is not addressed to us; the city of Kars is not mentioned therein. You have made an account without figures!"

"May you prosper!" said Mustapha, who had been deeply intent upon all that had taken place; "but, as I love my child, I swear that that firman has been read and respected throughout Asia. Kars, after all, is but a small place compared to the whole of Room."

"Whose dog are you that dare to speak?" exclaimed the Mufti: "keep your tongue quiet; take care, lest the offences of your mouth be visited upon the soles of your unblessed feet. I say this firman is nothing to us." Then turning towards the Pasha, he said: "This man is no Frank; he may be a Mus-sulman, or an Armenian, or an Arab, but he is no Frank. He talks Turkish better than we; he dresses as a Turk; and his name is Osman. What more would you have?"

"What is he then?" inquired the Pasha; "he must be something."

"Who knows what he is?" said the Mufti with indignation. "Let us see whether he be not a spy; he may be a Russian spy; we will see. We will not allow the cap to be pulled from off our heads. We will not suffer the finger of shame to be pointed at our women, nor the word of the blessed Koran to be insulted and reviled for want of protection."

"Can you make the profession of our faith, O man?" said the Imam to Osmond.

"I can make the profession of one faith," said Osmond, with much spirit, who had now been worked up into a feeling of indignation by the insults heaped upon him,—“and that is, that I believe you all to be a set of rogues and miscreants, who have no other aim than to rob and oppress a defenceless man.”

This speech acted like a lighted match to a train of gun-powder, and they one and all exploded into invectives and exclamations, which exhibited every variety of passion. "*Kiupek!*—Dog!" said one. "*Giaour!*—Infidel!" said another. "Ill-born!" cried a third;—and they all agreed in one sentiment, which was that his mother and sisters were vile, and that his

father and grandfather were only fit for the dunghill. Mustafa would have stopped the raging of the storm, but his voice was lost in the universal uproar; Stasso, with his hands clenched, appeared prepared for the worst, and waited for what would happen next; whilst Osmond stood like a lion at bay, and seemed to defy the united efforts of the assembled barbarians.

When the rage of the company had in some measure subsided, and they began to consider upon the best means of securing Osmond's person, their blustering began to droop. His conduct had produced so great an effect upon them — of present fear of his valour, of apprehension for the future, that there was a pause. The Pasha then began to use soothing words and flattering speeches, in order to lull his suspicions of what might be in preparation for him; but, in so doing, he made a sign to one of the attendants, who soon returned with a body of armed men, and into their charge he delivered him as a prisoner. Osmond, without farther expostulation, rose with dignity from his seat, and merely saying, "Upon your heads be it that an English subject is thus detained," he followed the officer, and left the room, accompanied by Mustafa and Stasso.

CHAPTER X.

Bra. A maiden never bold;
Of spirit so still and quiet, that her motion
Blush'd at herself; and she, in spite of nature,
Of years, of country, credit, everything—
To fall in love with what she feared to look on?

OTHELLO.

OSMOND was conducted to a small room in the Pasha's palace, situated within an apartment allotted to the *Kiaya*, or deputy governor, and there he was confined, a guard being placed over him. His first determination was to despatch Mustafa in all haste to Constantinople, in order that he might make known his situation to the King's ambassador there, and obtain a speedy

release. He accordingly wrote to his friend Wortley, giving him a full account of his adventures, and intreating him to use his best endeavours to send him assistance. He did not withhold the circumstance of his acquaintance with Ayesha, but described to him, with all the enthusiasm of a lover, her charms and perfections : he did not, however, permit himself to state what were his ulterior views with respect to drawing her from her seclusion ; for he felt that the scheme of future happiness which he had so recently planned, was likely to evaporate as a vision or a dream. When he had finished his letter, he called Mustafa to him, and ordered him to depart forthwith. Instead of showing any joy or alacrity at this, the dejected courier shook his head and sat down.

“ You tell me to depart,” said Mustafa, with a sigh ; “ where are the post-horses, where the Surugi ? You do not know these people. It will be easier for me to get into paradise than to reach Constantinople ;—we are prisoners !”

“ How ?” said Osmond ; “ you have done nothing against their laws ! Why should you be punished, when I alone am to blame ?”

“ In this country if the master be in fault,” said the Tatar, “ the servants are the same. When the master eats stick, the servants eat also. Ah ! why did you speak to that woman ?”

“ It has been an unfortunate event,” said Osmond, thoughtfully, and we must get out of our difficulties as well as we can : however, you can lose nothing by making an effort to depart. You must tell the Pasha that I wish to procure proofs that I am what I profess myself to be, and then surely he cannot refuse to set me free ?”

“ And stand a chance of getting his own neck twisted off for his pains,” said Mustafa. “ No, no ! neither he nor the Mufti are such fools as that.—Animals, yes ; but asses, no.”

“ What then is to be done ?” said Osmond.

“ You must give money,” said Mustafa ; “ if you will not tell lies, you must give money.”

“ I will give nothing,” answered his master, with indignation : “ they may rob me if they choose ; but I will never bribe a tyrant to be just, or encourage a rogue in his roguery.”

“ That may be very well in your country,” said Mustafa ; “ but you do not know these fellows. A man here robs, beats, and

murders, then says his prayers, and thanks the holy Prophet for all favours."

Stasso was present whilst this conversation took place. During the progress of his master's passion for Ayesha, he had always had forebodings that it would lead to misfortune, for he never divested himself of the idea that they had been struck by the evil eye of the negress Nourzadeh, on the day of their entry into Kars,—and what, thought he, could withstand the *kati-vochio*? His energies, by this conviction, were paralyzed; and the utmost that he could do was to pour out that volley of anathemas, ever so ready for use at the bottom of every Greek's throat, and which he principally directed against Zabetta, who had been one of the leading causes of their present misery. "*Diavolissa*—the she-devil," was continually playing upon the surface of his lips, as he dwelt upon her attractions, as well as upon her pernicious influence over him. "I will cut off my whiskers," he would exclaim, "if I do not insult every Tiniote I meet, her father, mother, and sisters, the first and also the last."

Osmond at length, after making many resolutions, desired that Mustafa and Stasso together should ask permission of their keepers to conduct them to the Pasha, in order that they might demand on the part of their master, either that he would allow of his immediate departure, or permit Mustafa to proceed to Constantinople with letters addressed to the English ambassador, and thus also afford the Pasha an opportunity to state the reasons of his conduct to his own court.

The assembled Turks, after the departure of Osmond to prison, began to deliberate seriously what punishment they ought to inflict, or what they were to do with him. The Pasha was anxious to secure him for one of his prize-fighters; the Mufti, in league with the Imam, were for proceeding to extremities, and dividing his goods among them; whilst Suleiman Aga smoked, paused, and said nothing.

When Mustafa and Stasso appeared before them to make known their master's request, it soon became apparent that they were all of one mind upon that subject. They would neither allow of his departure nor of Mustafa's. The Mufti swore that all that he or they could assert would never convince him that Osmond was a Frank; he particularly dwelt upon his

language, his dress and appearance, and insisted that *Osman* was a name belonging only to a true believer. "Such being the case," said he, "he must bear the penalties of transgressing the law." The Pasha, fearing that he might lose all chances of possessing the services of so wonderful a pehlivan, strongly opposed his departure; whilst Suleiman Aga smoked and pondered still. Mustafa and Stasso were ordered to return to their confinement, to communicate the refusal of the authorities to accede to their master's wishes; and after coming to no resolution upon the punishment to be awarded, the assembly broke up, with an agreement that they should meet again on the following morning.

Suleiman Aga returned with an unwilling step to his house. He foresaw the storm that was preparing for him; he anticipated the angry looks and the unceasing wrangle of his wife; but more than all, he feared to meet the sorrowful looks of Ayesha. He was not mistaken in his anticipations. The account of what had taken place at the dyer's house was soon rumoured abroad, and the whole story, down to the imprisonment of Osmond and his servants, was conveyed, with all the usual exaggerations, to Zabetta and Ayesha, by the old and officious Caterina. Here then was an end to all Zabetta's schemes of emancipation, and a cloud cast over Ayesha's early dawn of love. The one was thrown into a fever of anger, whilst the other bowed her head with meekness to the decrees of fate, but promised to herself to treasure up in her mind the recollection of that vision of bliss, which had visited her in the shape of one whom she was never more destined to behold, and to endeavour to imitate those perfections, of which she might be said only to have caught a casual glimpse. When she heard of the manner in which her lover was treated, and, moreover, of the fate which awaited him, her heart sank within her, and her senses almost forsook her. The attack of the negro upon him had already been magnified into an attempt to take away his life; and having escaped that, his confinement was reported to be only preparatory to the death which he was doomed to suffer. The position of Ayesha was in every way most painful. What could a Mahomedan maiden do? Secluded from mankind by custom, as well as by the prohibitions of her faith, how could she come forward to assist

and protect one who was an enemy to her religion, without implicating his safety as well as her own? From the moment she had heard of his seizure, she was lost in thought; the colour forsook her cheeks, her whole appearance bespoke anguish and despair. She knew her father to be a rigid Mussulman; and although he was naturally passive, and disposed to take the reverses of life with more than the philosophy of a predestinarian, yet in every thing that regarded women, their purity and seclusion, he was jealous and vindictive to the highest degree. At one moment, relying upon her influence upon him, she determined to avow her love for Osmond, and to implore his interference to save him. At another, she recollected to what a pitch his anger had been excited by his suspicions of her mother, and she feared that he would not be more lenient towards herself. She had frequently heard of the cruelties committed by her countrymen upon Christians; and in the violence of her love, she could see nothing but the dear object of her affections exposed to the brutalities and the outrage of the Pasha and the Mufti. Again, she reflected how effectually her father could stay their hand, could she but enlist him in her cause: and again she despaired, for what is there so inexorable as religious persecution upon principle? Pondering deeply upon Osmond's situation as well as upon her own, she at length determined, happen what might, to make one vigorous effort to save him, even were her father to proceed to the utmost extremities with her.

Suleiman Aga, upon reaching his house, stole quietly to his own apartment to smoke and think: this he did for some time before he proceeded to the harem, when, finding upon inquiry that his wife had gone out, and that Ayesha was alone, he arose and sought her. He found her, as he had anticipated, sorrowful and dejected. She was seated in a corner, apparently mindful of nothing, with an abstracted look, and was not conscious of the presence of her father until he actually stood before her; she then stood up, as children in the East are wont to do before their parents, and waited his pleasure.

"Ayesha," said he, "look at me, why are you so sorrowful? Am I not your father? Speak but a little—wherefore so?"

At these words, which were spoken with as great an expression of tenderness as the phlegmatic man could command,

the grief-stricken maiden burst into an agonizing flood of tears. She had in vain sought for consolation in her distress; she had found none in her mother, and none in her own thoughts; and when the kind words of her father struck her ear, every fibre of her heart was softened, and her whole nature melted into tenderness.

Suleiman, whilst he allowed her tears to flow, was himself affected; and although he was no adept in the art of endearments, he managed by his words and manner to soothe this ebullition of Ayesha's grief, and to inspire her with corresponding confidence. She first expressed her sorrow for having been the cause of giving him so much displeasure and uneasiness; bewailed that she should have brought so much misery upon Osmond, and finished by intreating her father to exert all his influence to skreen the youth from harm.

"God knows," said she, "what grief I have devoured,—I am weak,—whatever I did to resist my feelings was of no use, fate struck me, and made me act. I never intended to displease you."

"But in the name of Allah!" said Suleiman, "wherefore not speak to me? have I not always been your friend?"

"True you say, O my father!" returned Ayesha; "but who could ever think that so much distress would fall upon me, from an accident which happened to another!" Upon which she described every circumstance relating to her first acquaintance with Osmond—his fall—her alarm—his respectful behaviour—her running to his assistance.

"Allah! Allah!" exclaimed Suleiman, "did he see your face?"

"What can I say?" answered the maiden, "perhaps yes, perhaps no; I did not know what I did: I fear that we looked at each other, and during that time fate struck us; from that moment a change was worked in my mind, and, from being happy and in peace, ever since then I have been full of anxiety and strange hopes."

Suleiman, upon hearing this, shook his head and pondered. "But then," said he, "he fell sick,—we heard that from Caterina,—what did you do then? you saw him no more for some time?"

"*Ahi!*" said Ayesha, sighing, "'tis true I saw him no more

then, but Allah! Allah! what a thing is memory! how treacherous is thought I did nothing but think of him."

"You thought of him, Ayesha?" said her father, "that was wrong."

"But what could a poor maiden do against fate?" she returned:—"besides, was there a day in which Caterina did not come to me and sing his praises?"

"The praises of an infidel—of a Giaour!" exclaimed Suleiman Aga, as if he were horror-struck; "I am astonished. That Caterina is an old bit of misfortune. This must not be. We are Mussulmans. Let the infidel perish. Shall we be polluted in our very harems? Ayesha, this must not be. You have committed sin."

"*Babām!*—O my father!" exclaimed Ayesha in alarm, "are we not all God's creatures? Why should an innocent man perish, though he be not of our faith? Oh, think better of this, and save him."

"Allah, Allah!" exclaimed Suleiman, "you a Mahomedan maiden, and speak thus? To what end have my instructions served, if you are ignorant of what is decreed against infidels? You have read our book of faith, and are you now to plead in favour of a Giaour? Ayesha, do you love this Frank?"

Ayesha was overpowered with contending emotions; her father's stern intolerance was so directly opposed to the spirit of Osmond's benevolence, that she could not but feel how amiable was the one, and how reprehensible the other. Still she saw that all was lost if she did not control her feelings; and she remained silent for a while, until, fearing that the most dreadful fate was about to befall her lover, she fell on her knees before her father, and said,—

"If any one is in fault, it is I, I alone am guilty—do what you please with me, I will not repine; but save the innocent youth. If he dies, Ayesha dies also."

The grave Turk had never contemplated such a misfortune as the loss of his daughter; little did he suspect how deeply her affections were opened. He would have exploded with anger but for the beautiful form and imploring attitude before him; his own sense of what was right impelled one way, whilst his affection led him the other. He was perplexed how to act, and would have left his daughter without a reply, had

not a thought struck him that a compromise might be made, by which her happiness would be secured, and his own rectitude remain unsullied.

"Ayesha, my lamb," said he, as he made her rise, "the decrees of fate are indeed unalterable. We will make a thought for your happiness."

"Heaven bless my father for those words!" exclaimed the distressed maiden; "Think not of the happiness of Ayesha; she will be content happen whatever may; but let him protect the innocent. What have you devised?"

"Let the Giaour become a true believer; let him forsake his faith, and adopt that of the blessed Prophet and his followers, and as there is but one Allah, Ayesha shall become his wife. Suleiman has spoken the word."

Ayesha's bosom heaved with new sensations, and although she felt a sad foreboding, from the knowledge which she had already acquired of Osmond's sentiments, that this could never be, yet her eyes beamed with delight upon hearing this proposal of her father. She kissed his hand, and made her acknowledgments of gratitude; and although she could not control that look of despondency which marked her real feelings, still in his eyes she appeared comforted and at ease.

At this juncture Zabetta entered the apartment. She had bestirred herself most actively to acquire information in the city concerning the seizure of Osmond, and was just returned. Her passions were roused at what she had heard. At one place it was said that an infidel had arrived, and, aided by a worshipper of Satan, had carried off Suleiman Aga's daughter into the Kurdistan mountains. At another, she was told that, Suleiman Aga having found his wife with the Giaour, he had thrust her into a sack, and drowned her in the river. Then those who resided near the Pasha's palace affirmed that the Pasha's Ethiopian had broken the infidel's back, and that he was lying dead in the court. At length she ascertained to a certainty what had really taken place, and she returned home in full venom against her husband. As soon as she perceived him, she exclaimed, "And so, you have become the destroyer of your own house? Mashallah! you have brought your beard to a good market! All the world, men, women, and children, are passing their whole time in spitting

at it, and for what? because a dog of an Imam chooses to come and tell you lies!"

"Zabetta," said Suleiman, unmoved, "are you become mad? Am I to blame because I have done nothing?"

"How I done nothing?" screamed the angry woman: "Is dishonouring your wife and oppressing your child, nothing? Is making us the talk and derision of the whole city, nothing? Is the oppression of an innocent man, nothing? Is putting him in danger of his life, nothing? *Eh vah?* by what account do you reckon?"

"As Allah is great," said Suleiman, "I have done nothing! If the hind chooses to squat before the lion, is it the lion's fault that he eats him up? When a Giaour, of his own accord, leaves his own country, and comes hither to insult our laws, is it the Mussulman's fault that he defends them, and punishes the guilty? Women talk with their hearts, and not with their heads."

"What have you to say against women?" said Zabetta, in a voice of anger. "Without women what would you be? What but a dried-up old stump, with nothing to refresh you? What but a dirty heap in a corner, without a helping hand to purify you? Go, go, you talk as if your tongue belonged to your hands instead of your head. You straight come to your stick and your strength, when the little wit which you possess has left your brain. You may uphold your men when women are not here to guide you; but as long as you have a Zabetta in your house, you shall hear her and her only, even had you but one ear to help you to hear her words. I say you must not allow that ill-fated infidel to perish; he must be saved; and as you have caused the evil, so must you bring back the good."

"Are you mad, O woman!" exclaimed Suleiman, "to speak thus? Wherefore do you coin useless words? Who but the Imam is the accuser of the Frank?—he saw the deed—he bears witness to the crime. What can I say against facts?"

"Imam! Imam!" exclaimed Zabetta, mockingly, as she rested her hands upon her hips, looking straight into her husband's face; "one would think from your words that that old scarecrow, who croaks out his profession of faith from the minaret top, was as sacred a personage as the Prophet himself! But what is he but an old dotard? a toothless, beardless churl, who,

instead of minding his *azan* and the affairs of his mosque, chooses, like a bird of ill-omen as he is, to soar over and pry into our harems; to look where he should not; to imagine evil where none is meant; to destroy men's houses by his vile falsehoods; to set father against daughter, and husband against wife; and to spread such false rumours as may produce misfortunes, and none but Allah knows where they may stop. Go, go! let us hear no more of your Imam, except when you may have secured for him a sound bastinado upon the soles of his feet. Suleiman Aga! you must put an end to this thralldom. Go to the *mekemeh*, and insist that the infidel Ingliz be set at liberty. *Wallah billah!*—I will not rest until he is."

Suleiman allowed this burst of his wife's volubility and rage to subside, and then looking at Ayesha, replied, "What I have said, I have said. If the infidel will consent to abandon his faith, and adopt that of Islam, she shall become his wife; and then all will be well."

"What words are these?" exclaimed Zabetta. "She shall become his wife, do you say? she shall become no man's wife unless I choose it. Am I nothing, that I am not to be consulted? What man in the world is there who knows anything about marriages? men can no more select a husband for their daughters, than they can choose the colour of their wives' vest. Let them keep to their pipes, their horses, and their camels; let them sit in the bazaar, buy, sell, fight, and steal, but let them not meddle in what concerns them not. Allah! Allah! what is the world to become if a mother cannot do what she pleases with her own daughter? Go, man! go smoke, go pray, but leave marriages to women."

"There is no harm in what you say," returned Suleiman, with a most placid mien, "be it so. But if you wish to save the infidel's life, he must first abjure his faith; and if it be your desire that your daughter remain unhurt, she must marry him after his abjuration of his own faith, and when he has adopted ours."

These words in some measure stopped the current of Zabetta's rage, and she was so far cooled as to perceive that, if something were not done, all her hopes of emancipation from Kars must fall to the ground, and thus this opportunity, so fa-

vourable to her views, would be lost. She therefore gradually desisted from that fierce opposition which she was in the habit of making to every proposal emanating from her husband, and, like the gradual cessation of artillery which marks the close of a battle, she withdrew from the contest by slowly diminishing the power of her angry words, and at length quitted the room under cover of a low growl.

When left in full possession of her harem by the absence of Suleiman, she closeted herself with Ayesha, and there she gave full vent to her feelings at the untoward turn which their acquaintance with Osmond had taken. She disclosed to her the various schemes which had passed through her mind for effecting his release. She first thought of despatching a messenger to the nearest Russian post on the frontier, in order to invite the officer in command there to an attack on the town. She next turned her thoughts to a chieftain in the Kurdistan, a friend of hers, who might be useful in destroying the Mufü, or carrying him and the Imam prisoners into the mountains. She afterwards thought how bribes might best be administered in order to open the gates of Osmond's prison; but, the more she devised schemes, the more one after the other they appeared impracticable. At length she was obliged to sit down in the conviction that, for once in his life, her husband's scheme was the most feasible, and that, after all, Osmond Turk would serve her purpose just as well as Osmond Christian; for she thought to herself, let him but once rid me of this horrid place, and then I care not what happens to him.

Ayesha was for the moment relieved by the hope that her lover's life was not in danger; but, after due reflection, she could not conceal from herself that the blow, although it might be averted by her father's interference, would only fall the more heavily, from the line of conduct which she felt sure Osmond would pursue. She could not entirely open her heart to her mother, for experience had taught her that she was ever too much impelled by passion and sudden impulse to act with the prudence and circumspection so necessary in the present posture of her affairs; and moreover she felt, that as the scheme which filled her mother's mind had reference entirely to her own well-being, it would be wise not to intrude her own, and thus produce a collision which might be fatal to all

parties. The maiden, called upon to act upon an occasion of difficulty, exhibited all at once a sagacity far beyond her years; and she now first learned the elements of that fortitude which accompanied her through the series of adventures which it will be our task to bring to light in the forthcoming narrative.

CHAPTER XI.

The Mahomedans are neither involved in the impiety of atheism, nor the darkness of idolatry; and their religion, false as it is, has many articles of belief in common with our own: which will facilitate our labours in diffusing the true faith, and dispose them to receive it.—FORSTER'S *Mahomedanism Unveiled*.

On the following morning the authorities met to deliberate upon the best course to pursue in regard to their prisoner. Each party put forward their opinion; lenity was urged on the part of the Pasha, severity on that of the Mufti and Imam. Suleiman Aga, having been called upon for his decision, offered the alternative which he had proposed to his wife and daughter. "If," said he, "the infidel will embrace the Mahomedan faith, nothing more need be said; he shall marry my daughter."

This proposal was unexpected, and produced a pause in the deliberations. As good Mussulmans, neither of them could object to it, for they were bound to make proselytes in the best manner they could, and here was too favourable an opportunity to be missed; but this stroke of Suleiman Aga's magnanimity did not hit precisely in the right place the intentions of either the Pasha or the Mufti. The Pasha wanted to secure a good pehlivan, and was ready to have paid a price for Osmond, should death have been decreed to him; whilst the Mufti was expecting to make a good harvest of gain by the youth's delinquency; but with this compromising proposal both were likely to lose their object, although their faith would gain a true be-

liever, and Suleiman a son-in-law. However, as Suleiman Aga strenuously persisted in his scheme, nothing more could be said, and it was determined forthwith that their prisoner should be ordered to appear before them, and the decision to which they had come be duly announced to him.

Osmond, in the meantime, had enjoyed full leisure to reflect upon the situation in which he was placed. Notwithstanding all the buoyancy and spirit of his youth, notwithstanding the natural force and manliness which formed a principal feature of his character, yet, when he looked around him and found himself destitute of help, far away from friends and protectors, a prisoner in the hands of barbarians, and guilty of what in their estimation was a crime only to be expiated by death, his fortitude was shaken, and he began to despair of his safety.

The tender passion which had been awakened in his breast by Ayesha, interfered not to soothe, but to add more bitterness to his feelings. Whatever schemes he had conceived in her favour were now blasted, and he dreaded to think to what horrors and brutalities she might be exposed on his account. He dwelt upon her perfections, recalled the conversations they had held together, repeated to himself the endearing expressions of love with which she had charmed his ears, only to feel more intensely the misery of his situation. His imagination would then wander to his own country—his own home; he would picture to himself what dread desolation would strike the hearts of his parents when they heard of his fate, and was moved to tears in the remembrance of all the dear friends of his youth, with whom he, perhaps, had parted for ever! Nor was the presence of his fellow-prisoners, Mustafa and Stasso, of any real comfort to him; for they too moaned over this check to their prosperity, and added, by their anticipations of what might probably be their destiny, to the gloom and horror which surrounded them.

Mustafa did nothing but con over the barbarities which were peculiar to the region in which they then were. He affirmed that the Turks put their prisoners to death by impalement; the Persians, by cutting the body into equal parts, or by explosion from a bomb; the Kurds, by strangling, or burying alive; and, by way of being learned on these matters, he discussed whether, if their heads were cut off, the Mufti would

have the courtesy to allow his head, as being that of a true believer, to be placed under his arm, or whether he would be condemned, along with his master and Stasso, as an infidel, to be degraded and abused.

"Allah send them misfortunes!" he would exclaim; "may their houses be ruined! we may die here like dogs, and no one will be near us to cover our faces or turn our feet towards the blessed Mecca!"

"*Allah kerim der*—God is merciful!" said Osmond, endeavouring to keep up the spirits of the dejected man; "let us hope for the best."

"Allah kerim is very well in its way," sighed Mustafa, "but what good will that do me when my head is off?"

"Why do you think of your head," exclaimed the faithful Stasso, "when our master's life is in jeopardy? May the wicked one take her to himself—that black devil!" alluding to Nourzadeh, "for she it is who has brought us into this scrape."

In the middle of these their discussions, the door of the prison was opened, and, with the usual salutation in his mouth, the Pasha's chokhadar made his appearance, stating the orders of his master, that Osmond should immediately repair to the presence. He would answer nothing to the questions put to him both by Osmond and Mustafa, excepting the indefinite '*Bakalum*—we shall see!' the refuge of every Turk in ignorance or indolence; and straightway marshalling himself at their head, he led them into the room where the Pasha, the Mufti, the Imam, and Suleiman Aga, were assembled, besides a *khoja* or scribe, in readiness to make any notes that might be necessary.

As soon as Osmond appeared, it was evident that they did not intend to extend to him the courtesy of allowing him to sit; but this question he soon settled himself, by at once placing himself next to the Pasha,—an action in the eyes of all present so extraordinary, and so imposing by the resoluteness which it proclaimed, that, instead of militating against him, it acted in his favour; for Orientals are ever awed by an assertion of dignity.

The prize-fighting Pasha, enveloped in furs and shawls, was excited into something like nervous agitation at the neighbourhood of one whom he looked upon as an eater of lions,

which he evinced by moving his seat about a span, at the same time coaxing his lips into flattering and conciliatory expressions. The Mufti, too, was startled, but he was not to be cheated out of his inflexibility; the Imam was passive, and Suleiman Aga appeared, as usual, torpid and indifferent. At length, when it was plain that Osmond intended no overt act of assault and sat quietly in his place, the Mufti opened his lips and said, "We have sent for you, O Frank! in consequence of complaints made against you: here is the man," pointing to Suleiman Aga, "who sues you for an outrage done to his harem—Speak Suleiman Aga, what accusation have you against this Frank?"

"My accusation is this," said the Turk; "that this man infidel to our faith, and stranger in our land, did seduce and hold converse with one of our harem; and this man here, pointing to the Imam, "is my witness."

"If you are the witness," said the Mufti to the Imam, "state what you saw."

"May you live many years!" said the Imam in an hypocritical tone of voice, "I am witness to the fact—I, with my own eyes, saw this Frank with a woman of our faith upon the terrace of the house of Bogos, the Armenian dyer—What more can I say?"

"Frank! speak," said the Mufti to Osmond, "what have you to say to this accusation?"

"I have before acknowledged that I did meet and speak to a woman on the Armenian's terrace," said Osmond with firmness, "and I acknowledge it again. It was not my intention to infringe your laws, for in my own country men speak freely to women, and do not controvert the laws of God in so doing."

"What says the law on this occasion?" said the Mufti addressing the scribe, who had hitherto taken note of the proceedings. The scribe turned to a copy of the Karan, and taking it up with much reverence, opened the leaves, and after some search stopped at a passage, to which he pointed with his finger, and then read aloud, "As for the unbelievers, it will be equal to them whether thou admonish them, or do not admonish them, they will not believe—God hath sealed up their hearts and their hearing, a dimness covereth their sight, and they shall suffer a grievous punishment."

The assembled company looked at Osmond as these words

were read, when the Mufti said, "Have you heard, O Frank? what can you say against receiving your merited punishment? You, who wear our dress, and adopt our manners, must know that you have transgressed against our laws, invaded the sacred privacy of our harem, and thus, admonished or not admonished, you have persisted in your sin—wherefore should you not be punished?"

"The passage which has just been read," said Osmond with great self-possession, "has nothing to do with my holding conversation with one of your women—show me a law against it, and I will answer you."

The Mufti, who knew that there was no special injunction in the Koran against an unbeliever holding communication with women of the true faith, and who had twisted a general denunciation into a special one, as the custom frequently is among Mahomedan lawyers when their sacred book is at fault, grew angry at Osmond's answer, and made a long and confused exposition of the law against unbelievers in general, which it is unnecessary to repeat, but which only left him more open than before to the criticism and exposition of his prisoner. Suleiman Aga, who was a sound Mahomedan, and who had paid great attention to the discussion, seeing how ill the argument was conducted on the part of his countrymen, thus briefly broke silence and said, "All infidels are worthy of death, of that there is no doubt—throw no more words into the air upon that head, but hearken to these words;" and taking the Koran from the hands of the scribe, and turning over a few pages, he stopped at this passage, which he read aloud, "'Give not in marriage women who believe, to the idolaters, until they believe.' This is positive, and it is also positive that unbelievers are worthy of death. Let the Frank embrace our faith, and I will give him my daughter in marriage. Should he refuse—let him die. I have said."

Upon this the Mufti, who was pleased at being delivered from his embarrassment, expressed his approbation, and was seconded by that of the Pasha and the Imam. He then said to Osmond, "Have you heard? This is our ordinance: instantly make the profession of our faith, accept Suleiman Aga's daughter for a wife, and live;—refuse, and you die."

Osmond, who had not anticipated this result, was struck with

perplexity. He would have at once rejected with indignation the invitation to become an apostate to his own faith, but he recollected that the fate of his enchanting mistress might be involved in his own ; therefore, to gain time, he appeared to listen to the proposal, if not with approbation, still not with disgust and anger. With as much calmness as he could command, he said, "As for embracing your faith, prove to me that it is better than mine, and I agree, with this proviso, that, if I can prove to you that my faith is better than yours, you will adopt it in preference to your own." Then turning to Suleiman Aga, he said, "And with respect to receiving your daughter for my wife, with this hand and heart I accept her under all circumstances, and offer you my gratitude for the gift."

Upon hearing Osmond's words, the assembly sat mute for some time, reflecting upon their import, and full of wonder at what might be the result. The Mufti, however, who soon perceived what an advantage his prisoner had ceded to them by his proposal, said with great gravity, "There is no harm in what the Frank proposes. We accept. Let him prove that our sacred religion is false (which Allah forbid!) then we will become Christians ; but, as Allah is in heaven, as the holy Mahomet is his prophet, we swear, should he not cede to conviction, although convinced, and should he be obstinate in refusing to be convinced, then, by the beard of the Prophet, I swear that he dies !" To which his compeers gravely and emphatically answered, "*Evalla*—truly yes."

During his early studies, Osmond had paid great attention to every thing which had reference to the East, and in particular to the religion of Mahomed, and to the extraordinary fact, that so large a portion of the human race should be living under the delusion of a false faith, subjecting themselves to its laws, and influencing their hopes of futurity by its false promises. His mind, accustomed to embrace large and extensive views of the schemes of Providence, did not view Mahomed merely in the light of a designing adventurer, an artful fanatic, or an ambitious chieftain ; but he referred to the unalterable truths of prophecy recorded in the sacred scriptures, to expound the difficulties which existed in his mind concerning the sway which his doctrines had acquired throughout Asia. Adopting the opinions of one of our learned divines, he had taught him-

self to look upon the Arabs, amongst whom he had travelled, as the descendants of Ishmael, and upon the Turks, who had so taken up the spirit of the Prophet's views, as the most powerful upholders of the false faith, both working out the truths of prophecy. He had always held the opinion that the false faith was so nearly imitative of the true, that in time it was preparing the way for the conversion of those who now professed it; and that those doctrines which they found interspersed throughout the Koran, which had been taken from the book of truth, and incorporated into the book of falsehood, would, as it were, be the virus which in time would bring out the baleful disease, and produce a renewed and wholesome state of being. When, therefore, the proposal was made to him by the Mufti to abandon his own faith, and to adopt the Mahomedan, he was immediately struck by the idea that an opportunity was now afforded him of exposing the falsity of the Prophet's doctrine, and that, however weak and superficial such an exposition might be, still he might perhaps be the means of shaking some one mind, and adding his mite to the contributions which were now making in furtherance of the great object of converting the heathens to Christianity.

Having been reconducted to his prison, he turned his mind to the serious task which he had imposed upon himself. He repeated to himself all the arguments which he thought would be most likely to produce conviction upon his antagonists—arguments, on the one hand, to subvert the false basis upon which Mahomedanism was founded, and on the other to uphold that which formed the groundwork of Christianity. His ardent mind lost sight, in this exercise, of the imminent danger to which he was about to be exposed, and, looking upon himself as a champion of his religion, he felt prepared to encounter every species of martyrdom in the struggle which he was about to undergo.

Not so, however, did his companions meet the forthcoming controversy. They began to esteem their master as one but a degree removed from a madman. They had been accustomed to hear Englishmen called '*delhi Ingliz*,' the mad English, and now they were about to learn the truth of that appellation, as illustrated in their master; for though hitherto they had admired his wisdom and respected his high personal

qualities, yet, in this instance, they feared that the nerve of insanity had been touched, and that he would be truly entitled to the epithet often applied to his countrymen.

"By Allah! he is mad," said Mustafa to Stasso. "He does not know these Turks. What do they care for what he may say! All they want is his property—they do not care an *asper* for his doctrine. Let an infidel wear a green turban, or even put on yellow slippers, without permission; let him go into a mosque, or even into a bath, unprotected, and they will tear him to pieces. What then will they not do when they hear him announce in full assembly that their religion is false, and that the blessed Mahomed is an impostor? Allah! Allah! they will fall upon him like lions and wolves, and drink his blood. And what will happen to us? They will drink our blood also."

"What can I do?" said Stasso, looking the picture of woe; "he is a Frank, and, what is more, an Englishman. Englishmen are very devils—they neither go to the right nor left—but straight on—on they go—they never will believe that danger is before them, they never do things like other people—they never will run away. Don't you remember, Mustafa, some years ago at Constantinople, when a Jew was hung opposite to the gate of the bazaar, and everybody ran away fearing he might be obliged to perform the operation, that an English sailor, walking along with the greatest indifference, was seized upon and ordered to do it? and that, instead of running off, he willingly lent himself to the task, threw the rope over the first beam, and having hauled up the wretch as if he had been a cask, quietly turned about and inquired if there were any more?—As you love your mother, this is true! they are all mad from first to last."

They then determined to expostulate with their master, in order to divert him from his intention; and to propose a scheme for bribing their keeper, escaping from the walls of the city, and making the best of their way to the Russian frontier. But when they did so, they found him inexorable; he was determined not to flinch from the proposal which he himself had made, and informed his servants that, if they would not stand by him, they were at perfect liberty to depart, assuring them that, by letters which he would give them to his agent at Constantinople, he would secure to them a full and ample

remuneration for their services. Stasso's fidelity remained unchanged; Mustafa's very probably would not have proved so firm had he possessed the means of taking advantage of his master's offer, but, as he would have found the post-houses shut to him, and probably would have lost his situation at the British embassy had he returned to Constantinople without his charge, he thought it best to remain where he was, and to take the chance of whatever *kismet*, fate, might throw in his way.

Whilst that which we have just related was passing in Osmond's prison, the Turkish dignitaries remained together in council. Some time before, a circumstance of a nearly similar nature had taken place in Persia: a pious Frank had appeared there, and had advanced such arguments in favour of the religion of Christ that none of the Persian doctors could answer him. The Turks on this occasion were determined to do better, and to put forth so much learning, and advance such arguments as would at once rival their neighbours and annihilate the Frank. Accordingly, they collected all that the city possessed of wisdom and learning,—Khodjas, Mollâhs, Hakims, Imams, all were assembled; but that which they most depended upon was the sagacity of a celebrated Dervish, who lived a recluse in a mountain cell, where he practised austerities and prayed without ceasing. He was said to have the Koran by heart, and was so well versed in the sayings of the blessed Mahomet, that no one could compete with him. He seldom appeared in the city; and, when he did, was so beset by applicants for talismans, charms, and medicinal nostrums, that he could scarcely move for the crowd which beset him. The very hairs of his beard were preserved as relics, and even the parings of his nails had a price. To him the Mufti sent a deputation, requesting his attendance upon the appointed day, announcing to him that the Mahomedan faith was in danger, and that an unbelieving Frank had undertaken to dispute its authenticity.

Nothing was spoken of in Kars but the approaching controversy; and the zeal of each true believer was heightened to such a pitch, that it was looked upon as certain, if Osmond should venture to walk the streets unprotected, he would be torn to pieces by the populace. The news soon reached the

ears of Zabetta and Ayesha, who were affected by the report in a very different manner. The one was fully aware of the danger of the undertaking in which Osmond had engaged, and, little caring about his motives, which she would have derided had she known them, looked upon him in a worse light than Mustafa and Stasso had done—for they only thought him a madman, she a fool: the other, wrapped up in the object of her admiration with an intensity of the most ardent love, was smitten with fear and apprehension at the dangers which awaited him. To oppose himself single-handed to a multitude of fanatics in religion, to attempt by argument to convince them of their errors, and to attack their prejudices, one of which was hatred and abhorrence of infidels, and contempt of Europeans in general, was altogether so wild a scheme, that even to Ayesha, who admired Osmond as much for his wisdom as she adored him as a lover, it appeared downright madness. All she could do was to pray for his safety. She passed her time solely and entirely in thinking of him, in repeating to herself all that he had ever said to her, in bringing before her mind's eye every feature of his face, and in devising means for his escape.

Such was the state of things in Kars; and those who are at all acquainted with Turks, with their jealousy at any interference in matters of their faith, with the quickness of their revenge, and contempt of life when their passions are roused, will be able to judge of the dangerous predicament in which Osmond was placed. Perhaps, had he been himself fully aware of it, he would not have risked his life in so unequal a contest; but, impelled by a spirit of enterprise, actuated by an ardent desire to do good, and feeling himself called upon to uphold his religion, even at the risk of his life, he was blind to danger, and determined, happen what might, to proceed with vigour in what he had undertaken. The result he left to the disposition of Providence.

CHAPTER XII.

War is enjoined you against the infidels.

Koran, ch. 2.

THE day being appointed for the controversy, the *medresseh*, or school; which adjoined the principal mosque, was selected for the place of assembly. On the morning of that day, every one who had any pretension to sanctity was seen making his way to the spot; men with large turbans and scanty beards; Imams with wan faces; scribes, young and old; those connected with the schools, dervishes, the attendants upon the Mufti, and indeed, it may be said, all who hated Franks and upheld the Mahomedan faith. By the time they had taken their places, the *medresseh* was nearly filled, so that dense rows of turbans, faces, and beards, appeared rising one above the other in a compact mass, as one may have seen in an Eastern market piles of water-melons in a stall. A vacant space in front had been prepared for the Pasha, the Mufti, the Ayans, and others of the chief men of Kars, duly cushioned and carpeted; whilst those who from their learning or superior wisdom were entitled to consideration, were placed in a conspicuous position, for the better confronting the adverse party. When the Pasha had taken his seat, the Mufti, Suleiman Aga, and others in authority also arrived, and took theirs: but the person to whom the greatest respect was paid, was the recluse, the old man of God from the mountains. He had arrived, pursuant to the call, and his appearance had given a fresh impetus to the zeal and fanaticism which more or less pervaded all ranks and classes. He was a short man, shrivelled, wan, and haggard; his eye deeply sunk in his head; his lips always in motion, reciting passages of the Koran; and his person was always fixed in one position, which never deviated from the perpendicular. A very scanty rag of green was wound round a brown felt cap, by way of

stating the length of its duration, and enumerating the vast portion of the inhabitants of the globe which acknowledged its obligations. His wish was at first to fix the attention of his auditors by interesting and amusing them with historical references and details. He alluded to the origin of the Arabians, gave a short account of the history of Abraham their patriarch and ancestor, and then exhibited the different promises which had been made to his two sons, Isaac and Ishmael; "how Isaac had, through Judaism and Christianity, given laws and religion to a great portion of the inhabited world; whilst Ishmael, through the primitive Arabians and the variously incorporated Moslems, had given laws and religion to a still larger portion of mankind. How Isaac new-modelled the faith and morals of men, first, through his literal descendants the Jews, and secondly, through his spiritual descendants the Christians; and how Ishmael effected a corresponding revolution in the world, first, through his literal descendants the Arabs, and secondly, his spiritual descendants the Turks and Tartars. He showed that, in the case of Isaac, the change was wrought by the advent of Jesus Christ, a person uniting in himself by divine appointment the offices of prophet and apostle, of priest, lawgiver, and king, and whose character and claims are equally unprecedented; and in that of Ishmael the change was effected by the appearance of Mahomet, a person professing to unite in himself the same offices as by the divine appointment, and presenting in this union the only known parallel to Jesus Christ and his typical forerunners in the annals of the world." *

By the time he had proceeded thus far in his discourse, he saw that the angry disposition of the assembly had been materially allayed; that his soft and persuasive manner, set off by his intimate knowledge of the language in which he addressed them, had produced a change in his favour; and that the doctrine which he expounded, so new and unheard of to them, had fixed all their attention. Having established a parallel between Jesus Christ and Mahomet, showing the divine appointment of the one and the self-appointment of the other, without having materially disturbed the sensation in his favour, he again diverged into the history of their celebrated lawgiver. He re-

* Forster's Mahomedanism Unveiled, vol. i. pp. 71, 72.

marked that the propagation of his religion, whether considered in its rapidity or in its extent, presented a signal and singular contrast. He showed that, encountering simultaneously the rival empires of Rome, and Persia in the East, the immediate successors of Mahomet established, at the same moment, their dominion over the fairest provinces of both powers, and their creed upon the ruins of Christianity and the Magian superstition. He then raised his voice, and, carrying the attention and evident admiration of his audience with him, adroitly apostrophized them, saying, "You then, O Mussulmans, achieved the conquests of Syria, of Persia, of Egypt, of Shâm, or Palestine, which succeeded each other with a celerity that outruns description. You then led the storm onwards, without check or pause, eastward to the frontiers of India and China, westward to the utmost confines of Africa, and to the shores of the Atlantic, and on the north to the banks of Oxus and Jaxartes, and the uttermost borders of the Caspian. In the twenty-first year of the Hejra, the Mahomedan crescent shed its influence upon as large and considerable dominions as had been flown over by the Roman eagle. In eighty years, your empire, O sons of Islam, extended its power over more kingdoms and countries than the Romans in eight hundred; and in less than a century from the period of its rise in the barren wilds of Arabia, your faith extended and bore sway over the greater part of Asia and Africa, and threatened to seat itself in the heart of Catholic Europe."*

This address to their vanity so entirely succeeded in securing for him a breathless attention to his words, that he would have found no further difficulty in making good his discourse, had not the wary and jealous Mufti, who had been an anxious observer of the temper of the assembly, begun to apprehend that he might lose his victim. "What has this to do," he exclaimed, "with the object of our meeting? Did not I say that he was a true believer? Has he come hither to laugh at our beards?"

Osmond extended his hand as if to impose silence, and then continued, "Grant me your patience as well as your attention, and I will explain myself with those words which God has granted to his servant."

* Mahomedanism Unveiled, vol. i. p. 11.

"Speak on, speak on!" was heard to come from different parts of the crowd, whilst the old man of the mountain merely looked up and shook his head. Mustafa and Stasso scarcely could draw breath, so utterly were they astonished at the success which had hitherto attended their master, although they neither of them could well comprehend to what result he was directing his speech.

He then proceeded to draw a parallel between Christianity and Mahomedanism—to show the evidences which existed for the former being vouchsafed to mankind by God for the remission of their sins, that it was ushered in by prophecy, and established by miracles performed in the person of our Saviour, and remarked that no such evidences existed in favour of Mahomedanism. Christianity, he asserted, was a religion of peace, whereas Mahomedanism, on the other hand, was a religion of the sword; and in enumerating the various facts in Eastern history illustrative of the violence which marked its propagation, he dwelt much upon that prediction which related to Ishmael—"his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him," strongly exemplifying the state of the Arabs at that very time. They were called "a people armed against mankind."

With much eloquence he spoke of the extraordinary qualities of Mahomet, of his ingenuity in drawing his nation out of their barbarism and superstition, in leading them to adopt a higher tone of morality, and giving them truer notions of the greatness of the Creator. "He led them to believe in one God, creator and lord of all, to whom they attribute infinite power, justice, and mercy—he taught them to hold to the immortality of the soul, to expect a future judgment, a heaven and hell—to honour the patriarch Abraham as the first author of their religion—to acknowledge Moses and Christ to have been great prophets, and to allow the Pentateuch and the Gospel to be sacred books.* But then it must be plain to every one," continued Osmond, "that all that is good in the Koran is drawn from the Christian's Bible."

"The Koran itself is a miracle," exclaimed a voice from the crowd; "deny that if you can!"

* Mahomedanism Unveiled, vol. i. p. 102.

This was a signal to the whole assembly to pour out their hitherto suppressed retorts, and it would have been difficult to make out any definite answer, or any succession of argument, to what Osmond had advanced, or any thing but a general tone of hostility against him. "Let him answer that," said one. "What words has the infidel been throwing into the air?" cried another. "We have phrases which will disperse all his," said a third. "Let him disappear from among us," roared out others. "We are Mussulmans!" cried out those who listened only to passion, and cared not for argument. Again was vociferated, "The Koran is in itself a standing miracle, let him but accede to that, and we want no more."

Silence having been obtained, Osmond, undismayed by the rising tumult, although disappointed at what he had at first hoped had been a promise of success, answered: "The Koran might indeed have been called a miracle in the dark and barbarous times in which it was first published, but then it must have been so called as an extraordinary effort of human ingenuity, not as a supernatural interposition. The parts which are taken from the Christian Bible are divine; those which are the works of a mortal are not divine. They are spurious. They are *bosh*—nothing."

At these words a general and violent outcry of anger and execration was raised in the assembly against Osmond. In vain had he hoped that he had shaken the belief of some of his hearers, and arrayed them on his side; the burst of violent expressions which exploded at his last assertion showed him how much he was mistaken, and how impossible it would be for him to make a lasting impression on so short a notice. Answers to his argument were no longer sought for; abuse to himself, his creed, and his nation, alone met his ear—*Kirpek*—dog, *kelt*—our, *giaour*—infidel, *karemzadeh*—ill-born, and a thousand other abusive terms, rose from the bottom of each angry throat, and were confirmed by the most violent gestures and indications of aversion. The faces of the mass opposed to Osmond assumed the character of a compact living mosaic of demons, their eyes flashing fury, and their mouths distorted into every figure which that feature can take.

The Muki at length, commanding silence, solemnly addressed Osmond in these words; "As you are a man, and as

you fear to die, say, do you acknowledge the Mahomedan faith to be the only true one, and the blessed Mahomed to be the prophet of God, or do you deny it? Speak, and Allah direct your speech!" At these words the whole assembly roared out, "Speak, speak!" and by the fierceness of their looks and gestures seemed to be preparing for violence.

Osmond was still undismayed. His object had been gradually to lead on his audience to this fact, that Mahomet and his empire had been predicted from the first ages; and that from the days of Ishmael to the present his career and that of his adherents might be traced in our prophetic books, and that, although his religion was false, yet still it was, from the large portions which had been drawn from the Christian Bible, so far good that it was preparatory to the adoption of the faith in Jesus Christ. He made several attempts to resume the thread of his argument, but in vain; the more he endeavoured to obtain a hearing, the more violent were the cries for an answer to the Mufti's question. Mustafa, who sat behind him, peering into his face with a most beseeching look, said to him in English, "In the name of Allah! tell lies. If you do not say you are a Mussulman, we die—then what will be the use of your truth?" Stasso, too, who saw the depending storm, said, "Master, as you love your eyes, let the devil take them, but save us—these demons will cut our throats."

Osmond felt that he must decide what course to pursue in this awful crisis of his fate, and that decision was not for a moment doubtful. He extended his hand and arm in the midst of the uproar in order to obtain silence; and the instant he had done so, although every tongue was quiet, it might have been supposed that every face had been also fixed, as if by magic, into the ferocious cast of its features, so intense was the attention. The Mufti's features bore the stamp of great excitement, the Pasha alone surveyed Osmond with admiration, whilst the old man of the mountain, who hitherto had been principally concerned in mumbling out portions of the Koran, stopped the action of his lips, and cast his old withered eye towards the object of the tumult.

When silence was restored, so that even a suppressed sigh might have been heard, Osmond, in a firm and audible voice, said :

"You ask me whether I acknowledge the Mahomedan faith to be the true one: I answer that I do not, and that it is false."

No sooner had these words escaped from his lips, than a scene ensued which words cannot describe: the agitation of the sea in a storm, the rocking to and fro of a forest, or any other usual simile, are but poor figures to illustrate what took place. The otherwise calm and placid Turks here at once became the representatives of infernal beings; their eyes flashed forth every hateful passion, whilst their extended hands showed to what extent their violence would impel them. Even the spirit of a Turk arose in Mustafa; and he too almost partook of the universal rage against his master, so angry was he at finding himself thus implicated in what in his heart he called his folly and English pertinacity.

Osmond stood boldly forward, his right-hand thrust within the folds of his breast, whilst his left hung by his side. The Mufti had no sooner heard the prisoner's declaration, than he exclaimed to the assembly, at the utmost extent of his voice: "Mussulmans, do you hear this? Mussulmans, our faith is in danger! the infidel is among us—slay!" The old man of the mountain then for the first time opened his lips, and cried out in a cracked though distinct enunciation, "My children, in the name of Allah, kill the Giaour!" Upon which a general rush towards Osmond took place, and a confusion ensued which, although awful in its import, might well be called ludicrous in its incidents. Turk rolled over Turk, turbans fell and discovered naked sconces, and instruments of all descriptions, from a slipper to an inkstand, were thrown in the direction of the prisoner. He coolly watched the danger as it approached, and his faithful Stasso would have skreened him with his person; but when Osmond found himself seized by several of the foremost of the crowd, with a sudden bound he shook off his immediate assailants, and, making at once to the spot where the Mufti was seated, with his left hand he seized him by the breast, and with the other drew forth a pistol from his vest and presented it at once to the head of the appalled and astonished chief of the law. Osmond vociferated in a voice of thunder, "Advance but a step further, and I fire!" This decisive act produced an instantaneous effect, for the Mufti im-

mediately roared out, "Stay, be quiet! in the name of Allah, peace!" and although, like wild animals deprived of their teeth with impotent fury, the maddened Turks could scarcely refrain from violence; still they only paused for the moment, in the hope that treachery would effect that which open force at present could not. Osmond was, however, too much aware of his danger to quit his hold without having some assurance of security; and accordingly kept the struggling and half-fainting Mufti under the muzzle of his pistol, until the Pasha, rousing himself from a half state of repose, ordered his guard, which was in attendance, to take charge of the prisoner, and reconduct him, together with Mustapha and Stasso, to a place of confinement: thus favouring their retreat, and securing them from immediate danger.

The Pasha, whose admiration of Osmond had greatly increased since he had witnessed the power of his oratory, had already determined in his own mind that the wiles of the Mufti and the religious set with whom he was leagued should not succeed, and consequently he remained passive until the proper moment for action arrived; but then, having preserved him from present destruction, he still felt that he could not so much oppose the popular feeling as to openly espouse his cause, and therefore ordered that he and his suite should be confined in the prison which has already been noticed as looking upon the court-yard of the Pasha's palace, and thither they were conducted amid the howling, the hooting, and execrations of the crowd.

When they had reached that place, and were left to themselves, the first impulse of Osmond was to put up a hearty prayer of thanks for his respite from death, whilst that of Mustafa was to pour forth the vial of his wrath against his master. "Am I an ass," said he, that you will not listen to what I say? Did I not tell you that these fellows were not men, but devils? What do they care for your fine speeches, for your Ishmaels and Abrahams, for China and the Roman eagles, and I know not what! May the mothers and fathers of Roman eagles be defiled! Before you speak, they already think you fit for Jehannum; do you suppose they will think you a bit less so after you have spoken? No! were a Giaour to speak with the tongue of an angel, he still would be a Giaour." Then taking up

the lapel of his cloak, and shaking it, whilst his head vibrated in unison, exclaimed, "Allah! Allah! heaven preserve us from such another misfortune! we have escaped this time, but see, if you are mad again, shall we escape a second?"

Thus did he go on, whilst Osmond took a survey of his prison. It was considerably more like a stable than a room; low, unfloored and unpaved, and festooned with cobwebs. On one side a small iron-grating afforded a view of the Pasha's courtyard, so that every one entering or strolling about might be seen; on the other was the door, fastened by a lock of no great strength, and opening into a small narrow lane, which terminated in one of the streets of the city. Here they were exposed to the gaze of every one who chose to look through the grating, and many were the expressions of contempt and execration which they occasionally heard addressed to them. It would have been no difficult matter to break open the door and force their way; but whither could they fly, totally destitute of help, and surrounded by guards? It was plain that their best plan was to remain quiet, to allow the storm which had been raised to abate, and then, either by stratagem or negotiation, to seize upon some fitting opportunity to effect their escape.

CHAPTER XIII.

I drive back the horses on their haunches from the lofty seat of my thin-flanked Abjer.—The sword is my father, and the spear in my hand is my father's brother.—

HAMILTON'S *Antar*.

As soon as the prisoners had left the medresseh, the assembly broke up, and every one returned home. The result was the same as that of a still swelling and unsatisfied passion in the human breast: every man who had been present resolved in his mind that the Giaour should not leave Kars alive, and the whole population might be said to be impelled by that resolution. The Pasha returned to his palace, the Mufti to his

house, the tattered saint to his mountain, and Suleiman Aga to his harem.

Zabetta had made herself very busy among the women of the city, mounting first on a terrace, then on the roof of a mosque, then on the nearest projection which overlooked the place of meeting, in order that she might ascertain the truth of the proceedings against Osmond, upon which depended her own future schemes; and when she had seen him return to prison, she bent her steps homeward. The dejected Ayesha had not ventured to leave the walls of her home, great as was her anxiety concerning the fate of her lover. She dreaded the results of the morning's controversy; for she well knew the inflexible nature of his mind, and was convinced that one so guided by principle would never swerve from it under the most severe visitation of danger. She also knew the uncompromising nature of the fanaticism of her own countrymen, and how totally useless even the most convincing arguments would be in turning them from the path of their religious faith. She had therefore made up her mind to the worst; and as she sat at her window, listening with breathless attention to the least noise which arose in the city, she expected every moment to be called upon to hear of her lover's destruction. In her distress she could not long remain fixed on one spot, but wandered to and fro from her apartment to the house-top, and from the house-top to her apartment, in restless agitation. At one moment her cheek became pale with fear; at another her whole frame was dissolved in tears of the deepest grief—then she would pause and endeavour to gain relief from prayer, burying her face in her hands, and sobbing out her supplications to the foot of the heavenly throne for the safety of her lover.

In this state, she heard the door of the house open and close again, and recognised the footsteps of her mother, followed by her slave. She could scarcely refrain from rushing out to meet her, forgetful of veil and every precaution which a Mahomedan woman always takes before she issues forth; and at last when she saw her enter, she trembled so violently that her limbs refused to do their office, and she almost fell headlong on the floor. She had sufficient strength to exclaim, "Does he live?" and would perhaps have lost all sensation,

had she not been instantly revived by hearing her mother answer, "He lives—the dogs have not killed him yet!" This quick revulsion was succeeded by its concomitant evils—violent hysterics—an almost total extinction of life, and then a flow of overwhelming tears, which brought on the usual exhaustion and relief. Any one but so heartless a creature as Zabetta would have devoted herself to the care of this most interesting maiden, who throughout her distress had exhibited feminine loveliness in its most bewitching character; but, leaving her to the care of the kind-hearted Nourzadeh, she merely thought of planning her own schemes and pursuing her own inventions. By the time Suleiman Aga had returned, his daughter had in a great measure recovered her self-composure, and although her recent violent emotions had left her a prey to languor and dejection, still she was well enough to receive and converse with him.

Suleiman Aga, as before stated, was a bigoted Mahomedan; he had heard all that Osmond advanced with dogged obstinacy, little understanding the drift of his speech, and predetermined not to assent to a single argument; but still he was pleased at first to find that he had obtained a hearing from the assembly, and that it had evinced a disposition to be tolerant, for he hoped that this augured well for the conversion of his future son-in-law. Whilst his mind was firm in his own faith, his thoughts would wander to Ayesha, to whom he hoped to bring a good account of the result of the meeting; but when the tumult broke out, and he found that all his hopes were dispelled, his naturally tacit nature was roused into more than usual violence, and, catching the maddening infection, he was soon the foremost in the crowd, forgetful of Ayesha and of every softer emotion, exciting its violence towards the destruction of Osmond.

By the time he had reached his home, his fury had in a great measure abated; and he was hastening to complete his composure through the medium of his favourite pipe, when he was startled by the wan and dejected appearance of his daughter. She soon read in his looks that there was no hope left, and would have quitted him; but with all his intolerance he was kind-hearted, and calling her to him, said, "Ayesha, my soul, what has happened?"

"You know what has happened," answered the broken-spirited girl: "Let the decrees of Allah prevail—What can we poor creatures do?"

"*Allah kerim*—God is merciful!" returned her father with a deep-drawn sigh; "What can we do, the Giaour is mad! what can we do?"

"You must save his life!" exclaimed Ayesha with great earnestness. "Set him free; let him depart. As you love Allah! as you bend to his holy decrees! as you are a servant of his Prophet! you must not allow the blood of the innocent man to be upon your house! After all, you are the person to speak! Go to the tribunal of justice; say you insist upon his being set free—let him depart in peace!"

Suleiman, who had been so active in exciting his townsmen to destroy the unbeliever, sat sullen and silent at this appeal; and as one between two roads, uncertain which to take, stands stock still, he remained fixed to his seat, unmoved and undetermined. At last, full of the same uncertainty of purpose, but anxious to be removed from the immediate influence of his daughter, he suddenly rose, and uttering the never-failing "*Bakalam*—we shall see!" retreated with haste to his own apartment.

In the meanwhile, the Pasha, who occasionally would have visitations of wisdom, particularly when it was to oppose the designs of the Mufti and the priests, issued his orders throughout the city, that on the following day he would exhibit to the people feats of wrestling, to be succeeded by a camel-fight, and to finish by a grand game of *jertid*. Nothing could be better calculated to extinguish one excitement by producing another than this order, for nothing was more relished by all ranks than such sports. The whole scene was to take place in the great court of his palace, under his immediate direction; and as he himself was devotedly fond of the excitement which it produced, preparations were made with all the splendour which Turkish grandees generally put forth on such occasions. We have already shown that he was a great patron of wrestlers; he possessed the first of his species in that line: his camels were also some of the finest in Asia; and his horses, as well as their riders, were said to be equal to any in the Kurdistan. Thus provided, he always took the field with superior advan-

tage ; and as soon as it was known that Pehlivan Pasha was about to give a *jerid* party, all the neighbouring agas, or chiefs, immediately flocked to the city, mounted upon their favourite horses, and accompanied by their adherents, to partake of the sport.

On the following morning, the whole city was on foot in anticipation of the pleasure of waiting for them. Parties of horsemen were seen entering the gates by five or six at a time, and, proceeding to different coffee-houses, they alighted to drink coffee and smoke, in order to await the hour of meeting, whilst their steeds were picketed about in various places, rendering the air by their shrill neighing. The women too, in readiness, had already taken post on the walls and the tops of the houses which surrounded the scene of action, all clad in their white veils, looking more like spectres than those whom we are wont to call Nature's fairest half. Though unseen, they were not unheard ; and although their charms were concealed, their tongues, loud and unceasing, showed, even among Turks, that they had a great deal to say for themselves. A conspicuous and elevated place had been swept, carpeted, and cushioned, for the reception of the principal agas and visitors ; whilst the kiosk, which looked immediately on the court, was prepared for the Pasha, the Mufti, and the principal men of the city. As soon after the noonday prayer as was convenient the world began to assemble, and it was not long before the greatest portion of the inhabitants had managed to collect themselves into compact masses, covering every wall, crowning every heap, and overwhelming every spot ; in short, doing that which other mobs do, excepting, perhaps, that the mob now in question might vie with all others in quiet, sobriety, and dignity of deportment. At length the Pasha, and the other dignitaries, having taken post, and having smoked and said, "*Khosh geldin*," and retorted, "*Khosh buldounk*," a signal was given, and the Pasha's chaoush led forth two wrestlers into the arena. Indifferent performers at first began, and were followed in quick succession by others, until the Pasha's celebrated negro came rushing on to the scene, like a lion longing for his prey. He threw every one that was opposed to him with uninteresting facility ; and the Pasha would willingly have sent for Osmond to oppose him, and indeed was about to lend

himself to the cry of "*Giaour ! haniah Giaour !*—Where is the Giaour ?" which some of the negro's enemies tauntingly set up, when he was checked by the fear that his appearance might give rise to a religious tumult, which probably would put an end to the day's sport.

The wrestling was succeeded by a set-to of camels. These otherwise passive creatures, at certain irritating seasons are apt to be very furious. When male is brought face to face to male, all their evil passions are awakened, and the moment they are at liberty they fly at each other with corresponding violence. At a given order from the Pasha, a magnificent camel, his mouth white with foam, his tongue performing curious convolutions, emitting loud and hoarse cries, was led forth by two men, who were scarcely strong enough to restrain his impetuosity. He was gaily caparisoned with a saddle of crimson, green, and yellow cloth, his head being decked with a bridle glittering with inlaid shells and worsted tassels; he was, moreover, ornamented about the upper arm of the leg with armlets, also inlaid with shells. This fine animal now no longer wore the usual calm and patient aspect of his race; for his nature appeared quite changed; his neck and head were erect, his eye flashed fire, and, the moment he perceived his opponent approaching from an opposite quarter, it was almost impossible to restrain him.

At the word "*Gitsin*" from the Pasha, both the animals were slipt from their rein, and they rushed upon each other with astonishing agility. Their mode of attack is very much that of wrestlers; their bite is terrible, but, being both muzzled, they were harmless. They made the most dexterous use of their necks as well as of their legs in trying to throw each other down, twisting and writhing, giving way, then advancing with contortions the most singular, which, although graceless, were nevertheless not deficient in picturesque effect. The Turks appeared much interested in the result of the fight: from anxiety they could scarcely smoke—bets were laid—their own calm nature, so like that of the animal itself, was roused, and more words were heard among the crowd at that moment than perhaps are ever spoken throughout the year at Kars. At length the result was declared to be in favour of the Pasha's camel, who, by certain able combinations between his

neck and legs, had managed to pin his adversary to the ground, where he lay motionless and unresisting, until he was at length dragged away, amidst the exclamations of *Mashallah !* and *Evallah !* of the surrounding audience.

The camel-fights continued, in varied succession, to take up the time until the day began to decline, when the court was cleared to admit the horsemen for the exhibition of the jerd. Whoever has witnessed this exercise in perfection among the Turks will, I am sure, own that it is the most manly that can be devised, requiring more courage, agility, and skill than any other, and developing in the finest manner the energies both of the rider and his beast. Two parties of horsemen arrange themselves on opposite sides, and gradually engage in a general skirmish, armed with a staff or javelin about five feet long, and as thick as one's middle finger, which they lance at each other, in the fullest speed of their horses, with the straightness and strength almost of an arrow from a bow. It is usually a contest between man and man; for, either by animating shouts or by gestures, the parties individually select each other, and proceed to dart the fiercest blows which their strength and dexterity can command, alternately the one in flight, the other in pursuit, thus sometimes inflicting very serious if not mortal wounds.

Osmond, Mustafa, and Stasso had, by way of beguiling the tedium of their confinement, by turns taken post at the iron-grated window which looked upon the court, to see the sport, when a little old woman, whom Stasso recognized to be the old Caterina, stepped close up to it, and, watching her opportunity, threw in a small folded slip of paper, and straightway disappeared. Osmond immediately took it up, and found within it these words written—'Fly for your life—your death otherwise is certain—Allah preserve you!' His whole frame shook with secret transport as he viewed this note, for he well knew whence it came—it could have been dictated by none other than that faithful heart which beat in response to his own; but, in looking hopelessly around his prison, he asked how he could fly—where were the means? He paced his miserable room, deeply reflecting what he could do to save himself, for he knew but too well how true were the words which he had just read.

The jerid party had now begun its movements. A dense body of the pasha's officers and guards, mounted on the finest horses, richly caparisoned, their mouths foaming and fretting under the heavy bit, curveting and uprearing, were arranged in due order on the one side, whilst a corresponding body of Kûrds, men of the plain, and agas from the villages and hill country, were placed on the other, the whole dressed in cloths, velvets, and silks of every hue, their various ornamental arms and accoutrements glittering in the sun : forming the most brilliant combination of men, horses, rich drapery, and fine colouring, that can be conceived, and, perhaps, exceeding in picturesque beauty any similar combination in any other part of the world. After a pause, previously to the first onset, a sensation was observed among the assembled horsemen, which was caused by the appearance of the Pasha in person among them.

He had stripped himself of his heavy furred pelisse, and had put on a light silken wadded jacket, which fitting tight to his shape, set off his herculean shoulders. Mounted on a powerful Turcoman horse, whose sleek and shining coat showed at once the excellence of his breed and the superior care with which he was tended, and whose magnificent trappings, glittering with gold and embroidery, shone conspicuous above all others, he was altogether a striking personage. He wore a shawl on his head ; his legs were clothed with an immense pair of cloth shalwars, that hung in folds to his ankles ; and the vigour with which he bestrode his saddle, and wielded his jerid, showed that of all the combatants present he was the most formidable. He threw the first javelin, and this became the signal for engaging in the sport. The whole mass was soon in motion. At first, those who engaged proceeded with wariness and caution. One cavalier was detached from the Pasha's party towards that of the Kûrds : advancing at a slight trot, he gradually approached, discharged his jerid at the foremost man, and immediately turning sharply round, fled at full speed, followed by the antagonist whom he had selected, who in return threw his javelin with all the force and dexterity which he could muster. The retreating horseman, with head looking behind, and with an eye accustomed to watch the direction of the coming weapon, was ready either to catch it as it glanced

by him, or to throw himself entirely under his horse's belly if he saw it about to take effect, and then, with unparalleled dexterity, when discharged, to stop his horse at once with a sudden jerk, turn and pursue again, until, his javelins being expended, he was obliged to seek for more, either picking them off the ground with a crooked cane, which he had for the purpose, or receiving them from the hand of some valet whose business it was to collect and distribute them. This took place in succession with every cavalier present, until the whole were engaged; and as the fray increased, in the same proportion increased the animation and vigour of both the horses and their riders. The noble animals, enjoying the sport as much as the men, were soon bathed in a white foam; and, their eyes flashing fire, their nostrils expanded, every muscle stretched to the utmost, and their whole being changed, exhibited themselves in attitudes and forms which perhaps are never seen excepting in this sport, or in actual warfare. Their riders, too, whose usual dull and phlegmatic humours make them look more like automatons than living beings, were now not to be recognized — every look was animation, every gesture agility; and as the engagement continued, their cheerings increased into shouts, which, mingled with the trampling of their horses and the clatter of their trappings and accoutrements, afforded as true a picture of a real battle as can well be imagined. The Pasha kept aloof, and did not engage in the heat of the fray, but every now and then, when he found his opportunity, he selected some more aspiring or more successful horseman above the rest, and did him the honour of throwing his jerd at him, seldom failing at the same time to confer the distinction of a broken head.

There was one among the rest who was more distinguished by the Pasha than the others. This was a Kùrdish cavalier, magnificently dressed: his varied-coloured silken head-dress hung low over his face, and in combination with his immense mustaches, which curled up to the corners of his eyes, it was with difficulty that his features could be distinguished. Then the large crimson bag or pouch peculiar to the Kùrdish head-dress, terminated by an immense blue tassel, was larger than those appendages usually are, and seemed to be turned over his head on purpose to throw as much shade upon his coun-

tenance as possible, which, to say the truth, was sufficiently remarkable. He rode a horse which might have vied with the Pasha's in beauty, but which certainly excelled his in activity; it was coal-black, a rare colour in those countries, and not generally in high estimation, but in this instance gave the lie to the received opinion among Asiatics, that it denotes a vicious and bad temper, for nothing was ever more docile or sagacious than it appeared to be during this day's sport. It was seen carrying its master into the thickest of the fray, now advancing, then retreating, with the rapidity of lightning. He was rather of a slight figure, but full of muscle and nerve; and the astonishing feats of horsemanship which he exhibited were the remark and admiration of the whole field. The Pasha had twice selected him as one of his victims, had given him chase, and had launched his jerd at him without effect. It was in retreating before the Pasha the second time, that he had dashed his horse immediately under the small grated window of Osmond's prison, and had stopped there in order to pick up one of his own favourite jerids.

Stasso had been posted there some time before, admiring the feats of this man, longing himself to be one of the party, and criticising in his mind the action of every horseman. His eye had, however, been riveted by the distinguished Kûrd more than by any other—he thought he had seen him before; there was a certain turn of his back and shoulders which was familiar to him. Still he argued within himself that he never could have known so magnificent a personage; his acquaintance ran more among grooms, guides, and muleteers—no, he never could have known a Kurdish pasha, for such he esteemed him to be, of such high pretensions. However, looking with all his eyes at the man, who was then standing close to him and stooping down to pick up his javelin, to his astonishment, under the flow of silken tassels that skreened his eyes and brow, he discovered his old friend Hassan the Surugi, whose life on a former occasion his master had saved. His heart rose into his mouth at this important discovery—without one moment's delay and consideration, he exclaimed loudly, "Hassan Aga, Hassan Aga, *bak*—look." The Kurd, apparently annoyed at being recognised, was about leaving his jerd and turning away his horse, when, on raising his head, his eye

caught Stasso's. His surprise was great at seeing one whom he had long thought gone; he immediately recognised the man whom he had known as the Boshnak, and quickly said, "*Ne oldou*—What has happened? Upon which Stasso in a low and mysterious manner said to him, "When last we parted, you told me, should we ever be in want of your services, to apply to you. If you are a man, Hassan Aga, be faithful to your word; release my master from this prison, and depend upon his gratitude." The Kurd heard these words with attention, put up his finger before his mouth to enjoin secrecy, and straightway dashed his horse again into the thickest of the fray. Stasso of course continued to watch his movements, but, to his utter disappointment, the Kurd proceeded in his career of sport, apparently totally unmindful of him or his master.

The fray had now risen to its highest pitch. The Pasha, whose anger had been excited at being foiled in his two attempts to plant a blow upon the gallant Kurd, had determined to make a third, and launched out his horse at him with all the vigour which a pair of sharp stirrups to his side could give him. He approached him jertd in hand, roaring out at the top of his voice, "*Y'allah, Y'allah, Agam!*—In the name of Allah my lord!" when Hassan turned his horse sharply round, and retreated on the fullest speed, throwing himself entirely under his body, merely hanging by the mane and by his leg, which he hooked on to his saddle, thus giving the Pasha no one good spot upon which to deliver his javelin; which he did, however, on the under part of his large brass stirrup, so that the only result was the ringing noise which announced his ill-success. Immediately upon this, Hassan was on his saddle again, and, turning with the greatest agility upon his ponderous adversary, who, according to the laws of the game, was obliged to retreat in his turn, he lashed up his horse to the highest pitch of his mettle, and this time, heedless of the respect due to the Pasha's rank, which as a point of courtesy always prevented a return of the attack, he delivered his well-poised, his unerring jertd, immediately between his highness's shoulders, which indeed presented a noble target, and so nicely between, that the weapon, meeting the back-bone, bounded up high into the air like a rocket. Seeing this, Hassan, to com-

plete his triumph in the eyes of all the field, (for a pause had taken place to witness this feat,) dashed his horse forward in the direction of his javelin, and with hand erect and arm extended, succeeded in catching it firmly in his hand, ere it fell to the ground. Such an exhibition of dexterity was hitherto unknown to the Turks; and although at the expense of the Pasha, all those who had seen it, could not refrain from exclaiming aloud, "*Aferin! Aferin!—Mashallah! Mashallah!*"

This applause, added to the mortification of having received so palpable a blow, aroused all the Pasha's passions. He felt himself insulted, and, what was still more galling to him, he felt that he had found his superior in skill, and, moreover, that that superior was a Kurd, one of a people whom it is the fashion in Turkey to despise. Immediately, in his fury, he turned again upon Hassan; and his own officers and adherents, who were never sorry to insult the Kurds, seeing how it had fared with their master, were not slow in catching his rage, and, one and all, made a most formidable charge against the adverse party. The game, from being a sport, became a fight—their cries of mutual cheering and excitement were turned into cries of insult and invective—"Kurdish hogs! Sons of the devil!" were roared out by the Turks; "Long-bearded asses! Filth of Omar!" were returned by the Kurds. Jerlds flew as thick as hail—horse was impelled against horse, and the air rang with the shock of breastplates and stirrups. The Pasha was seen urging on his men—Hassan bounded on his furious steed from one side of the fray to the other. At length a Kurd was brought to the ground by a Turk, the dismounted man, in falling, fired his pistol, and killed the Turk; then a general cry of "hand to the sword" issued from both sides, and a scene of life and death took place, which not unfrequently terminates this sort of tournaments.

CHAPTER XIV.

Thenne Florence rav'd as anie madde,
And dydd her tresses tere ;
O staie mye husbande, lorde, and lyfe !
Sir Charles thenne dropt a teare.

CHATTERTON.

THE raging of the battle had assumed so loud and threatening a character, that its clang and uproar roused Osmond from the train of thought into which Ayesha's note had thrown him, and brought him to the window. Stasso stood there, likewise, and, pointing out Hassan, related what had so recently taken place between them. Osmond was musing on this circumstance, and a ray of hope dawned on his mind that through Hassan's means some mode of escape might be devised, when Stasso, with a look of despair, shrugging up his shoulders, said, "He is a devil—all Kûrds are devils! I have watched him ever since he left me, and he seems to have heeded my words no more than the wind."

Mustafa, who had lent his ear to what Stasso had said, was too happy to put in his word of invective against Hassan and his countrymen, and said, "If you trust in that bit of villany, you will only find how well he can laugh at our beards. They come all from one dunghill : May their mothers—may their fathers, be bought and sold ! If you want a dog, look at him for the first dog in Roum."

The battle was raging ; the first pistol-shot having been fired, a burst of shouts came from the Kûrds, a roar of execration rang through the Turkish band ; the confusion and uproar was at its height, when a pushing and vibration were observed by Stasso at the door of the prison, followed by an attempt upon the lock. He hastened to the spot, when he heard the words,

"*Atch!*—open! *vour!*—strike, break!" spoken in a low and most cautious tone: "I am a friend—I come from Hassan. Horses are ready, break down the door, and you are free!"

These words acted like magic upon the three prisoners: a thrill of delight ran through the whole frame of Osmond; Stasso instantly lent his whole strength to the work, and Mustafa stood by in silence, apprehensive of treachery. The door of the prison opposed but a slight obstacle to the strength and ability of so many. The friendly hand thrust a stone under the door, and Stasso, having immediately seized it, began to batter away at the rude lock, heedless of noise—for what noise could be heard in the clamorous din that was going on around them? Osmond discovered a bar in a dark corner of the prison, and using it as a lever under the door, soon found it most efficacious in forcing it off its simply-formed hinges. The expulsion of the door was the work but of a few minutes. When it began to fall, the prisoners were curious to see who might be their deliverer, when, to their surprise, they found, not Hassan as they had expected, but a stranger, a Kûrd in dress, who said little, but showed how much he was in earnest by furthering the work of demolition to the utmost of his power. At length, having secured an egress, Osmond cast his eyes around his prison by way of bidding it adieu, and looking out of the grated-window for the last time, there, to his surprise, he saw Hassan still in the thickest of the fight, dealing out his blows like another Rustam, and apparently totally heedless of his, Osmond's fate. At first, he also suspected treachery, but, when he recollected that none but a friend could have effected this first step towards an escape, he boldly followed the Kûrd, accompanied by Stasso and Mustafa.

The mysterious guide glided down the narrow lane into which the door of the prison opened, at the farther end of which stood four horses, which, by their heated appearance, evinced that they had recently been in active service: he himself mounted one, and desired Osmond and his attendants to mount the others. This they did without a minute's delay, and, the guide leading the way, they wound through the streets with haste tempered by caution, which indeed might without much fear have been neglected, seeing that the streets were

entirely deserted; for such of the inhabitants as had remained behind to watch the houses and shops had abandoned them, to learn the reason of the increasing fury of the fray.

They easily made good their escape from the city. This being achieved, the guide immediately struck into a path leading to the nearest mountains, and having reached a small ruined building, the remains of one of those many Armenian churches so frequently seen about this part of Asia, he there told them they must await the arrival of Hassan Aga, his chief. They dismounted, and the guide tying the horses' nose-bags to their heads (for these they always carry with them), allowed them to feed. To the faithful Stasso, however, it occurred that this delay might be turned to a better account; for, having perceived how little danger of detection there was in passing through the city, he proposed to his master that he should return, make for the dyer's house, and redeem the arms which they had therein secreted, and which were now become articles of the first necessity; whilst at the same time he might easily carry away such other effects as were necessary for his dress and comfort. To this Osmond slowly assented, and no sooner was it proposed than put in practice. Stasso, having mounted his horse, took his departure, but he had scarcely proceeded an hundred yards ere he heard his master's voice calling upon him to return.

Ever since Osmond had received in the prison the note from Ayesha, he had been impelled by a violent longing to see her before bidding her adieu, perhaps, for ever. Seeing his servant depart to seek the very spot where she lived, produced a desire to accompany him, stronger than any consideration of prudence; and he forthwith determined so to do. Mustafa and the guide, hearing him call for his horse, interposed themselves, and would almost have used violence to prevent this evidently rash act, but, finding him resolved, all they could do was to entreat him to return without the smallest delay, seeing that Hassan might join them at any moment, and that the safety of all depended upon a speedy flight from Kars and its neighbourhood.

Osmond and Stasso soon found themselves at the gate of the dyer's house. The good Armenians stood all aghast when they saw them enter. Bogos had carefully refrained from

being present at the morning's exhibition, having learned from experience how dangerous it was for Christians to show themselves when there was a chance of a conflict between Mahomedans; and now that the conflict had actually taken place, he still more carefully kept at home. Having upon their arrival ascertained who his guests were, he allowed them to enter, and secured their horses in the court of his house. He would have overwhelmed them with attentions, but they desired him to desist, for that they were on a business of life and death. Stasso immediately flew to the well-known spot where he should find his masters' arms and effects, whilst Osmond ascended the terrace. As the latter scaled the steps which led to it, his heart almost leaped into his mouth from excess of agitation. He paused ere he ventured upon the last step, and then looked around him—he heard the noise of the conflict still going on in the direction of the Pasha's palace. Every thing on the terrace remained as he had left it. The loveliness of Ayesha upon her first appearance on that very spot came strongly to his recollection. He advanced some steps towards the opening of Suleiman's terrace: the first object that caught his eye was a praying-carpet, which seemed to have been spread preparatory to devotion, and from this he concluded that Ayesha might soon appear. After the miseries which he had undergone, he could scarcely believe that he was so near the enjoyment of happiness. He saw traces of Ayesha in many things which lay around; she had evidently been passing some of her time on that spot. There was a cushion near which she had been seated; the temporary veil, or large covering which Mahomedan women throw over their heads when they look from the terrace, rested upon it; near it was a cambric handkerchief. Osmond took up the handkerchief: it appeared to him that this was not an article of dress usual to Turkish women, that it was evidently a European's handkerchief—he knew enough of women's work to be certain that the sewing had never been executed by Turkish hands: he inspected the corners, and to his surprise saw in one of them the remains of a European mark—the letters were almost obliterated, but it was plain that there had been letters:—he was lost in conjecture. But a few minutes had passed in this occupation, when he heard voices at the foot of the stairs leading to Suleiman

Aga's terrace, then the rustling of clothes, and at length some light steps ascending. What was his ecstasy—his overpowering delight—the next moment to see his beloved! She uttered a shriek at seeing him—a deadly paleness came over her—she tottered, and was only supported by his arm. What pen can describe, or what words can sufficiently give an idea of their mutual sensations! In a few words he told her how he had been released, and how he had succeeded in getting thus far. It would be impossible to describe the look of love and interest, mingled with apprehension, which beamed upon the features of the maiden as she turned her eyes towards her lover—it was the perfection of beauty, for Osmond at the moment thought that nothing human was ever like it. But the endearing confidence which his presence inspired, was the moment after broken and blasted by the fear and apprehension of discovery:—at one moment she would cling to him with rapture, at another retreat from him with the chilling apprehension that the demonstrations of her love were but so many steps which might lead to his destruction. Instead of appearing to enjoy his presence, she only seemed anxious to see him depart. Every moment, she felt, was pregnant with danger—she looked around with alarm to see if any one was espying her actions—she drew her lover with precipitation behind a projection, lest they might again be seen from the adjacent minaret, that offspring off all their miseries! It appeared to her that the air was studded with eyes, beaming their full glare upon her—there was no concealment at hand. Osmond did all in his power to control her fears—he entreated her to hear him with composure. As he pressed her to his heart, he poured out the assurance of his ardent love—he did not know what futurity might have in store for him, but this he knew, that he was determined to live only in the hope of one day possessing her. He disclosed to her his conviction that there was some mystery in her present situation, which had given rise in his mind to doubts almost amounting to conviction that she was not the daughter of Suleiman and Zabetta; and he assured her of his determination, if he lived, to endeavour to clear them up. He alluded to the handkerchief which he had just seen, to the locket and the coin which he had before observed. He entreated her to reflect deeply upon

all their past conversations,—perhaps she might hear what he had advanced in the assembly which had been convoked to oppose him. He entreated her to live in the certainty that he would never abandon her—adding, that he was obliged to leave her now in order to secure both from the death which otherwise would certainly be inflicted upon them, but that many events might interfere to bring them together again, and therefore he again conjured her to live in hope.

Ayesha lent the most anxious ear to all he said, although at the same time her whole being seemed to be abroad to watch against danger. They were interrupted by the hasty footsteps of Stasso, who, rushing up to the terrace with the arms of his master, would have dragged him away at once, so full of apprehension was he lest any further delay might be the cause of their destruction. Osmond having thrust his pistols into his girdle, and strapped on his sabre to his side, assured him that he would instantly follow, and ordered him to go and prepare the horses. Stasso retreated, shaking his head, and doubting his master's words. Osmond then returned to Ayesha, who, in her turn, opened her whole heart to him; told him of her grief—of her fears for his safety; assured him that she would adhere to every word of advice which he had given her; that she would live in the hope of being his; and that, if constancy were ever to be found in the breast of woman, it should be in hers. Lovers' vows are perhaps the same in all parts of the world; therefore, it will be needless to describe more of those which were mutually repeated on this occasion, excepting to remind the reader of the extraordinary circumstances under which they were made.

The hitherto undisturbed continuation of their interview produced confidence, and they both began to lay by part of their fears, when, providentially, they were brought to a sense of their situation by hearing the rattling steps of a horse approach along the paved street at full gallop, followed at a distance by the steps of other horses at the same speed, accompanied by shouts and occasional pistol-shots. Osmond immediately thrust his head over the parapet of the terrace, and to his dismay he recognized in the approaching horseman the brilliantly-dressed figure of Hassan, the Surugi, urging his horse on to the utmost of his speed, and at a distance perceived

several of the Pasha's guard equally impelling their horses in pursuit. At one glance he saw the state of the case, and aware of the imprudence of further delaying his departure, he was obliged to screw up his courage to leave Ayesha. She saw the necessity more vividly than he could do. She would have gone with him ; her whole existence seemed to become as a thing of nought, now that she was to be deprived of him in whom her own being was identified, but, the dangers with which he was about to be assailed bursting at once upon her imagination, she threw herself upon his breast and wept aloud, whilst at the same time she impelled him gently towards the descent of the Armenian's terrace. Osmond was turning in his mind what he could leave with her as a token of his love ; the only thing which he could give her at the moment was a Turkish ring, with his own name, Osman (after the Oriental mode of pronouncing it), engraved upon it, and from this he entreated her never to part, but to deliver it to him when it should please Heaven to bring them together again. A shot fired close under the walls of the terrace reminded him again how necessary it was to depart, and, with one sudden wrench, he darted away from his drooping mistress.

He hastened down the stairs, received the benedictions of his host on his passage, threw himself on his horse, and, with Stasso following, dashed boldly into the street. He found himself at once in the centre of a band of the Pasha's horsemen who were in full pursuit of Hassan :—dressed like them, he was not noticed, but passed for one of the pursuers. Casting one longing look upwards, he caught the form of his Ayesha, who was straining all her eyes to see the last of all that she held most dear ; and, having received from her a sign of recognition, he pressed the flanks of his steed, and made equal way with the band amongst whose ranks he rode. They soon cleared the streets of the town, crowded through the narrow gate, and then, sword in hand, made for the bridge. At a short distance he perceived the flying Hassan making head against his pursuers, although he remarked with dismay that three of them rode horses whose speed was as great as his own, and who seemed likely to come up with him.

Having got into a more open space, and his horse being less worn than either those of the pursued or the pursuers, he

urged him forward with redoubled impetus; and as he bounded over every impediment, he came up with the three Turks, who were preparing to seize or destroy their victim. Their words were full of exultation; fierceness and determination were depicted in their features. "*Kelb, dur!*—dog, stay!" roared one. "*Anna sena baba sena!*—I will destroy his father and mother!" cried out another. "*Pezevenk!*—wretch!" exclaimed the third. The one with whom he first came up was just taking a long aim with his carbine at Hassan, rising on his short stirrups and leaning over his saddle-bow, when Osmond, with a blow of his arm, knocked the weapon from his hand, which instantly delayed his career. The second horseman, who had his hand extended with a pistol, intending also to discharge it at Hassan, seeing what had happened to his comrade, and recognising Osmond at the same instant, fired at him; the ball passed through his turban without touching his head. This immediately brought the attention of the headmost man upon Osmond, and, sword in hand, he reined in his horse, in order to discharge the whole force of his arm upon him as he should pass; but our hero, who now saw that he had but one effort more to make and he was safe, with great dexterity parried the blow aimed at him, and with still greater, extended his arm, and succeeded in cutting the bridle-rein of his antagonist in two, thus leaving him to the mercy of his horse, who soon bolted out of the road, and carried him away more in a line with his own stable than with Hassan's route.

Thus, having got clear of his enemies, and delighted to find that Stasso was close upon him untouched, his next object was to make himself recognized by Hassan, who was evidently making every preparation to receive his pursuers with a gallantry equal to any part of his day's exploits. "Hassan Aga!" roared out Stasso. "Hassan Aga!" exclaimed Osmond.—"Stop, in God's name!" cried one.—"It is the Frank; the Turks are gone!" vociferated the other. Nothing would do; Hassan rode on, heedless of every thing. He occasionally looked behind him, but only saw Turks in his rear, and therefore, perceiving no change, he still rode on. At length, Stasso calling up his loudest voice from the depths of his lungs, roared out, "Hassan Surugi, stop!" This appeal struck Hassan at once. He had flattered himself that no one could have recognised him as a

Surugi, and therefore the circumstance of being called such, brought his attention to a closer scrutiny of his pursuers; and as soon as he discovered who they were, for they had now approached very close, the gloom of his countenance was dispelled, and joy broke out upon it in a manner seldom seen upon an Asiatic face.

Having got clear of his Turkish pursuers, who had perceived how useless would have been any further efforts, Hassan gradually drew in his horse's rein, and allowed Osmond and Stasso to come up with him. When he found that it was to his former deliverer from danger that he was again indebted for life, and particularly when, looking at the shot through his turban, he saw how nearly his own had been sacrificed, he would have dismounted from his horse to kiss his skirt; but Osmond would not allow of any acknowledgments, seeing that he owed his liberty entirely to Hassan's exertions. Indeed, this was no time for unnecessary delay; they might again be pursued by the Pasha's horse; their jaded horses might be overtaken by fresh ones, and it behoved them not to lose a moment in leaving Kars at as great a distance behind them as possible before the shades of night came on. Taking the direction of the spot where Mustafa and the guide lay in wait, they soon added them to their party, and then, keeping their horses at the best speed they could, they struck across the plain in an easterly direction, through paths well known to Hassan and his comrade. Little was said, for the attention of the whole party was taken up in looking constantly around them, so apprehensive were they still that their steps might be traced. They were yet in the country under the Pasha's control, and therefore thought it right to keep clear of all habitations; and it was only when night had closed in upon them, that Hassan thought he might with safety despatch his comrade to a village, in order to provide corn for their horses, as well as provisions for themselves. They waited at a convenient distance until this had been successfully performed, and then struck into a more uninhabited tract; they sought a sequestered spot, a cavern on the side of an arid slope, well known to Kurdish freebooters, and there they determined to pass the night. Having reached it, they at length dismounted from their jaded horses, and each, after their respective creeds, offering thanks to Heaven for their deliverance, they proceeded

to settle themselves for the night. Hassan and his comrade took charge of the horses, which they picketed close to them; and replenishing their nose-bags with corn, the poor brutes soon forgot their fatigue in the enjoyment of their food. Stasso then made a fire, and by means of stakes, cut in a neighbouring thicket, he managed to make a spit wherewith to roast a piece of kid, which, with sundry flaps* of bread, formed the evening's meal. Mustafa took the concoction of the coffee under his superintendence; whilst Osmond, extended upon a horsecloth, endeavoured to collect his thoughts, and to come to some conclusions upon the best course which he ought to pursue in the present posture of his affairs. The image of his Ayesha was interwoven with every scheme which he ventured to form; and when he turned his mind to his relations and friends in England, he sighed as he thought how great was the distance between them, and how many events must intervene ere he could hope to find himself restored to them in safety. As for his more immediate schemes, he had not hitherto ascertained from Hassan whither it was his intention to conduct them; but he was determined to allow himself to be guided by him; for he felt that not to place confidence in a man who had done so much for him, would be at once base and unwise.

Stasso having announced that the kid was sufficiently roasted to be eaten, Osmond called all the party together around him, and having seated them in a circle, the meat was placed in the midst upon a flap of bread, and few words were said ere the whole had disappeared by the vigorous application of fingers and jaws. Water from a neighbouring rivulet washed down the coarse materials which their voracious appetites (Osmond's at least) alone made them devour; and when Mustafa had produced his coffee, and they were all seated around, each with a refreshing and consolatory pipe in his mouth, they had entirely forgotten the dangers and fatigues of the day in the present enjoyment.

Osmond, being anxious to ascertain whither it was Hassan's intention to conduct them, and also to discover who he was, since his present splendid appearance seemed incompatible with his former humble avocation of Surugi, requested him to give

* Bread in this part of Asia, and throughout Persia, is rolled out into flattened portions, like large pancakes.

some account of himself, premising the question by making him sincere professions of gratitude for having thus saved him from the violence of the Turkish authorities of Kars.

Hassan was a wary fellow, and would never have consented to commit himself by the avowal which Osmond required, had not all concealment been now useless; he therefore agreed to his request, and began as follows:—

“I am your slave—I am nothing—whatever you will order me to be, that I am. You saw me first as a guide, and a driver of baggage-horses; I am, however, no Surugi—I am Cara Bey’s principal officer, that’s what in truth I am. I am his *kiayah*, his deputy—I sit in his place when he is absent—he reposes much confidence in me. Sometimes I appear as a Surugi, when it is necessary to acquire intelligence of what passes on the road, of who comes and who goes; and as such I appeared to you. At the time during which you were travelling, when, by the blessing of Allah! you saved my life, my master was lying in wait for a caravan that was to pass into Persia. On the road we met two of his horsemen, sent to ascertain who you were; I ordered them to return, and we passed unmolested—this is the history of that transaction. I have not appeared at Kars, where I am not known as a Surugi, since that time—but the news of the Pasha’s projected jerd party having reached us, I asked Cara Bey’s leave to attend it—in the first place, because I am devotedly fond of the game, and in the next, because I had received an insult from one of the Pasha’s officers, which I longed to revenge, and I hoped that I should on this occasion find a fitting opportunity for that purpose. I was permitted to go—I bestrode my best horse, one of the finest in the Kurdistan—six of my own men attended me, and on the appointed day we appeared in the field, opposed, with other agas, to the Pasha’s horsemen. I perceived my enemy, and I determined, ere the day’s sports were ended, to revenge myself upon him, either by fair means or foul. The moment I discovered your situation through the means of the Boshnak,” pointing to Stasso as he spoke, “my plan was laid. I determined to return the Pasha’s attacks upon me, and I knew that this would lead to a serious affray, during the noise and confusion of which you might escape. Kûrds and Turks mutually hate each other, and the least spark is always sure to kindle the fire of their passions

into a flame. I told him," pointing to his comrade, "to dismount three of our men, to appropriate their horses to your use, and to release you from prison : all of which I knew he could perform, for he had done the same service to myself some years ago. I then returned the Pasha's attack upon me, by discharging a jerid at him with all my best violence : this made him angry, he rallied his men and made a charge upon us. My enemy was the first who fell ; he received my pistol-ball in his head, and shrieked out my name as he writhed with pain. I urged on the engagement to the utmost in my power, for I hoped that, during the noise and excitement which it would produce, you would be able to effect your escape. You know the rest : but for you I must have fallen a prey to the three Turks who so closely pursued me. And now, O Agam ! O my master ! what more can I say ?"

Osmond made all appropriate acknowledgments of the gratitude which in reality he felt, and expressed his admiration at the ingenuity and presence of mind which Hassan had displayed. Even Mustafa could not refrain from exclaiming "Mashallah!" and finding himself safe in his person, secure from immediate molestation, and, moreover, with a cup of coffee in his mouth, he seemed, for the present, perfectly at his ease. But when he heard that Hassan intended to conduct them to Cara Bey, and moreover that his master acquiesced in that intention, his lips forgot to sip, his mouth to inhale smoke, and he remained with his face and mustache perfectly agast ! He did not venture at this moment to speak his sentiments, for the lieutenant of Cara Bey, who sat before him, was too formidable a personage to displease, and therefore he reserved himself for some future opportunity to warn his master of the dangers into which he was thus voluntarily thrusting himself. Cara Bey had always been the one object of his fear, whenever, crossing this part of the frontier between Turkey and Persia, he carried despatches to and from the British Embassies of Constantinople and Tehran : he had always avoided his castle, as the seat of misfortune. Such stories had been related to him of his cruelties, his personal prowess, his cunning in attacking and robbing caravans, of his hatred of all Mussulmans, and of the great ability which he had displayed in setting at nought all the authorities which were opposed to him, that to fall into his hands

with one's eyes open, and in full possession of one's understanding, appeared to him an act which none but a madman, and he also thought in his own secret mind, none but an Englishman, would perform. Thrown into deep cogitation by this prospect, all he could do was to comfort himself with a deep-drawn "*Allah kerim der*—God is merciful!" sighed from the bottom of his throat, and delivering himself to *kismet*—fate, he laid himself down on the bare ground with his companions, who had already long buried their hopes and fears in the arms of sleep.

CHAPTER XV.

As glowr'd the louts, amaz'd and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious.

BURNS.

THE sensation which had been created throughout the town of Kars by the engagement which had taken place, had entirely driven Osmond and his controversy from the heads of its inhabitants. Nothing was talked off but the machinations of Cara Bey; for, his officer having been recognised in Hassan, he was accused, and indeed not unjustly, of having been the instigator of the mischief. Curses came from every mouth upon Yezidies—and in cursing Yezidies they of course included Kûrds; then upon unbelievers, among whom Osmond and all Franks were freely comprehended. The Turk whom Hassan had slain, was an officer high in the confidence of the Pasha, and consequently that dignitary's wrath was excited in no small degree on that head; but, if the truth were known, perhaps it would be found that his indignation bottomed more upon the recollection of the blow which he had received between the shoulders from Hassan's jerd, than upon the death of his servant.

It was only at night-fall that the door-keeper of the prison, upon returning to his charge, discovered the escape of the prisoners. A Turk's misfortune, whatever it may be, soon finds relief in exclamatory words. On this occasion the jailor exclaimed, "*Alla bela ver sin*—heaven send thee a reverse!"

"*Anna sena, baba sena satim*—I have sold your father and mother!" He continued to exhale his spleen in grosser forms of speech, not to be translated, which, duly ejaculated, seemed to soothe his nature into resignation at the decrees of destiny. He completed his consolation by filling his pipe, and sitting down over against the seat of his misfortune, puffed away his care, and restored his equanimity. As he pondered over the event, and reflected duly upon the consequences which might in the course of things accrue to himself, he determined, in the present state of excitement of men's minds, and of the Pasha's and the Mufti's in particular, to defer the communication of it until the following morning. He scented an immediate bastinado to his own particular feet if he spoke now—he hoped that nothing more than a slight fine would be imposed if he deferred till the morrow. After the Pasha had risen on the next day, the jailor, having ascertained that he was refreshed by a bath, and that his *kief*, spirits, were in proper order, ventured to make the disclosure, and with great humility of mien and attitude stood before him. "*Ne oldou*—What has happened?" said the Pasha, upon seeing the man, and not till then recollecting that he held a Frank in custody. "As I am your slave," said the jailor, "I have things to say."—"Speak on," said the Pasha.—"As I am your slave," returned the jailor, stroking his beard down at the same time, "the Frank is gone."—"How!" exclaimed the Pasha: "whither is he gone?"—"What do I know, O sir! he is gone."—"How did he go?" asked the great man, pondering deeply. "He opened the door and ran away," said the jailor. "*Pek ayi*—very well," said the chief, with much complacency; upon which quietly slapping his hands, to call his attendants, he said to his principal *chokhadar*, in as composed a manner as if he was about ordering his dinner, "Here, give this man one hundred strokes on the soles of his feet." The poor wretch began to cry out "*Amān, amān!*—pity! pity!"—Nothing would do; he found that his prognostics were true; and, bending himself to the decrees of fate, calmly took off his socks and slippers, spread himself out on his back, put his feet into the noose, received blows—got up, stole away to his pipe, mended the prison-door, and continued to perform his functions, muttering to himself "Allah has been merciful! well it was no worse."

The Pasha, having sent information of what had taken place to the Mufti, that important personage, an hour before the noon-day prayer, made his appearance; and after a short conference, they determined to send for Suleiman Aga, and whoever else might be concerned, in order to see what might best be done on the occasion. The whole party being convened in the Pasha's room, were seated in solemn composure upon his sofas, smoking long pipes. Upon investigating the causes of Osmond's escape, the circumstance of his having aided that of Hassan by his attack upon the three horsemen, led to the discovery that he and his servant had been observed to issue from the Armenian dyer's court-yard, armed and mounted. An order was immediately sent for the appearance of the unfortunate Bogos, who, with blanched cheeks and trembling frame, soon stood before the assembled chiefs. As soon as he appeared, every one present seemed anxious to salute him with some appropriate epithet. "*Kuipék oğlu*—son of a dog!" said one. "Hog of an infidel!" said another. "*Bokchi*—dung-monger!" exclaimed a third. "Where is the infidel Frank?" enquired the Mufti; "speak, or *jehanum* will be your fate!" The poor Armenian could not open his lips from excess of fear. "Speak—come, let us see," said the Pasha in his slowest manner. "Where is he gone?" enquired Suleiman. "Where are his goods?" enquired the Mufti. At this question Bogos took courage, and immediately gave such information as he possessed of the different commodities which Osmond had left behind him in the way of luggage. There was a portmanteau containing clothes, there was a dressing-case, then a medicine chest, books, drawing materials, charts, mathematical instruments—in short, every sort of thing which English travellers carry about for comfort, cleanliness, and acquiring information.

Bogos, accompanied by an officer and guards, was straightway despatched to his house to bring from it every thing which belonged to Osmond and his servants; and ere the assembled dignitaries had had time to enjoy much more of their beloved coffee and pipes, the Armenian again stood before them. The end of the apartment was heaped up with the different articles which had been found, and curiosity having been greatly excited by the exhibition which had been made of them as they

were paraded along the street, great was the rush of those who wished to obtain a sight of their contents when they should be brought to light before the Pasha.

First, the contents of the portmanteau were exhibited. It principally contained Osmond's clothes. In succession were displayed, waistcoats, neckcloths, shirts, drawers, and stockings, which drew forth the astonishment of all present, for they wondered what one man could possibly want with so many things, the uses of most of which were to them incomprehensible. They admired the glittering beauties of a splendid uniform-jacket, which its owner carried about to wear on appearing at courts and in the presence of exalted personages; but when they came to inspect a pair of leather pantaloons, the ingenuity of the most learned amongst them could not devise for what purpose they could possibly be used. For, let it be known, that a Turk's trowsers, when extended, look like the largest of sacks used by millers, with a hole at each corner for the insertion of the legs, and, when drawn together and tied in front, generally extend from the hips to the ankles. Will it then be thought extraordinary that the comprehension of the present company was at fault as to the pantaloons? They were turned about in all directions, inside and out, before and behind. The Mufti submitted that they might perhaps be an article of dress, and he called upon a bearded chokhadar, who stood by wrapped in doubt and astonishment, to try them on. The view which the Mufti took of them was, that they were to be worn as a head-dress, and accordingly, that part which tailors call the seat, was fitted over the turban of the chokhadar, whilst the legs fell in serpent-like folds down the grave man's back and shoulders, making him look like Hercules with the lion's skin thrown over his head.

"*Barikallah*—praise be to Allah!" said the Mufti, "I have found it; perhaps this is the dress of an English Pasha of two tails!" "*Aferin*—well done!" cried all the adherents of the law. But the Pasha was of another opinion; he viewed the pantaloons in a totally different light, inspecting them with the eye of one who thought upon the good things of which he was fond. "For what else can this be used," exclaimed the chief, his dull eye brightening up as he spoke—"what else, but for wine? This is perhaps the skin of some European animal.

Franks drink wine, and they carry their wine about in skins, as our own infidels do. Is it not so?" said he, addressing himself to Bogos the Armenian. "So it is," answered the dyer, "it is even as your highness has commanded."—"Well then, this skin has contained wine," continued the Pasha, pleased with the discovery, "and, by the blessing of Allah! it shall serve us again."—"Here," said he to one of his servants, "here, take this, let the Saka sew up the holes, and let it be well filled; instead of wine it shall hold water." And true enough, in a few days after, the pantaloons were seen parading the town on a water-carrier's back, doing the duty of mesheks. But it was secretly reported that, not long after, they were converted to the use for which the Pasha intended them, and actually were appointed for the conveyance of his highness's favourite wine.

In the lid of the portmanteau was discovered a boot-jack, with a pair of steel boot-hooks. These articles put the ingenuity of the Turks to a still greater test. How could they possibly devise that so complicated a piece of machinery could, by any stretch of imagination, have any thing in common with a pair of boots, a part of dress which they pull off and on with as much ease as one inserts and reinserts a mop into a bucket? They thought it might have something to do with necromancy, then with astrology, but at length it struck them that the whole machine must be one for the purposes of torture;—what more convenient than the hinges for squeezing the thumb, or cracking the finger joints,—what better adapted than the boot-hooks for scooping out eyes? Such they decided it to be, and, in order to confirm the conclusion beyond a doubt, the Pasha ordered his favourite scribe to insert his finger between the hinges of the boot-jack, which having done with repugnance, he was rewarded for his complaisance by as efficacious a pinch as he could wish, whilst peals of laughter went round at his expense. The instrument was then made over to the chief executioner, with orders to keep it in readiness upon the first occasion.

The various contents of the dressing-case were next brought under examination. Every one was on the look-out for something agreeable to the palate, the moment they saw the numerous bottles with which it was studded. One tasted eau-de-

cologne, another lavender-water, both which they thought might or might not be Frank luxuries in the way of cordials. But who can describe the face which was made by the Pasha himself when, attracted by the brilliancy of the colour, he tossed off to his own drinking the greater part of a bottle of tincture of myrrh! The Mufti was a man who never laughed, but even he, on seeing the contortions of his colleague, could not suppress his merriment; whilst the menials around were obliged to look down, their feet reminding them of the countenance they ought to keep, if they hoped to keep themselves free from the stick.

Whilst this was taking place, the Imam of the mosque, whose mortified looks belied his love of good things, quietly abstracted from the case a silver-mounted box, which having opened, he there discovered a paste-like substance, the smell of which he thought was too inviting to resist; he therefore inserted therein the end of his forefinger, and, scooping out as much as it could carry, straightway opened wide his mouth and received it with a smack. Soon was he visited by repentance:—he would have roared with nausea had he not been afraid of exposing himself—he sputtered—he spat. “What has happened?” said one with a grin. “*Bak—see!*” roared the Pasha, who was delighted to have found a fellow-sufferer—“*Bak—see! the Imam is sick.*” The nature of the substance which he had gulped soon discovered itself by the white foam which was seen to issue from his mouth: then other feelings pervaded the assembly; they apprehended a fit, they feared madness—in short, such was the state to which the unfortunate priest was reduced, that he was obliged to make a rapid escape from the assembly, every one making way for him, as one who is not to be touched. The reader needs not be informed that he had swallowed a large dose of Naples soap.

Many were the mistakes which occurred besides those above-mentioned, and which it would perhaps be tedious or trifling to enumerate. They pondered deeply over every article; they turned the books upside down, they spilt the mercury from the artificial horizon, broke the thermometers, displaced the barometer, scattered the mathematical instruments about, so that they never could be re-inserted in the case. A small ivory box attracted their attention: it was so prettily turned, so

neat, and so ornamental, that, like children quarrelling for a toy, each of them longed to possess it. At length it was ceded to the Mufti. This sapient personage had enjoyed the pleasure of laughing at others, but as yet had not been laughed at himself. Twisting the box in all directions, at length he unscrewed it, much to his satisfaction, and seeing a small tube within, surrounded by a bundle of diminutive sticks, he concluded this must be the Frank's inkstand—the liquid in the tube being the ink, the sticks the pens. He was not long in inserting one of the sticks into the tube; he drew it out, and on a sudden instantaneous light burst forth. Who can describe the terror of the Turk? He threw the whole from him, as if he had discovered that he had been dandling the *shaitan* in person. “*Ai Allah!*” he exclaimed, with eyes starting from his head, his mouth open, his hands clinging to the cushions, his whole body thrown back:—“Allah protect me! Allah, Allah, there is but one Allah!” he exclaimed in terror, looking at the little box and the little sticks, strewn on the ground before him, with an expression of fear that sufficiently spoke his apprehension that it contained some devilry which might burst out and overwhelm him with destruction. Nor were the surrounding Turks slow in catching his feelings; they had seen the ignition, and had partaken of the shock. Every one drew back from the box and its contents, and made a circle round it: looking at it in silence, and waiting the result with terror, low “Allah Allahs!” broke from the audience, and few were inclined to laugh. At length, seeing that it remained stationary, the ludicrous situation of the Mufti began to draw attention, and as he was an object of general dislike, every one who could do so with safety, indulged in laughing at him. The grave Suleiman, who had seen more of Franks than the others, at length ventured to take up the box, though with great wariness; he was entreated, in the name of the Prophet! to put it down again by the Pasha, who then ordered Bogos, the Armenian, to take up the whole machine, sticks and all, and at his peril instantly to go and throw it into the river; swearing by the Koran, and by all the Imams, that if the devil ever appeared amongst them again, he would put not only him, but every Armenian and Christian in Kars, to death.

There only now remained the medicine-chest to be exa-

mined, but, seeing what had happened, every one appeared but little anxious to pursue the investigation, fearful of some new disaster. However, when Bogos had explained that it was to this the Frank had recourse when he required medicine, at that moment every Turk present seemed impelled with a desire to take some; and, indeed, they would have proceeded to help themselves, had not the Mufti interposed, who, still with the fear of some satanic influence before his eyes, entreated them to refrain. But an expedient occurred to him which he immediately put into practice. He sent for as many Jews as could be found upon the spur of the moment, and ordered them to appear before the Pasha. A few of these miserable outcasts lived at Kars under the severest of tyrannies, and if ever any misery was to be inflicted, were sure to come in for the first share. Very soon after the order had been given, some half-a-dozen of them were collected, and marshalled in a row at the end of the room. The bottles were taken out separately from the chest, and a certain quantity, *ad libitum*, of every medicine was administered to each of the Jews. They were then conducted into an outer room, where they sat in doleful mood, watching their approaching doom, like men condemned to some severe punishment, bewailing their misfortune, and in their hearts wishing for the destruction of their tyrants. The effects produced upon each were as various as they were effectual: the Turks looked on in horror, the Jews were absorbed in disgust. "Allah, Allah!" was exclaimed by every looker on; and by the time the whole ceremony had drawn to a close, they became all seriously convinced that their town had been visited by the great Evil One in person: the medicine-chest was put on one side with caution, and everything which related, directly or indirectly, to Osmond, was retreated with becoming suspicion.

The whole circumstance of his apparition at Kars, and his sudden departure, was duly weighed by the Pasha and his colleagues, as one of considerable importance. Those who did not believe that he was the devil, were fully persuaded that he was something more than a mere man. The whole town had been thrown into confusion by him; his history was full of mystery. He was called Osman, and still he was a Christian! He was a Frank, and still he spoke their language as if

He were a Turk! He came from the North, and yet he was better acquainted with the records and manners of the East than their most learned scribes! He came nobody knew when, and disappeared nobody knew how! That he was leagued with the Evil Spirit was evident, since he was seen in company with one of its most celebrated worshippers. The more the Turks pondered over every circumstance of his appearance, the more they shook their heads, and doubted whether all was as it should be.

Suleiman Aga was the chief of the doubters. He had seen the fascination which Osmond had exercised over his daughter; and he even strongly opined that Zabetta's more than ordinary violence had been caused by his influence. The more pious Mussulmans advised that a general purification of the city should take place. A rumour of the massacre of all infidels was whispered about; but what was urged as a step of the first importance was, that an expedition against all wine and wine-bibbers should be proclaimed. This took place without delay; and ere the sun had set on that very day, not a wine-jar was to be found unbroken, nor its contents unspilled, throughout the city.

The Pasha, during all this confusion, was the only man who did not partake of the frenzy which seemed to have seized the inhabitants. He did not cease to deplore the loss of Osmond; for, from the moment when he last ordered him to prison, he had hoped to secure him as his Pehlivan Bashi, or principal prize-fighter; and, whether he dealt with the Evil One, or not, it signified little to the Pasha, provided he could possess a man who was powerful enough to throw every other on his back. Besides, he was charmed to have it in his power to tease the Mufti, and never before had he seen that worthy so subdued, as when Osmond stood over him with a pistol to his breast. The destruction of the wine-jars he would willingly have prevented; but what could he do against the priesthood? He knew that, when once they were roused, nothing could withstand their power, and therefore he found it advisable to appear to side with them, in order that hereafter they might grant him a more ample dispensation to crack bottles for his own gratification.

When Suleiman Aga returned to his house after the occur-

rences just described, he found his wife impelled by more violence than she had ever before exhibited. The departure of Osmond had deprived her of the hope which she had cherished of making him an instrument in her projected emancipation from Kars. She felt that her fetters were now riveted for ever. When would a Frank and a Greek, combined, again appear at Kars, and in a manner so likely to be useful to her? She might live to threescore ere such an event happened again! In her rage she laid the whole defeat of her hopes on the shoulders of her husband; she upbraided him in no measured terms; she called him by every base epithet which her tongue could devise. The fine theme of injustice, cruelty, rapaciousness, and inhospitality, which the treatment of Osmond had given her, she freely descanted upon. She called it persecution; swore that it arose out of hatred to her who had once been a Christian; and raved about the revenge she would take. She even accused Ayesha of having combined against her. When Suleiman was not present, she upbraided her with not having made use of her charms so to enslave the Frank, that he would rather have given up his religion than have abandoned her! She deplored her condition; nothing would satisfy her!

Ayesha bore all with meekness; for her spirit was supported by the recollections of her last interview with her lover. This she kept fondly within the recesses of her heart, as the prisoner in a dungeon secretes the prohibited lamp from his gaoler. Hope was awakened by his last words; they were to her as the words of promise to the despondent Christian on his death-bed. She knew that she could trust in him: he had assured her that he would return to her; whatever might happen, she possessed that assurance: that was enough for her present happiness; the rest lay in the hands of Providence. And here, for the present, our narrative must leave her.

CHAPTER XVI.

The further I went, and the closer I examined the remains of this vast capital (Anni), the greater was my admiration.—KERR PORTER'S *Travels*, vol. i. p. 73.

OSMOND and his companions throughout the night enjoyed as deep a sleep as if they had reposed upon beds of down; and, ere the day dawned, they and their horses being thoroughly refreshed, had left their resting-place, and proceeded again upon their journey. They travelled at first in silence, and followed the steps of their guide without asking a question. Except the trampling of their horses' hoofs, and the smoke of their pipes, which, leaving a train behind, scented the morning air, there were no indications of their march.

By the time Mustafa had finished his first pipe, he began to collect his wits, and then to reflect whither he and his master were going. In proportion as his imagination warmed, did his fears increase, as he contemplated the moment of meeting Cara Bey; and he almost came to the conclusion, that he was happier in prison at Kars, with a hope of flight before him, than he was now, at liberty and on horseback, bound, as he imagined, to certain destruction. He thought and smoked, and smoked and thought, until his mind was perfectly bewildered in a maze of apprehension and uncertainty: at times he would resolve to slink behind and run away; but then, recollecting what a sorry figure he should cut were he to be caught, he determined to keep under the protection of his master, and abide by the consequences. At length, watching his opportunity, when he remarked that Hassan was at a sufficient distance ahead not to be overheard, he stole up gently to Osmond's side, and said, with a mysterious air and a half-supplicating look, "Do you know whither that fellow," pointing to their conductor, "is taking you?"

"Yes," said Osmond, "we are going to visit Cara Bey—where else can we go?"

"*Amān! Amān!*—pity, pity!" exclaimed Mustafa, looking pinched and wretched with the cold of the morning, and at the same time shaking his jacket. "Cara Bey is one devil! You don't know this man! He is worse than all men! He cuts men's throats for pleasure!—a throat is the same to him as a melon, he cuts one with as much indifference as the other. *Vi! vi! vi!* You don't know Cara Bey—the Mufti of Kars is a man compared to him! Why do we go to him? Here are plenty of roads and an open country."

Osmond turned round to take a survey of Mustafa's person ere he answered; and certainly, had he been inclined to laugh at another's misery, he might have so done in this instance. The poor fellow appeared to have withered up during the night to less than half the size which he was ere he slept—he looked the picture of woe; his little face exhibited a compound of various colours—his sprigs of mustache fell in a small streak down each corner of his mouth, and his large ears protruded from his head somewhat like the splashboards of a carriage. He sat on his horse, cold and ill at ease. Occasionally one might hear a vibration of his jaws, as his teeth beat against each other; and when he spoke, his words came out between a whine and a moan.

Osmond smiled at his looks, and would have laughed outright, had not his proper feelings prevented him from increasing the load of misery which evidently weighed down his companion. "Why, Mustafa!" he exclaimed with a cheering voice, "one might almost think, to judge by your looks, that we were going to have our throats cut too?"

"And so we shall," muttered the other between his teeth.

"Whither else can we go but to Cara Bey?" continued Osmond. "After having been saved from destruction by Hassan, can we in honour refuse to accompany him? You do not think that he would cut our throats, do you?"

"*Allah bilir*—God knows!" said Mustafa; "he is one devil too."

"Devil or no devil," said Osmond, "we must follow him—what else can we do?"

Mustafa thought to himself, though he did not venture to ex-

press it aloud, that they were now three to two—that there was nothing to prevent them from taking the road they pleased, and that in Turkey no one much weighed the doctrine of right and wrong. However, he satisfied himself by merely shrugging up his shoulders and exclaiming, “*Allah kerim*—God is merciful!” To this sentiment Osmond fully assented, for he too was not without his apprehensions as to what might be the result of this part of his adventures. He had heard so much of the lawless and savage nature of Cara Bey’s character and profession, and so many stories of his cruelty to prisoners, and of his treachery towards those who had confided in him, that he felt he was, in fact, acting an imprudent part thus to place himself in his power. But then he reflected that he could be no object to any man’s rapacity, poor and denuded as he was. The very horse which he bestrode did not belong to him, and his guide would soon inform the gang they were about to visit, that whatever property he had possessed had fallen into the hands of the Turks at Kars. But, whatever might be his doubts or his apprehensions, he always returned to the obligations which Hassan’s noble conduct had imposed upon him; and happen what might, he determined that nothing should prevent him from evincing his gratitude for the services rendered to him, and that by trusting himself in this instance to his guidance.

Stasso, in the meanwhile, had so well ingratiated himself with Hassan and his comrade, that he had engaged them in conversation upon a subject which he knew was likely to be a matter of great importance to his master as well as to himself, namely, upon the conduct they ought to adopt in approaching Cara Bey. At first they appeared shy in answering Stasso’s questions, but, little by little, they allowed themselves to be more communicative. It was plain that they lived in the greatest awe of their chief—they hinted that nothing but perfect submission to his commands could conciliate him—that he was of all men the most suspicious—that he scrupled at no means to gain his ends, and would by treachery, if he could not by open violence, get rid of any one who stood in his path. Hassan owned that he never appeared before him without trembling, and although he knew that he enjoyed more of his confidence than any other man, still, that he was obliged to be

wary and circumspect in all he did or said. He described him as superstitious to the last degree, and that his faith in the power of talismans and amulets was unbounded—his arms groaned under the weight of amulets, each containing something which he thought might preserve him from impending danger. He never stirred without consulting his priest, a most noted Yezidi, upon the result of any undertaking, and this individual was scarcely ever out of his sight. He passed his time between pleasures of the grossest kind, and preparing himself and his gang for new attacks and new depredations. To those who behaved with bravery and devotedness, he was a liberal master; and this, with his known ability and resources in danger, was the secret of his power of attaching his followers to his person. He was brave himself, and so ardent an admirer of bravery in others, that an act of gallantry performed under his eyes was certain to ensure his respect and admiration.

“How will he treat my master?” said Stasso.

There was an evident hesitation in Hassan’s manner in answering this question—he looked perplexed and in doubt; at length, he had recourse to the only word which could redeem him from perplexity, and said, “*Bakalum!*”

This satisfied Stasso that every precaution should be taken on the part of his master, as well as of himself, to secure a prompt retreat from Cara Bey’s power; and this to be done by stratagem, if it could not be effected by fair means. He therefore determined within himself to notice with most scrupulous attention the whole face of the country which surrounded the chief-tain’s residence; to mark the relative positions of prominent points of land; to observe the directions of roads; and, in short, to acquire every information which could be of use, should it be their lot to find themselves wanderers without a guide on the surface of the great tract of country which lay before them.

They travelled prosperously onwards during the day, laying by at noon to give their horses rest. Cara Bey’s castle, perched on a commanding eminence, was seen in the blue horizon, as the sun was about to set, and, in order to reach it, it was necessary to cross a chain of arid hills, on the further side of which flowed the Arpachai—a river which we have before named, and celebrated in this narrative for Osmond’s feat in

saving the life of Hassan. The sun set gloriously, tinging every height with his golden beams, enhancing the ruggedness of some, and slanting over the gentle declivities of others; to his dazzling light succeeded the subdued and soft light of the moon, which being at the full, rose with unclouded beauty, and gave a charm to the landscape, glancing in playful streaks over the rushing waters of the river, and throwing long slopes of the adjacent mountains into unbroken masses of shade. The five horsemen rode quietly onwards, enjoying their security, for they felt themselves now within the influence of Cara Bey's power; and although he in fact owned no territory but that upon which his castle was built, yet still, such was the terror of his name, that none but the most fool-hardy would venture to travel in his neighbourhood, unless in such numbers as to defy his attacks. On a sudden, as they turned the abrupt angle of a defile, Osmond's eye was arrested by the vision of what he supposed was an immense city. Walls, houses, towers, cupolas, and battlements, arose before him in massive groups, exhibiting to his astonished mind, not the small and insignificant structures of a common Asiatic town, but the severe and well-defined masses of ancient times, such as one fond of classic illusions might imagine to have been the residence of Greeks or Romans. Although some of its angles were glanced upon by the moon, its principal outlines were in deep shade; the whole bearing so dark, awful, and mysterious an appearance, that a poet might without much exaggeration have called it "The Spectre City." Osmond was struck with astonishment, and gave himself up to contemplation: he could think of nothing but the sublimity of the view before him, and did not at first trouble himself to enquire its history: but without enquiry, he was certain that what he had so abruptly stumbled upon, could be nothing else than the famous remains of Anni, formerly one of the principal cities of Armenia. His companions scarcely noticed what so powerfully struck Osmond; for, in their ignorance, they passed unheeded any ruins or remains rendered interesting merely by recollections of the past. Hassan called them the remains of a Giaour city. Mustafa shuddered when he heard them called the ruins of Anni, for he knew them to be the head-quarters of banditti, and had always shunned their approach with as much care as his master now hailed their vici-

nity with joy. Stasso eyed them with respect, for he recognised the remains of churches among the towering groups, and occasionally distinguished the sign of the cross; but, when he was told that they had belonged to Armenians, his Greek prejudices arose in his breast, and he did not deign to make his sign of the cross, which, had they belonged to his own nation, he would have done without intermission.

It was not long before the travellers, having passed the first broken outskirts, began to wind through the desolate streets. There was not sufficient light to exhibit every detail of ruin, and an ignorant observer might have mistaken what he saw for a flourishing city, the inhabitants of which had suddenly been smitten by the plague, or with one consent had abandoned their homes and fled. The silence which prevailed was fearful, and struck involuntary horror. House succeeded house in sad array, and not a sound was heard. A magnificent structure, looking like a royal palace, lifted up its walls and towers, cutting the clear blue vault of heaven with its angular lines, and lighted up by the moon in its splendour. The travellers paced along at the foot of its walls; the only noise which broke the still air was that of the reverberating hoofs of their horses, heard in echoes throughout the long deserted courts. Osmond would have questioned Hassan,—but observed that he also was full of thought, and rode on with caution as if he feared to meet with some unwelcome vision. He looked at Mustafa,—who seemed the personification of despair; if ever so awful a passion would condescend to put up with so diminutive a representative. Stasso kept up his spirits by every now and then exclaiming, “*Ti diavolo!*” At length, very distant and indistinct sounds, as if from the beating of a small drum, accompanied by strange screams or voices of men, either in pain or in frenzy, or in outrageous merriment, stole upon the ear, and broke the silent spell which seemed to have arrested every tongue.

“What is that?” exclaimed Mustafa, as he pulled in his horse’s bridle and trembled from head to foot.

“What can it be?” answered Osmond, not a little startled by so strange a circumstance: “if this were the land of elves and fairies, one might suppose this was their capital.”

“Hassan Aga!” roared out Stasso, “tell me, my soul! what has happened—what do we hear?”

Hassan, after a pause, lending his whole attention to the sounds, after having stopped his horse and again urged it forward, said, with a voice not the most encouraging, and with evident signs of perturbation,—“It is Cara Bey!”

Mustafa, on hearing these words, would have fallen from his horse, had not his scared senses been restored to him by the firmness of his master’s voice, who, overjoyed at having at length reached the object of their search, urged Hassan to push on, and introduce him into the presence of his redoubted chief.

They made for the spot whence came the sounds, and after having wound for some time through a succession of skeleton-like streets, which appeared to be familiar to Hassan, all at once he stopped near a ruined archway, the entrance to some once large mansion, and desired them there to await his return. They did so, and instantly he and his companion disappeared; the steps of their horses gradually becoming fainter as they increased their distance, until they entirely died away upon the ear.

Osmond dismounted, and seating himself upon the fragment of an architrave, the moonbeams darting full upon him, whilst his servants stood near him, he leaned his head upon his hand, wearied with the day’s journey, and gave himself up to reflection.

The mysterious tone which Hassan had recently adopted, and his evident perturbation at the vicinity of Cara Bey, made him reflect that there must be something more in the character of this man than he had imagined; and that, if there were not danger to be encountered, at least there was a great degree of caution necessary to be preserved. Several times a thought would cross his mind that even now he might be free, by avoiding the meeting with Cara Bey, and endeavouring to make the Russian frontier, which he knew could not be very far distant. But every time this thought arose, another would immediately oppose itself, in which the image of his Ayesha was presented to his mind in colours so vivid and fascinating that he could not prevail upon himself to abandon scenes which might again afford him the pleasure of seeing her. He never ceased, either directly or indirectly, to fix his thoughts upon her; — to leave her for ever appeared to him almost as great a crime as to ab-

jure his faith. He had so impressed himself with the certainty that she was not a child of Turkish parents, and that her history, if fully investigated, would disclose to him secrets which, if brought to light, would lead to the happiness, not only of himself, but of many others—that, every time he thought of escaping from his present situation and seeking the protection of others, he felt that he was doing her an injustice, that he was acting cruelly towards her, and that nothing but the most positive necessity should ever prevent him from devoting himself to her happiness.

Both Mustafa and Stasso had watched their master's looks with considerable anxiety ever since Hassan had left them, and thought that he betrayed symptoms of impatience at his absence. The strange noises which they had heard, and which still at intervals struck their ear, had much shaken their nerves and had given reality to the thousand and one stories which they had heard of the life and character of the man they were about to visit. They sounded like the midnight orgies of some infernal being, and, as they occasionally became louder, might have been taken for a sort of flourish preparatory to the introduction of the demon of wickedness on the stage.

Mustafa could no longer maintain silence, but, overcome by his increasing apprehensions, broadly entreated his master to take advantage of the favourable moment for escape. He pointed out the facilities which the surrounding vastness of the ruined city afforded for concealment; and asserted that, once having regained the plain, there could be no difficulty in eluding any search which might be made for them. "Besides," said he, whilst he furbished up a momentary bit of courage, "are there not three of us? Mashallah! there is you; then there is me; and here is Stasso. — Cara Bey, indeed! I laugh at his mother! Be you but safe, and we do not care a para for him." At that moment he thought he heard the distant tread of a horse, when his valour died away, and he again became silent through apprehension.

Stasso, too, urged every argument to induce his master to escape. "Effendi!" said he, "who knows what this devil may be? We hear everywhere that he is the greatest wretch ever known; that nothing stands in the way of his humour. That

Hassan there, even he, told me just now, shuddering as he spoke, that he spares neither man, woman, nor child, in the pursuit of his villany; and that you, Effendi, when you appear before him, must be very cautious not to displease him: that a word, either one way or the other, may excite his wrath, and lead to mischief. Let me speak to you now, O my master! there is still time: I have noted every inch of the way — I know the direction of all the mountains. The Peak of Aligez is not very far distant; and one can never mistake the position of *Agridagh* (Ararat). Before many hours have elapsed we could be within the territory of Persia, and then, may the devil take Cara Bey! What say you, Effendi? Shall I get the horses? A word from you, and we are off.”

These were words of temptation to Osmond, and suited the humour into which Hassan's delay had thrown his mind. So long as he was in action, and his thoughts bent upon one object, so long had he refrained from reflecting upon the dangers and difficulties which he was likely to encounter; but this pause had opened the gate for the intrusion of doubts and fears. The impulse in favour of Ayesha began to weaken as the delay increased: he reflected that he might aid her in some more effectual manner, by not submitting himself to Cara Bey's power: he thought that he might be at greater liberty to reward Hassan, were he to place himself in a more independent position than he was now likely to be in. Hassan himself, by this delay, perhaps wished to afford him an opportunity of escaping: he conceived that it might not be looked upon as a breach of confidence were he to do so: in short, arguments for taking this step now flowed so fast, that he was on the point of ceding to them. He rose from his seat; Stasso had brought his horse close to him; Mustafa was already mounted, and Osmond was actually about to put his foot into the stirrup with the determination of departure, when horse's footsteps were heard approaching with such speed that there could no longer be any illusion. Mustafa's tremors came on again; Stasso said “*Ti diavolo!*” within his teeth; and Osmond seated himself in his saddle, ready to await the result. At length Hassan appeared: he came in haste, and apparently full of care. All his words bespoke haste. “Come, come!” said he, “the Aga wants you. Do, not wait. I have seen him; he wants you.”

"Hassan," said Osmond with dignity, "am I welcome? If not, I will not approach your chief. You have been my friend, and I well know how to show you my gratitude; but if I am not welcome to Cara Bey, I do not proceed."

"Come, come, my Aga!" exclaimed Hassan, with evident signs of perturbation: "the Bey, it is true, is somewhat hasty; he is a bit of fire; he is a quick man, and likes to be obeyed in an instant: it is on that account I am anxious that we should not delay. But, Inshallah! you will receive welcome! He is not the man to turn away from those who seek his skirt. Bismillah! Come on, in the name of Allah!"

Upon this Osmond, lending himself to the impatience of his guide, and slowly turning his horse's head in the proper direction, followed his steps, accompanied by his two attendants. They had not proceeded far before they caught glimpses here and there of men's heads darkly peeping from behind the ruins, and occasionally groups of horses, with indications of troops on a march, were seen. These objects increased as they advanced, and it was evident that some predatory excursion was on foot. Men in the picturesque Kurdish costume, some on the watch, armed from head to foot, wielding the characteristic lance of that people—others asleep in recumbent attitudes—others, again, seated round fires, were now plainly seen, and bespoke the vicinity of their chief. A more striking moonlight scene could not well be imagined: overhanging turrets, broken battlements, lengthened walls, arose on all sides. Parts of the fragments, overgrown with wild vegetation, were lighted up by the pale gleaming of the moon, whilst the deepest shade concealed the remainder, and presented a series of outlines which became mysterious from being undefined. The whole was diversified by the shadowy forms of men, and horses and other cattle, producing a picture to which the pen or the pencil would find it difficult to do justice. Osmond would willingly have paused to enjoy it at his leisure, but he was impelled onwards by his guide, whose protection gave him security among the lawless gang through which he was about to pass, and who probably otherwise would not have failed to make him their prey. At length they reached the front of a large building, evidently the remains of a Christian church. Built in the form of a cross, one of its sides, in the centre of

which was the principal entrance, was terminated by a lofty pediment, and opened upon the square in which the building was situated. A triangular steeple rose from the summit of the roof, and presented to the eye a form of architecture so like a European place of worship, that Osmond could scarcely believe that he was far away from the blessings of his own Christian country, and in the midst of ruthless barbarians. The whole square was full of armed men, evidently ready at a moment's notice to obey the call of their chief, who was now close at hand. Presently Hassan, with a look of agitation, casting his eyes behind him, and looking at Osmond, said, "In the name of Allah! let us dismount; the chief is here." Upon which Osmond dismounted, and giving his horse in charge to one of the standers by, followed Hassan, accompanied by Mustafa and Stasso, and together they entered the small court by which the church was enclosed.

CHAPTER XVII.

Thou elvish-mark'd, abortive, rooting hog!
Thou that wast seal'd in thy nativity
The slave of Nature and the son of Hell!

Richard III.

THE great gate of the church, being unenclosed by doors, presented to the sight of Osmond, as he approached it, an immense glare of torchlight, which fell upon the ruined and dilapidated ornaments of its interior, as well as upon a large crowd of variously-dressed people. The scene was as strange as it was impressive. In front was the ancient altar, backed by a recess of highly-wrought fretwork in stone, in the centre of which stood conspicuous the sacred emblem of the cross; the high ceiling, supported by heavy pillars with grotesque capitals, received the rays of the brilliant light, and disclosed many details of sculpture which would be interesting to the

"After a pause, turning to Hassan, Cara Bey said, "A Frank you say he is, is it so?"

"Yes," said Hassan, "so it is."

"What is his name?" said the chief.

"*Osman*," answered Hassan, giving it the true Turkish expression.

"*Osman*!" exclaimed the other; "why then he must be a Mussulman, how is that?"

"*Osman*!" repeated Hassan, "so he calls himself."

"Does he talk Turkish?" enquired Cara Bey, with much animation.

"He does," answered the other. Then addressing himself at once to Osmond in a loud tone, Cara Bey exclaimed:

"How is this? you a Frank, and called *Osman*? this cannot be!" Osmond endeavoured to explain the difference between his own name and the Turkish *Osman*, but in so doing, expressed himself with idioms so truly characteristic of the language, and so like a native, that Cara Bey, on hearing him, remained perfectly astonished, and, what is more, confirmed in his suspicions that he was not what he professed himself to be.

"No Frank talks Turkish as this man," muttered Cara Bey to himself, although loud enough to be heard. "*Bak*—see!" said he, addressing himself to Hassan: "if there is any treachery in this, I look to you—your head shall pay for it. *Ang-nadinme*—have you understood me?"

Upon which Osmond answered boldly: "If you suspect us, bid us depart. We come to you for protection; we have been basely treated by the Turks, who, but for your officer, would have put us to death. All we require is to return to our own countries. Send us to your neighbours, the Moscovs; or, if you object to that, to your other neighbours, the Persians. We do not wish to remain with you, if you think us traitors."

"To my neighbours the Moscovs!" cried Cara Bey, tauntingly; "well, very well—*Mashallah*! so you think me an ass! So you would have me send one who has been a spy in my camp, to my bitterest enemy!—Or to my neighbours the Persians! better still. The foul red-caps! who do not allow a year to pass without endeavouring to destroy me and my castle. Perhaps they have paid you for coming. Thanks to Allah!

Cara Bey is not come to that pitch of stupidity yet. Is it not so?" said he, turning round to his priest; "is Cara Bey all at once become a fool of that magnitude?"

The dark man uttered a few sounds which were unintelligible, but which evidently marked his obsequiousness, and then remained as fixed and immoveable as ever.

"What then can I propose?" said Osmond. "Try me: all I can say is, that I am no Mussulman, I am an Englishman: I come to you for protection; if you do not choose to grant it to me, *Sen ektiar der*—you are the master!"

Upon this Cara Bey, knitting his sullen brows more than usual, remained silent for some minutes, and then muttered to himself, "Try you!" after which, turning to his oracle, he enquired, "shall I try him?" To which the dark man in answer said, "Try him."

"Well," said Cara Bey, "there is no harm done, I will try you. If you are a Frank, you must be acquainted with the manners of Franks, and, if of Franks, of Muscovites. See! this very morning I am about to attack a neighbouring village which belongs to the Russians and is garrisoned by their troops. You shall prove to me there whether you be my friend or my enemy. If my friend, you can help me; if my enemy, *Bak!* by this beard! I swear, were you to take refuge under the throne, or under the grandfather of the throne of the king, or of the father of the king of the Franks, I, I, who am Cara Bey, I would find you out! More I say not—only of this be assured, that my eyes, the eyes of Cara Bey," (upon which he glared with more than usual fierceness) "shall be upon you; from them you cannot escape, and by them you will be judged. Have you understood me?"

"I have understood you," answered Osmond boldly, "and I agree to the trial."

"So be it," said Cara Bey: "and here, if you be a Frank, let me see you drink off this cup of wine."

Upon which a small basin full of wine was brought to him, which he would not willingly have touched, but, considering the exigency of the moment, drank off.

"*Aferin!*—well done!" came from the monster, who deemed drinking wine one of the tests of being a Christian, and who,

consequently, laughed at the scruples of Mahomedans on that head.

Cara Bey then cast a look upon Stasso and Mustafa. Perceiving that the latter was a Turk, he fixed his eyes fiercely upon him, and enquired, "Who may you be?"

Mustafa, who had already shrunk to half his original size from fear, and apprehending that some test of bravery would also be required of him, stammered out a few unconnected words in a tone so suppliant, that Cara Bey was more excited to merriment than to anger by the sorry figure which he cut.

"So they call you a man in Turkey," said the ruffian chief, "do they?"

"What can I do?" said Mustafa; "I am a Tatar, and, if you please, a man," taking up a little more courage as he spoke.

"Mashallah!—a man!—hah!" roared out the chief in an offensive laugh. "Such men as you are good to keep women in order. My harem is in want of one such. What say you—are you ready?"

Upon this he laughed outright, and was answered by the obsequious chuckle of his surrounding attendants, whilst poor Mustafa's face flushed crimson with a rage which he was forced to suppress.

"And who are you?" exclaimed the chief, looking at Stasso. "You indeed are a man. Mashallah! we are in want of such arms and shoulders as you possess."

"I am Milord Osmond's servant," said Stasso, nothing abashed.

"Both these men are attached to me," said Osmond; "they have travelled with me from Constantinople through all parts of Asia, and I can answer for their good conduct."

"Very well," said Cara Bey; "very well. *Bakalum!*—we shall see!"

He then called for a cup of wine, which he drank off; and after that, assuming a tone of protection, which made Osmond shudder with indignation, he called him to sit by him, and in so doing, ordered his music to strike up, and his dancers to recommence their feats.

As soon as Osmond was seated, Cara Bey, under cover of

the music (for even he respected Asiatic prejudices sufficiently not to talk openly of women), began to question him concerning his adventures at Kars, and particularly with reference to the daughter of Suleiman Aga. The reputation of her charms seemed to be well known to him ; he dwelt much upon what he had heard of her excellence, and talked of her with a freedom and a licence which fully developed the wickedness of his nature. Feelings of horror rose in Osmond's breast, in a manner which he could with difficulty suppress, upon hearing his odious remarks : his colour came and went ; he could scarcely find words to answer the questions put to him, which mainly tended to ascertain the precise spot of her dwelling, and the best manner of invading it. A host of new ideas came across his mind when he found that the monster's intention was neither more nor less than to invade the city and to seize upon Ayesha for himself. As he sat on the odious cushions, his ears stunned by the din of the infernal music, his eyes offended by the coarseness and barbarism of the dances, and seated side by side with one who was a devil in all his characteristics, though he might not really be one in person, he felt a disgust and a rage which almost deprived him of his senses, and left him in a state of stupefaction. " And all this abomination too," said he to himself, " in what has once been a Christian church !"

Such an accumulation of horrors might have deprived any other but one of Osmond's sound mind, of all power of action ; but making an effort upon himself, he determined to dissemble his real feelings, in the hope of being able to devise some mode of warding off from his mistress the impending blow. On a sudden he felt an energy and a resolution spring up within him to protect the innocent maiden to the utmost extent of his abilities and strength, even should it cost him his life ; but fearing lest, at this particular moment, his disgust might betray him into some act of imprudence, he did not refrain from appearing to enter into the spirit of the scene before him, and even to drink of the wine that was repeatedly offered to him, more than he ever before had ventured to do. The result was that he lulled Cara Bey's suspicions, and found himself at liberty to reflect upon his situation, and upon the line of action he ought to adopt.

By this time it was nearly midnight, when the chieftain,

turning to Hassan, ordered him to take charge of Osmond and his servants, to see them provided with food and other necessities, and, particularly, that a good horse should be provided for him in the ensuing attack upon the Russians. He then dismissed his dancers, musicians, and attendants, and ordered every one to be in readiness on horseback two hours before the break of day; and, forthwith rolling himself up in his fur-cloak, he fell asleep upon the spot on which he had passed the evening.

When left to himself, Osmond for some time attempted in vain to unravel the complicated knot of difficulties with which he was encompassed. He found himself in the hands of one whom he was in honour compelled not to betray, although, were he to do so, it was evident he would be the means of ridding the world of one of the greatest criminals that encumbered its surface. He had, moreover, in some measure, bound himself to further his views; for, in self-preservation, he was about lending himself to an attack which might lead to bloodshed. He felt that it would be in vain to attempt flight;—besides, if he did, he must give up all chance of endeavouring to protect his Ayesha, who, from what he had heard from Cara Bey, and from what he had already seen of his character, would inevitably fall into his hands. The more he thought upon the line of conduct he ought to pursue, the less was he able to see his way before him. Of course, he felt that, under Providence, much must be left to the chapter of accidents, and to his own promptitude of decision at the moment of action; and as he pondered on what might happen, his heart was refreshed by the hope that all his present miseries would work out for him a futurity of happiness, and would, perhaps, be the means, not only of delivering Ayesha from her Turkish bondage altogether, but of uniting her to him for ever, and of placing her in that situation of life to which his warm imagination assured him she was entitled. Happen what might, he determined in the present case to kept aloof from the fight, and not to interfere, except to save the life of a fellow-creature, and to prevent the effusion of blood. Full of such-like thoughts, it is not surprising, that when the signal was heard for the gang (for we will not honour it by any other name) to prepare themselves and their horses to march, Osmond rose totally un-

refreshed by sleep. For the first time during his travels he felt really oppressed and unhappy : his spirit of adventure had never carried him so far as to contemplate the possibility of his ever becoming leagued with robbers, assassins, and freebooters ; and here he was one among those " whose hand was against every one, and every one's hand against them." He endeavoured to cheer himself by a feeling of conscious rectitude, and by the hope that some lucky opportunity would soon intervene, which would enable him with honour to clear himself from his present entanglement. But, surrounded as he was on all sides by ferocious men bent upon deeds of blood and rapine, his heart sank within him ; nor would he, perhaps, have been relieved from this state of despondency, had he not sought comfort, where true comfort is only to be acquired, at the foot of the throne of grace. A flood of tears came to his relief, as he fervently and earnestly prayed to God for pardon and protection ; and like a drooping plant which acquires fresh life and vigour from a refreshing shower, so, after this exercise, did his mind regain its energy, and his heart strength and peace, conscious of being under the protection of that Almighty power which sees all and directs all for the benefit of his creatures.

The troop was not long in collecting. From different parts of the surrounding ruins, horsemen, by three and four at a time, were seen to issue, and to make for the place of rendezvous,—the square in front of the chieftain's quarters. Everything was done in silence. The picturesque forms of the men, in their wild costume, with lances resting on the shoulder, were discerned gliding through the darkness, passing and repassing among the ruins, like evil spirits on the move, bent upon mischief.

Osmond was called upon by Hassan to attend his chief, who, the foremost of the band, was already mounted, awaiting the gathering together of his adherents. Cara Bey showed himself to be as vigorous and intelligent in action, as he was indolent and sensual in repose. His eye was everywhere. He distinguished the active by his approbation, and censured the tardy. His own interest led him to the right path in securing the devotedness of his followers : he was liberal to them, though unrelenting in his rapacity to acquire the means of that liberality. He talked to all with familiarity ; but whenever he

found it necessary to be severe, the blow was struck at once, and the result of this vigour of decision tended to secure his power and establish his authority.

The whole troop was assembled when Osmond joined it: it consisted of about one hundred men, who were not marshalled in regular order, but compressed into one compact mass. Cara Bey but slightly noticed Osmond as he approached to greet him, and, satisfied that he was properly guarded by several confidential servants whom he had placed around him, he occupied himself in giving requisite orders, and taking every precaution to ensure his success.

The Russians, whose increasing power in Georgia, and to the south of the Caucasus, had brought them in contact with the frontiers of Turkey, possessed an advanced post, almost touching the base of the abrupt hill upon which the castle of Cara Bey was situated. They had frequently attempted to dislodge him, but without success; and he, in return, never lost an opportunity of annoying them, sometimes attacking their military stations unawares, and running off with prisoners; at others, making a feint upon one point, whilst he plundered another. On the present occasion, he was informed that the small detachment which occupied the post in his neighbourhood, had been recently changed; and hoping to take advantage of the supposed inexperience of the new commander, he determined to attack it—to destroy it, if possible, or, at all events, to carry away as many prisoners as the fortune of war might throw into his hands. He collected his men in the ruins of Anni, in order to cloak his operations; and now he expected that he should be able to come upon the enemy unawares, and achieve an easy conquest.

At length, some two hours before break of day, the troop began its march. They defiled through the ruins in silence and with the caution of freebooters; the only voice heard was that of the chief—shrill, loud, and querulous, which every now and then would sound in echoes among the projecting walls and high towers, and, instead of cheering, infuse a cold creeping of horror in the hearts of those who heard it. Mustafa felt it vibrate through every nerve, and he accompanied it, whenever it fell upon his ear, with suitable execrations at its owner—execrations, however, which he carefully concealed at the bot-

tom of his throat. Stasso did his best to assume the Turk both in look and manner, although, in his heart, he would have been happy to accompany his master on any other expedition than the present. Osmond rode onwards absorbed in thought, watching ever and anon the approach of day, — that day, thought he, which might perhaps seal his fate in this world.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Ils levèrent une trappe cachée sous des nattes, et me forcèrent de descendre à l'aide de la corde dans un puits dont je ne pus alors entrevoir le fond.

Voyage de Jaubert en Arménie, &c. p. 42.

As the day began to break, objects, which had hitherto been obscured by darkness, were gradually developed. On the one side, the *Tepeh dive*, or the Devil's mountain, a high rocky, and apparently inaccessible height, reared its head in mysterious and shadowy grandeur, unadorned by trees or vegetation of any kind, and crowned by ramparts of broken and irregular outline. This was the castle and residence of Cara Bey. On the other side, towards the east, the country was intersected by small volcanic-looking hills, equally bare of vegetation, presenting a succession of dreary wastes and unappropriated land, and apparently of no use to man but as forming an excellent frontier-boundary between two inland states.

These hills, varying in size and form, gradually increased into mountains, and at length seemed lost in the great chain which swept all round the horizon, rearing its principal height in the two cones of Aligez, and arrested in its progress to the south by the intervention of the fertile and magnificent plain of Erivan, and its opposite mountains of Ararat. Nothing was yet seen of the point upon which Cara Bey was directing his force. The men marched in silence, every now and then casting their eyes forward, anxious to discover what they were about to

attack; whilst their chief, confident in himself, rode on as if he were perfectly aware of his position. Osmond kept close in his rear, and finding that he was narrowly watched, refrained from speaking, although he willingly would have held communication with Mustafa and Stasso. Hassan, busily employed in keeping the men together, was seen sometimes a-head on the look-out, at other times speaking to the chief, and again in the rear, giving orders, and holding out encouragement.

By this time the dawn had given way to the broad glare of day; the East was making preparations to receive the sun, and the crags of the robber's castle began to be brought out in strong relief, and to show their rugged and inaccessible strength. After having passed an angular projection of volcanic ground, on a sudden the whole party came in sight of a ravine, on the opposite side of which might be discerned the low and ill-defined houses of a village. This was the advanced post of the Russians on this part of the Turkish frontier, and the point which it was Cara Bey's object to attack and seize.

In order to take every advantage of the deep shade with which this side of the ravine was still overspread, the chief, in descending, put his troop into rapid motion, hoping to reach his destination unobserved, and thus to take the garrison by surprise. But, before he reached the bottom in order to ford a small stream which flowed through it, he was enraged by hearing a long shrill cry from the sentinel on guard, accompanied by a shot, which so effectually roused the little garrison, that, before the invaders could reach the opposite side, they had the mortification to behold a well-formed line of infantry, their arms clashing, and their bayonets glittering in the morning light, ready to receive them. Without a moment's delay, Cara Bey ordered a general charge; and every man was about giving full impetus to his horse, whilst he drew his sabre from its scabbard, when a discharge from the whole line at once stopped their progress, and apparently defeated his purpose. There he stood, foiled and enraged! His eyes glared with fury; he would have laid the blame upon every one but himself: he looked towards Osmond with a suspicious and frenzied look; then he cast his eyes upon Mustafa, then upon Stasso. He had not discovered that which was really the case—that when the invading troop passed the crest of the ravine, they had cut the

clear sky with their moving line, and consequently were plainly seen by the sentinel; he chose rather to believe that there was treachery in the wind. All his evil passions were immediately alive. He said nothing at the moment, but was evidently collecting his wits in order to determine what course he ought to pursue. He was not a man to retreat without striking some blow. He looked around to discover what might be done, and immediately determined to attempt an attack by spreading his horsemen on all sides of the opposing line.

This movement was soon observed by the Russians, who, advancing into a more open space, formed themselves into a hollow square, and there awaited the attack. Cara Bey had seen this manœuvre performed upon a former occasion, and therefore knew how hopeless his attempts would be to make any impression upon them. Again he remained perfectly perplexed. His anger now broke out with fury; he turned to Osmond, and, with the most taunting expressions, enquired from him what the Franks intended by this position of their forces, and hinted that, but for the unlucky presence of strangers, it might have been otherwise. He then turned to his wo-begone looking priest, who rode at his side, and with fury in his aspect asked him what he meant by leading him to undertake so disastrous an expedition.

Just at this juncture, an officer, accompanied by several others, was seen to issue from the ranks of the Russians, and to take up a position on an adjacent mound, in order to acquire a clearer view of the enemy; and this was done evidently by way of bravado, as well as to show his contempt of the invading force. He was a small slim youth, tightly compressed in the waist, according to the Russian fashion, wearing a large cocked-hat with feathers, whilst he held in his hand a small sword for his only defence; the others were inferior officers, who wore small cloth-caps. As they came in view, presenting as they did so fair a mark, every horseman who bore a rifle, instantly slipped it from the sling, and commenced a desultory fire upon them. But, although the balls fell thick about them, they valiantly kept their ground, and, regardless of danger, did not appear at all disposed to retire from their position.

Cara Bey instantly saw how easy it would be to make them prisoners, and without loss of time ordered a detachment of

some of his chosen men to make a circuit in order to cut them off from the main body. Then turning to Osmond, he said, "Now, Sir Frank, let me see what you can do,—let me see whether you be a true man or not : go, my eyes are upon you." Osmond would willingly have kept aloof from the fray, but feeling that he might, perhaps, be instrumental in saving life, and preventing the effusion of blood, and aware, moreover, in how critical a situation he was himself placed, he at once joined the party. Mounted upon a Kurdish horse of great power and speed, he altogether looked as complete an Asiatic as his companions; but he was aware of being strictly watched, and although the thought might have flashed across his mind that he now had an opportunity of escaping, yet he instantly rejected the temptation when he reflected that, by so doing, not only would he deliver up his two followers to certain destruction, but also be making a sacrifice of his honour, although it was only to a barbarian, who had none.

The ground happened to be so broken that the detached party found no difficulty in putting their chieftain's scheme into execution. Gradually gliding behind the condensed troop, they dropped into a small ravine, which led by a succession of projecting banks, emanating from the mound upon which the officers had taken post; then, carefully concealing themselves, they made a long circuit, until they came close upon the Russians; when, rushing at once to the spot which intervened between the troops and their officers, they succeeded in making the attack just as the latter were retreating into the hollow square. All secured their retreat excepting the principal officer, the youth before-mentioned; who, whether from pride or contempt of his enemy, chose to betray no haste in his motions, and walked almost leisurely towards his company. A fire had opened from one side of the square upon the advancing horsemen, which had the effect of stopping their career; three of the bravest, however, would not allow their ardour to be checked, but made at once for the young officer, with the intention of putting him to death. Sword in hand, they flew at him. Perceiving his fate, and that he was cut off from his companions, he stood to defend himself; he parried one man's thrust with success, another was about cutting him down, when Osmond, who had followed the three, drove his horse between the com-

batants, received the blow that was intended for the officer on his own sword, and then throwing it, by the sling, on his wrist, thrust forward his hand, seized the youth by the collar, and with that grasp which the great strength of his arm enabled him to accomplish, carried him off, half-dragging, half-running, to Cara Bey, and did not stop until he had reached his very stirrup. During this occurrence, which was performed with breathless rapidity, the young Russian roared out to his troops to fire. Their astonishment at what had taken place was such that they lost all presence of mind, for they neither heard nor heeded his command; and it was only when perceiving their officer thus carried away, that it occurred to them to fire: had they done so at first, probably they would have annihilated Osmond, officer, and all; but they fired too late to produce any effect, and nobody was hurt.

Osmond's feat had been so instantaneous, and executed with so much skill and bravery, that Cara Bey and his men could scarcely believe their senses when they saw him appear officer in hand.

"*Aferin! aferin! Frangi!*—Well done, Frank!" broke out from the mouths of those who had witnessed the scene. Cara Bey, in particular, appeared charmed; he extolled Osmond's bravery; called him "*Gardask*—brother!" all his suspicions appeared from that moment to have vanished, and he took him into especial favour. Much time, however, could not be taken up in admiration; for the Russians, finding that their officer was now a prisoner, made a movement in advance, in the hope of releasing him; but Cara Bey, satisfied with what had been done, and foreseeing that such a prize might further his views, ordered a rapid retreat to his castle.

Tying the unfortunate prisoner's hands behind his back, and blindfolding his eyes, they mounted him behind a trooper, and carried him off at so quick a pace, that it was impossible for the soldiers to overtake him. During this operation, which was conducted under the direction of Hassan, Osmond stood near, to see that he was treated with as little roughness as possible. The youth bore his misfortune with the fortitude of a hero; and although Osmond's heart smote him when he saw the horrors of the situation in which he had been the means of placing him, still he was consoled by the reflection that he had

also been the means of saving him from certain death. The barbarians would have drunk his blood, so incensed were they at the failure of their enterprise; for they had anticipated booty of all sorts, and licentious revelry for several days; but Osmond had interested Hassan in his behalf, and he, at this dangerous crisis, protected him.

Osmond perceived at once that the prisoner was a well-born youth; his manners were remarkably good, and his whole appearance prepossessing. He would have given the world to have talked to him—to have comforted him with hope of deliverance, to have consoled him by the assurance that he had a friend and protector at hand; but so fearful was he of committing himself and giving rise to suspicions, that he refrained, although he was determined at the first fitting opportunity to open himself to him.

The whole party hastened onwards to the castle. There were two roads; the one which led to the principal entrance was long and of no very difficult ascent—the other was shorter, a secret path, of the most rugged nature, and only taken upon particular occasions. When they had reached the spot where the two roads parted, Cara Bey collected a small detachment, the command of which he took to himself, in order to conduct the prisoner by the shortest road, whilst he ordered Hassan to take charge of the main body.

At the same time he directed Osmond and his servants to follow the prisoner, giving some directions to Hassan, which were inaudible to the rest of the party. They commenced the ascent on horseback, but it soon became too difficult for the footing of their steeds, and they were obliged to dismount and lead them. The horse upon which the young officer was mounted was forced up the steep path in spite of every impediment, for the bandage was not allowed to be taken from his eyes. Osmond, who occasionally walked at his side, watched the countenance of the prisoner, who appeared absorbed in the contemplation of the misfortune which had overtaken him. A tear trickled down his cheek. This spoke volumes; he was, perhaps, wrapped up in the recollection of some tender parent or some dear friend, lost to him, as he felt, for ever; or he might be deploring his rashness in having thus foolishly hazarded his liberty, and perhaps his life, whilst he had forgotten

his duty as an officer ; or he might be regretting the loss of his prospects in his profession, and contemplating the horrors of imprisonment in the hands of a ruthless barbarian. Osmond could no longer withstand the feeling of pity which sprang in his heart at this sight. He had observed that the youth could not explain himself, and did not understand one word of the Turkish language ; his exclamations and whatever he attempted to say being in Russian : but, from his appearance, he presumed that he must talk French ; and, overlooking every other consideration, he said to him in a low voice, as he walked by his side, " Do not be disheartened ; you have a friend here who will watch over your safety."

An electric shock could not have acted more violently than these words upon the frame of the young officer. " Speak again, whoever you are !" he exclaimed in very good French ; " in the name of Heaven, tell me who you are !"

" Hush !" said Osmond ; " say no more—we are watched. Again I say, do not despair—all will be well !"

Cara Bey, whose ears were open to every sound, as his thoughts were awake to every emergency, heard the Russian's voice, and immediately exclaimed, " What does the dog say ?"

Osmond answered, " As you would obtain mercy, show mercy to your prisoner."

" Mercy ! mercy, indeed !" shouted the other in savage exultation ; " Do you see that eagle ?" said he, as he pointed to one perched on the summit of a conspicuous rock—" does he show mercy ? Cara Bey learns how to war from the eagle. Look up to yonder castle ;—we do not keep that as a house of pleasure for such dogs as this ! Where did you learn the trade of a soldier ?"

" The trade of a soldier," replied Osmond, " does not prevent me from having the feelings of a man. In my country, when we go to war, it is with states, and not with individuals."

" Oh !" exclaimed Cara Bey, " you are one of those mad Franks who esteem yourselves wiser than other people ; wait till you reach yon walls, and you will learn other things."

This conversation took place during the labours of a severe ascent, in broken words, spoken between the heavings of the breath caused by violent exertion.

Mustafa and Stasso followed close in the rear of Osmond,

and lent a greedy ear to all that passed ; the former trembled at the prospect of being immured within the castle ; whilst the latter took the most attentive survey of every turn of the path, of every rock and stone, of the direction of surrounding objects, and particularly of the exact position of the Russian post, in the hope of one day being able to profit by it.

At length the whole party reached the summit of the mountain, and touched the very base of the castle walls. In turning back to survey the path which they had taken, it was evident that none but those who were thoroughly practised, could ever find their way up, or discover the small gate, which was secreted within a projection : through this they now made their entrance. As soon as the gate was closed, and carefully locked and bolted, Cara Bey ordered the bandage to be taken from the eyes of his prisoner, who was then led forward, through a long narrow passage, into a room of sufficiently large dimensions. His first impulse was to look around and discover, if possible, the person who had spoken to him ; but seeing none but Asiatics, for all traces of the European were lost in Osmond's complete disguise, he began to fancy that the words which he had heard addressed to him in French, were only the work of his imagination. He discovered in Osmond the man who had saved his life and made him prisoner, and therefore eyed him with peculiar interest. He would have addressed himself to the chief ; but, instead of being allowed an opportunity of making a remonstrance, to his surprise and indignation he was rudely seized upon by two ruffians, who, putting a rope round his breast, and under his arms, forcibly urged him towards a trap-door, which was concealed by matting, and, notwithstanding his struggles, violently obliged him to descend into a deep well, to the bottom of which, by the help of the rope, they gradually lowered him. At the sight of this indignity, Osmond turned round to remonstrate with Cara Bey, but, to his surprise, he was gone ; and, what was still more extraordinary, the door, which evidently led into the other part of the castle, was closed upon him by the two ruffians as they left the room, and thus he found that, with Mustafa and Stasso, he actually remained a prisoner also.

The person who received the first burst of his indignation, the appointed jailor, was an old Turk, of a placid and benign

aspect, whose looks of sympathy spoke him to be an unwilling witness to such infamy. "How is this, O man?" exclaimed Osmond: "am I also your prisoner? Is not your Bey already sufficiently a tyrant and a traitor, that he must add this act to his barbarity? The poorest Arab will receive his guest with hospitality, and, although laden with gold, would scorn to rob him as long as he is under his roof. I came to your master for protection; he pretends to grant it, but cheats me out of my liberty. Speak! are you a party concerned in this act of treachery?"

"*Ne apalum*—what can I say?" said the old man, shrugging up his shoulders. "If you have not known our Bey before, you know him now. I am under authority; I grieve for you, but cannot help you."

"Where is Hassan his *kiaya*? Surely there must be some mistake," said Osmond.

"He is one big rogue too," said Mustafa, in some measure consoled by his master's misfortune in finding his predictions about to be realized. "Did I not tell you, that you do not know these fellows? They are now laughing at our beards, and calling out, '*Ba! ba!*—see what clever fellows we are to trick this Frank!' Ah, why did you ever come here?"

Stasso's rage was not less than his master's; his first impulse was to endeavour to escape, and he began to try the strength of the doors, when he was stopped by the good-natured expostulations of old Mahmoud, who said, "My son, cease your endeavours; they will avail nothing, they will only lead you yonder," pointing to the well; "remain where you are, and be content."

Osmond could not bring himself to believe it was really intended that he should continue a prisoner, for, referring to the whole of Hassan's conduct, from his release to the time he delivered him over to Cara Bey, he could not discover what advantage could be obtained by keeping him in confinement. He was too poor to be an object of plunder, and, if it were intended to enrol him among his followers, wherefore keep him a prisoner? However, it was impossible to argue from the conduct of others to what might be the views of Cara Bey, who was evidently a wretch swayed by jealousy, caprice, suspicion, or fifty other feelings unknown to Osmond. He consoled

himself by the reflection that he had at least been the means of saving a man's life ; and a small still voice within would further tell him, that to this incident, which now appeared so disastrous in his eyes, would be owing his emancipation from all his miseries. With this feeling he approached the mouth of the well, and, with the permission of the old jailer, who lifted up the trap-door for the purpose, accosted the young Russian.

The words which he uttered fell in cheering accents upon the ears of the unfortunate youth, as the first indications of help act upon the feelings of a lost and benighted traveller ; a thrill of transport ran through his frame, and, with tears of gratitude in his eyes, he exclaimed, "For the love of God, tell me who you are?"

"I am a prisoner like yourself," answered Osmond, "though not so ill off as you : we are both in the hands of a villain ; but let us take courage, and trust to God for our deliverance."

This opening led to a free and frank communication between them, in which Osmond gave a full account of himself, and of the manner in which he had fallen into his present predicament, which was followed on the part of the Russian by a narrative of his own history and adventures. Osmond thought it right to inform him that he was the man who had, in fact, deprived him of his liberty ; but that, distressed as he was at the result of his feat, still he could not help congratulating himself upon it, as he thereby had been the means of saving his life. And he added, that nothing should be left untried by him, were he to regain his own freedom, to endeavour to make up for the violence which he had been obliged to exercise, by exertions in his favour. However enraged the Russian might have been at the time to find himself carried off in so unceremonious a manner in the very face of his own troops, yet, when he found that he who had made him prisoner had also saved his life, he allowed his feelings of gratitude to predominate, and almost forgot what had passed, in the charm of hearing the voice of a friend when he was about to abandon himself to despair. He informed Osmond that he belonged to a noble family in his own country ; that his name was Ivanovitch ; and that, owing to some juvenile indiscretion in his corps, he had been exiled for two years to this distant station. He described the hole in which he was now confined, as a sort of dry well or cistern cut into the rock, some thirty feet under ground, six feet long and five wide, receiving no

other light and air than that which a narrow embrasure cut into the summit of the wall could admit. It contained neither bed nor seat. A little straw and a small earthen vessel placed in a corner, was all that he had found for his convenience; and he added, by way of a hint of what his fate might be, that he had discovered a newly-dug grave. This Osmond found, upon inquiry from the old jailor, contained the remains of a Bey, who had recently been put to death by Cara Bey.

"Allah! Allah!" exclaimed Mustafa, upon hearing this piece of information, his teeth chattering with fear and his face assuming the colour of death,—“why did we ever leave Kars? What ashes are fallen upon our heads! Better to have eaten stick among the Turks, than to be buried in a hole by these devil-worshippers.”

“Patience, my soul!” quietly enjoined the benign jailor. “Do we know what is good or bad for us? If it be your destiny to be buried in a hole, wherefore grieve? Say ‘Praise be to Allah!’ whatever may happen. I am a Mussulman as well as you; and these grey hairs of mine” (touching his beard at the same time) “have witnessed more misfortunes than ever your chin has seen; and still I say, ‘Praise be to Allah!’”

“And so you may, if you choose, and welcome,” retorted Mustafa; “but will that make me a bit less a prisoner? This man is an English *beyzadeh*—a lord’s son; what has he to do with your devil-worshippers? I am his servant, what have I to do with them?” Then taking up a plaintive tone, he entreated him, saying, “Go, Mahmoud Aga, as you love your soul! go, tell your chief, that it is not the custom to make English *beyzadehs*, who are friends of his government and country, prisoners, and to treat them as enemies. As for the Moscovs, well, do what you like with them; but with us the case is different.”

Long and various were the consultations between Osmond and Ivanovitch, between Mustafa and Stasso, and between them all and the old jailor, ere they made up their minds to pass the night in their present state of misery; but there seemed to be no help for it. None but the most ordinary food was brought to them, and they slept upon the bare boards. The abject fear and awe in which every one stood of Cara Bey, prevented any appeal to him. No one dared venture to remonstrate after he

had once given an order; and, to all appearance, his resolves concerning Osmond and his servants were final. As for the unfortunate Ivanovitch, whether buried alive in the depth of the well, or buried a corpse in the bowels of the earth, to the inmates of the castle it seemed to be one and the same thing, and no one cared or thought more about him. But, however much he was to be pitied, Osmond was in fact still more an object of compassion; for, when left to himself, his mind was principally absorbed in contemplating the possibility of the threat which Cara Bey had uttered of seizing Ayesha. The more he dwelt upon that thought, the more he felt the utter misery and helplessness of his present situation. If the tyrant really meant to put his infernal scheme into execution, Osmond's only hope was that his services might be required, for then he might perhaps either frustrate the scheme altogether, or, if she were unfortunate enough to fall into the tyrant's hands, protect her, or, if he could not protect her, die in the attempt. When his imagination carried him on to the maddening thought of seeing one so fair and so innocent exposed to the rude insults of the monster, his senses almost forsook him, whilst his blood boiled with the fire of his indignation. He groaned with mental agony,—all his own cares were lost in this one absorbing thought, and as sleep forsook his eyelids, so the miseries which he endured gradually wasted his strength, and produced a baneful effect upon his person.

CHAPTER XIX.

Entre les sectes nombreuses qui se sont élevées dans la Mésopotamie, il n'en est aucune qui soit odieuse à toutes les autres autant que celle des Yezidis.

Notice sur les Yezidis, par le Père Maurice Garzoni.

THE Yezidies, or the worshippers of Satan, as they are frequently called, are one of the numerous sects which were formed in Mesopotamia, among the Mussulmans, after the

death of their Prophét, and extended themselves more particularly among that ancient people the Kurds. They constitute a curious chapter in the history of man. Their founder was Sheikh Yezid, the declared enemy of the family of Ali. The doctrine they profess is a mixture of Manicheism, Mahomedanism, and the religion of the ancient Persians. It is preserved by oral tradition, reading and writing not being allowed among them.

By the true believers they are looked upon as accursed; their name is synonymous with blasphemers, barbarians, and men of blood. Owing to the want of written records, it is very difficult to procure any accurate information concerning them, as they preserve great secrecy in matters of religion. The general report is, that the first principle of the Yezidies is to insure the friendship of the Devil, and to defend his interests by the sword. They never mention his name, and even adopt all sorts of circumlocution rather than pronounce any word or sound which expresses it. Whoever approaches their habitation must be careful not to pronounce the word *shaitan* and *lahnet*—devil and accursed, for fear of being ill-treated, or even put to death. The evil spirit has no precise name in their language. They designate him as the Sheikh Mäzen, or the great chief. They admit of the prophets and the saints revered by Christians, and respect the monasteries bearing their names, situated within their territories. They believe that all such holy personages, when they lived on the earth, were more or less distinguished according as the Devil was pleased to notice them. In a word, they affirm that it is God who ordains, but that he delivers over the execution of his orders to the Devil. In the morning, as soon as the sun appears, they fall on their knees, their feet being naked, with their faces towards that luminary, and worship him, touching the ground with their foreheads; and this they do in all secrecy. They keep no fasts and say no prayers, and, to justify this omission, they assert that their Skeikh Yezid has in his own person made sufficient atonement until the end of the world, that he received a positive assurance of this in the revelations made to him, and that therefore it is prohibited to them to learn to read and write. Nevertheless, every chief of a tribe, and all large villages, pay a Mahomedan scribe to read any letters which

may be received from Turks and men in authority. Whatever regards their own immediate concerns is always performed by word of mouth, conveyed by messengers of their own sect.

Without prayers, without fasts, without rites, they have no religious festivals, except one, on the 10th of August, when they assemble in great numbers in the neighbourhood of Sheikh Adi. At that time many Yezidies come from the most distant points; the festival lasts all that day and the night following; and during their passage to the place of congregation, they do not scruple to rob and plunder. Married women go in numbers to the surrounding villages; and on that night, it is said, after having eaten and drunk their fill, the lights are extinguished, and nothing more is said until the morning. They eat everything without discrimination, except lettuce and pumpkins; they only bake barley bread. They use indiscriminately the same form of oaths as Turks, Christians, and Jews, but their great oath is "By the standard of Yezid!"

The Yezidies recognise for the chief of their religion, the Sheikh who governs the tribe, to whom is confined the care of the tomb of Adi, the restorer of their sect. This tomb is in the jurisdiction of the governor of Amadiyah. The chief of this tribe must always be chosen from among the descendants of Yezid. The respect which is paid him by his adherents is such, that they are charmed if they can obtain one of his old shirts as a winding-sheet; they think that they shall be well off in the next world with such an appendage: some zealots will even give forty piastres for such a relic—a remnant suffices, if they cannot procure a whole shirt. When he wishes to confer a peculiar favour, he sends an old shirt as a present. The Yezidies convey to him secretly a portion of their robbery and plunder, by way of indemnification for the hospitality he exercises towards the individuals of his own sect.

The chief of the Yezidies always keeps near him another personage, who is called Kotchek, and without whose advice he does not venture to do anything. This man is looked upon as the oracle of the chief, because he is said to enjoy the privilege of being the immediate recipient of the Devil's communications. When any Yezidi is in doubt whether he should engage in an important affair or not, he seeks the advice of the Kotchek, which, however, is not given to him without a

consideration. Before the Kotchek affords his advice, in order to give the utmost weight to his answer, he extends himself at full-length on the ground, and covering himself over, he either sleeps, or pretends to sleep, after which he communicates what has been revealed to him, and the decision is made. Sometimes, he takes a long while to consider.

The following fact will serve to show the influence which such a personage possesses. Many years ago, the women of the Yezidies, like those of the Arabs, in order to save soap, wore dark blue chemises, dyed with indigo. One morning, when it was least expected, the Kotchek appeared before the chief of his sect, and announced, that it had been revealed to him during the preceding night, that blue was a colour which brought ill-luck, and was held in abhorrence by the Devil. Nothing more was necessary to cause express messengers to be sent to the various tribes with an order, that blue was for the future an unpermitted colour, that all clothes of that colour were to be destroyed, and that white, for the future, was to be adopted. This order has been adhered to with such great exactitude, that if at this day a Yezidi, living with a Turk or a Christian, was to find upon his bed a blue coverlet, he would sleep in his own white clothes, and perish with cold, rather than use it.

The Yezidies, as a race, are one of the most cruel and sanguinary that are known in Asia; for it is generally reported of them, that in war, particularly in their petty differences with the Turks, whenever they make prisoners, they give no quarter, but put every one to death without discrimination. At the same time, they are the greatest moral dastards and cowards, because, according as their interest may impel them, they do not hesitate to call themselves Mahomedans, Christians, or Jews, as may best suit their purpose at the moment. They pretend to hold in great veneration the Koran, the Gospel, the books of Moses, and the Psalms; and although they may be convicted of being Yezidies, yet they swear through thick and thin that they are not, and, for the time being, abjure their real faith.

This sketch of the extraordinary race may give the reader some idea of the wretches into whose hands Osmond had fallen. Cara Bey deserved the reputation which he had acquired, of

being a Yezidi of the most sanguinary character. He was tolerated by the Grand Signor, as were others of his sect, because, according to the opinions of Mahomedan doctors, expounders of the law, every man is considered a true believer who will make a profession of the fundamental doctrines of Islam, namely, "That there is no other God than God, and that Mahomed is the Prophet of God," although he fails in the practice of all the other precepts of the Koran. Cara Bey made no difficulty in making this profession, and, when in presence of Mahomedans, in keeping up the semblance of being one of them; but, at the same time, he made no scruple in putting them to death, whenever he could do so with impunity; and indeed, according to the principles of his own creed, he believed that in so doing he performed an action which was full of merit in the eyes of his great Sheikh—that is, the Devil.

It was said that Cara Bey, before he acquired his present eminence, had been executioner in the service of the governor of Ahmadiyah; and that, in consequence of the number of Turkish heads which he had cut off, he was held in proportionably great veneration by his own sectaries, who, when they approached him, were wont to kiss his hands, sanctified, so they esteemed them to be, by the blood of Turks. But the secret of his security in power and the possession of his stronghold, was said to be the protection of the Capidan Pasha at the Porte, which he had purchased at a great price, and which he continued to enjoy by pouring into the coffers of that great officer an annual tribute in gold to some considerable amount. Thus protected, he bade defiance to the efforts of the Pasha of Kars, or any other of the Turkish neighbouring local authorities, against him, and continued, almost uncontrolled, to be the terror of the traveller, and of caravans, as well as of the country round about.

His castle was one of those structures frequently seen in Armenia, crowning the summit of detached hills, apparently of the same date and architecture as the city of Anni; and was evidently adopted by the Turks, in their first inroads from the East, as a frontier fortress. Its outer walls were intersected at intervals by square turrets, indented with embrasures. The building consisted of a court, entered by massive gates, which led into suites of rooms, lower and upper: the lower were ap-

appropriated to offices and stables, the upper to the habitation of the chief. On a detached rock, communicating by a narrow wooden bridge to the main building, stood a square fort or keep, which formed the prison in which Osmond and the young Russian were confined. The whole was strong by its position, well calculated to resist any attack that might be made upon it by Asiatic troops, but not proof against artillery.

Cara Bey's own apartment was situated in such a manner as to command a view of the adjacent country, extending towards the plain of Erivan, watered by the Arpachai, and terminated by the magnificent mountains, of which the great cone of Ararat, with its minor summit, formed the principal features. Here, seated on his silken cushions, and his windows open to every breeze, did he pass a great portion of his time when he was not abroad as a freebooter, telescope in hand, scrutinizing objects far and near; his eye principally fixed upon a tract of the high caravan road from Persia into Turkey. From this room into his harem, which consisted of a low set of apartments, the small windows of which looked immediately upon the walls of the prison, there was an immediate access by means of a narrow and intricate passage. Here lived, in a state of miserable bondage, several unfortunate women, who were kept, like puppets, in a box, for the sole purpose of administering to his pleasures. One among them was dignified with the title of "Kadun," and bore a certain preeminence over the rest, who were called her slaves: but hers was but a poor superiority, deprived as she was, in common with the others, of the advantages of air, liberty, and converse with her fellow-creatures. Cara Bey's licentiousness knew no bounds. Frequently had he undertaken predatory excursions for the sole purpose of seizing upon some unfortunate maiden, whose reputation for beauty had excited his evil passions, attacked the village in which she lived, and carried her forcibly away from her parents, perhaps amid the ruins of their habitation, and after the horrors of murder and pillage committed by his sanguinary gang.

The constant suspicion in which he lived of those around him, was the cause of his determination to place Osmond and his servants in confinement. He was too well aware of the state of things at Constantinople, of the power exercised by

European ambassadors in the protection of the subjects of their country, and of the investigations likely to be set on foot in case of their loss or abduction, not to feel that, were it known that he had been the means of destroying an Englishman, and one of consequence, as in the present instance, not all the protection which the Capidan Pasha could afford him, nor all the money which he might expend, could eventually secure him from molestation. His ulterior object, therefore, was not Osmond's destruction; and he adopted the half-measure, between plunging him into Ivanovitch's well, and leaving him full liberty to range the castle at large,—that of simple confinement in a room.

This arrangement, however satisfactory it might be to himself, was not at all so to Hassan, his *kiaya*; who, really attached to Osmond from gratitude and from admiration of his high qualities, deplored in his heart the treatment which he had met with. The constant fear in which he lived of his ferocious master, prevented him from speaking his mind boldly; but it was evident, from his dull and downcast looks, from the loss of his energetic manner, and from the few words which he spoke when addressed, that the situation of his friend and deliverer, a situation in which he had been the means of placing him, was a subject which weighed him down with sorrow.

"*Ne oldou, pezevenk?*"—What has happened, fellow?" exclaimed Cara Bey to him, the day after they returned from their last expedition. "Are you become an owl, or a camel, or, what is worse, a Turkish dog, that you go moping about as if the day of judgment were at hand? What ails thee, man?"

"*Bir chey yok!*"—There is nothing!" answered the other, stroking his great mustaches down as he spoke, sighing the while, and looking like a condemned malefactor.

"Nothing! say you? Then wherefore so *kief siz*—so spiritless? Look! you know Cara Bey! He is not apt to take bad jokes. By the standard of Yezid! I swear, and, what is more, by this whisker!" touching the tip of his own as he spoke, "if you do not put off this piece of fool's play, and go about your duties like a good servant, I will make your soul jump out of that carcase of yours! Have you heard me?"

"You are the master to do as you please," said the other, doggedly.

"Speak then!" said Cara Bey: "speak; let us see. Are you not clothed sumptuously? Are you not fed well? Have you not the choicest horses in my stable at your command? Next to myself, have you not more authority than any other in the castle? For what then can you wish? If you want my musnud too, and my seals," added he, mockingly, "Bismillah! here, Sir Bey, come hither, sit, eat, drink, kill, rob, riot; what more can you want?"

"What does my lord say?" answered Hassan, with less sullenness and more confidence. "I am a poor man, and his slave. Praises be to Allah! I have everything at command from your bounty. You have done everything for me except one."

"*Ne var* — What is that?" said Cara Bey, his countenance taking that look which may be called the true satanic—a scowl on the brow and a smile on the lip. "What do you want?"

"You have not done me justice," said Hassan meekly; "I want justice."

"Justice!" exclaimed the other, breaking into a fiendish laugh. "Mashallah! how long have you become a mollah? You shall be made mufti of this castle, and with a great green caouk on your head, as large as Aligez yonder, you shall for the future dispense justice from the bench, instead of taking your pleasure on the saddle. Justice, eh!"

"You are the master," said the other, "but, in truth, my soul is sick — our honour is gone!"

"Man! are you run mad?" exclaimed Cara Bey in astonishment; "first you want justice, then your honour is gone: what words are these? Do I care for justice? Do I pine for my honour? If I do not, wherefore should you?—you, who only shine by reflection! Go, go, you are run mad."

"If such be the case, then," said Hassan, with great apparent feeling, "allow me to lay down my place of kiaya, and to return to that of one of your guard. My arms, my legs are broken; I can do nothing more than desire death, which I will seek on the first opportunity."

At these words Cara Bey answered nothing, but appeared for a moment in deep thought, although it was evident that

passion and that of the direst nature, was working in his breast. At last he said, "What do you require? Speak! I command you."

The Frank whom you have confined," said Hassan boldly, "has saved my life twice. I brought him to you upon the faith of receiving your protection; you have broken that faith. I ask you to release him, and this head of mine answers for his conduct."

At these words the whole demon broke forth in the person of Cara Bey. The obliquity as well as the brilliancy of his eyes combined, became horrible to behold; his white livid countenance was streaked with blue; his black hair exhibited a tendency to distension: he clenched his hands; he half-rose from his seat: his throat seemed too small for the utterance of his words. At length they came out, streaming with blasphemy and violence, as the first black volume of smoke issues from the chimney of a furnace before the coal has ignited! "Dog! rogue! ill-born! asses' colt!" first came from his lips; then, "I'll sell your mother. Shall I not do what I please with my own prisoners, and in my own castle? Shall I look to you for dictation? Dog! I'll destroy your father — a dog is too good for your parent." All this poured forth in such rapid succession that there was no interval between one gradation of abuse and another; until hoarseness overtook him, when he at length roared out for the inflictors of his cruelty to appear, and immediately ordered the too faithful Hassan to receive an untold bastinado on the soles of his feet. It was with difficulty that he restrained himself from ordering instant death, but the services of the offender were too well known and too valuable to him to be thus lost, and self-interest stepped in to allay the violence of his mad fury. The poor creature suffered without a groan, and was at length carried away in a state of total insensibility; his feet were beaten into a shapeless mass; the pain which he had undergone had almost caused his eyes to start from his head, whilst his parched mouth became black with darkened blood.

The fiend who had thus treated his faithful servant, would probably have made his vengeance fall upon the head of Osmond as well, but he was luckily brought to his more sober senses by the reflection that he had deprived himself of Hassan's

services when they would be of eminent use in a certain expedition which he had planned, and which he was anxious to put into execution without loss of time. This was the scheme which he had hinted to Osmond at their first interview—namely, that of bearing away Ayesha by force, and adopting her as the future queen of his harem. Such were the repeated accounts which had come to his ears of her extraordinary beauty and merit, and so much had his curiosity been raised after all that had taken place at Kars between her and Osmond, that his only thought was how he could obtain possession of her. This he turned over in his mind in every possible manner, viewing it in every light, and mad to undertake it, although he saw it fraught with difficulty. With Hassan's activity, bravery, and sagacity, he felt that he should be certain of success; but now that he had deprived himself of these helps for some time, he was almost on the point of knocking his head against the wall for having allowed his passion thus to overcome his better reason. But, in order to ease his mind of its present embarrassed state in regard to the expedition which he had in view, he sent for his Kotchek, or priest, the doleful-looking person whom we have before noticed, and ordered him to acquire some certain information whether the project which he contemplated, and which he explained to him, would meet with success or not. Cara Bey, who had in some measure arrogated to himself the dignity of being the head of the Yezidies, chose to adopt the privilege belonging to their real head, of keeping a Kotchek; and thus he felt his mind steeled against the iniquity of his horrid achievements, flattering himself that the responsibility lay at the door of the priest who sanctioned them.

The Kotchek, upon hearing the magnitude of the scheme, shook his head as if to say that it would be too difficult to accomplish; but as soon as he perceived the rising impatience of his chief, he began to fear that, if he refused his sanction, it might be the worse for him. Straightway he proceeded to business.—He first covered himself over with a large black cloak, and his head with a dark shawl; he then ensconced himself in the corner of a quiet room, where he extended his person at full-length on the floor. No one was permitted to disturb him on pain of punishment. There he lay, apparently torpid, waiting for a revelation from the Devil; but so long did he remain

in this state, that Cara Bey would every now and then steal into the room where he lay, and give him a monitory kick by way of hastening his operations. At length he arose, and with many hypocritical manifestations of having received a full and true communication, announced to his vivacious master that he might proceed in full surety of being successful, provided he crossed the threshold of his castle with his left leg foremost; and provided that he, the priest, received certain measures of rice, and of butter, and a good fat lamb, on the very day of the return of the expedition. Moreover, he warned him, as he valued his life, not to omit putting on, next to his skin, the old shirt which had lately been sent him from the great Sheikh of their tribe; and particularly not to wear it inside out, for much of his safety depended upon that.

Cara Bey announced himself well pleased with his priest's decision, and assured him, that not only would he bestow upon him the desired donation of rice and lamb, but that, on the day after his return, he would give a plentiful feast of pillau to his whole establishment and garrison.

Having said this, he immediately turned his mind to planning the expedition; and first, he thought it necessary to obtain from Hassan, who was better acquainted with the localities than any other man in the garrison, every information as to the best time and mode of attack. He did not cease upbraiding himself with want of foresight in having thus deprived himself of his services at a moment when they were most wanted, but still cherished the hope that, with proper remedies, he might sufficiently patch up his lacerated feet to enable him to be of the party. He proceeded to visit the poor man, who lay in agony, groaning with the pain of his wounds, and restless with feverish excitement. As he approached his bed, he assumed a voice of great interest and condolence, assuring him of his sorrow at seeing him in this state, and of his desire to ensure his recovery. He recommended that he should be removed into his own harem, where the women should take charge of him and watch over his recovery; and as a warrant of his good intentions, immediately ordered the change to be made. By the help of two men, under the direction of their chief in person, he was conducted from his own dark lodging into a small closet immediately at the entrance of the women's apartments, where he was deposited on a soft bed, propped up

with pillows, and treated with the same comforts which the Bey himself would have commanded.

Hassan allowed all this to be done for him, and received the attentions of his chief with every appearance of thankfulness; but his heart was not moved. He had been most cruelly treated : his fidelity was overlooked, and his services unheeded; he felt that he had been treated like the commonest menial. He had determined never to forgive this conduct. Although a marauder and a robber, yet his nature was full of gratitude, and having once received benefits, he never forgot them : but he was also revengeful; and being full of intelligence and resources, his hatred became dangerous. That feeling now was predominant in his breast, and Cara Bey was its object. The only relief which he enjoyed as he lay writhing on his bed of pain, was the contemplation of future revenge. He was universally beloved by the garrison, and was looked up to with great respect, on account of his sagacity and presence of mind in all emergencies of danger; indeed, Cara Bey's success and elevation were principally attributed to him : whatever, therefore, he proposed, was executed with zeal; and it had often been thought that, had his ambition prompted him to set up for himself, he might with ease have deposed his master and taken his place.

Cara Bey having taken merit to himself for conferring the distinction of his care and attention upon Hassan, with fawning duplicity called him his friend and adviser, informed him of his scheme, and of his intention of immediately putting it into execution. "But," my friend," said he, "you are the only man among us who can guide us in this adventure; let me hope that you will be able to go also : we shall have plenty of plunder : you owe a grudge to those cows of Turks; it will be a good time to pay it off."

Hassan, who knew that his only chance of revenge was present dissimulation, appeared to enter into his views, and said that, if he were only able to sit on his saddle, he would go; and there was no doubt that he could lead to the very house in which the maiden lived with her father and mother. "But," said he, "only look at my feet; they are totally useless! Besides, I am wasting away with such a burning heat all over my body, that I should die ere I got to Kars."

Cara Bey appeared to be in great distress at his suffering. He ordered the bandages to be taken off his feet; and then, indeed, he was convinced that, unless a miracle were performed, it would be impossible for him to stir for some time. "What is to be done?" said he.

"Let Mariam be called."

Upon which he ordered one of his women slaves, of that name, who enjoyed his confidence, and who acted as his cook, to be sent to him. It must be said, that this individual Mariam was one of the same mountain village in the Kurdistan as Hassan himself; had known him from childhood; and, if it must be avowed, a certain *tendresse* existed between them, though, on account of the severe restraint under which they both lived, it had never been expressed.

As soon as she appeared in the sick man's room, with a veil thrown loosely over her head and face, Cara Bey ordered her to approach. "Here, woman," said he, "look at this. You are a *hakeem*, a doctor, I know: you can cure sores and bruises. Here, you must do your best to cure Hassan Bey's feet." And throwing her a piece of gold, he added, "And here, take this; another shall be given as soon as he can walk."

The tender-hearted Mariam, when she discovered the lacerated limbs, and moreover to whom they belonged, uttered a shriek, and began to bewail herself, until she was brought to her senses by her less sensitive master, who ordered her to cease her lamentations, and to bring her salves and ointments. He then left the wounded man, with a promise of returning to him again in the evening, whilst Mariam commenced her operations.

We will not say what passed between them, but the sequel will show how important to the future welfare of Osmund was their meeting, the result of which it is not necessary at present to mention.

CHAPTER XX.

Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing;
Confederate season.

Hamlet.

CARA BEY returned, as he had promised, to the groaning Hassan. His feet had been dressed, and he avowed that they felt relieved; but his fever still raged. It was of that he most complained; and he insisted that, if something were not done for him, he must unavoidably die.

Cara Bey was more than ever anxious to avail himself of his lieutenant's services; but was at a loss how to proceed. There was no one at hand who knew how to treat a fever. "What is to be done?" said he to Hassan: "Will you take a talisman from the Kotchek? or shall I send for the Karabash, or holy man, who lives at the foot of Aligez?"

Hassan shook his head in apparent despair, and showed his parched tongue, and put up his hands to his aching temples. "There is only one thing to be done," said he: "all Franks have a knowledge of medicine: send me the Frank whom you keep in confinement; it is possible he may do me good. He has already saved my life twice; he may, perhaps, save it a third time!"

Cara Bey at this request looked confused, if such an evil countenance could be so deranged; but he hesitated not an instant to adopt the sick man's request. Unwilling to face Osmond after the treachery of which he had been guilty, the dastardly chief slipped out of the sick room, whilst he ordered the Frank to be sent for. The thorough rascal will ever be afraid to face the honest man, whatever may be his power: as, it is said, an enraged bull will shrink from the eye of man. Thus it was in this instance.

Osmond and his companions had, in the meanwhile, passed

their time in anticipation of some communication from their infamous and perfidious host. They were served, through the medium of old Mahmoud, with provisions sufficiently coarse and scanty; and, such as they were, they managed to convey a portion of them to the wretched Ivanovitch, who was only allowed a melancholy pittance of bread, water, and perhaps a little sour milk. He was young and full of hope; and his spirits, through the help of Osmond's cheering conversation, were wonderfully supported. The principal check which they occasionally received was, when he protested that, through the walls of his prison, he heard the moans and lamentations of some imprisoned wretches, still more ill-treated, perhaps, than himself, who evidently were lingering away a hopeless existence in some adjacent dungeon. Osmond, who fully believed the fact, and was even convinced that he heard the same noises, questioned Mahmoud upon the subject, who almost as much as avowed that the prisons of the castle, which were situated in various subterranean parts of it, were filled with desponding prisoners, merchants, travellers, and even inhabitants of villages, who, in attacks upon caravans, and invasions of inhabited places, had been seized and immured by Cara Bey and his adventurous gang.

They were now for the second time about to witness the setting sun from a small window situated nearly opposite those of the harem. From this window a slight view of the distant country, bounded by the western mountains, was obtained, and, by a happy accident, the very spot in which the sun made his exit was distinguishable. They were casting their eyes in melancholy mood at this small portion of the beauties of nature, and Osmond was speculating in his mind upon the chance that was left him of ever again enjoying them with that liberty of heart and person which was to him one of the principal sources of happiness, when a step was heard proceeding towards the door, and a command to Mahmoud to open.

This was no sooner done, than one of Cara Bey's servants entered, and ordered the Frank — Osman, as he called him — to follow him. Osmond immediately asked "Wherefore?" Stasso, fearing more treachery, said that, if his master went, he would go also. Mustafa looked as if he had been condemned to instant death, and stirred not. There was a hesitation,

and the servant appeared uncertain what to do, when, recollecting the object of his message, he said, "Hassan Aga is sick; you must try to cure him. The Bey has ordered it so; follow me you must. Bismillah!"

Osmond was too happy to have an opportunity to see something more of the castle than the four walls in which he had been confined, to hesitate any longer so follow the servant. Besides, he was more than ever anxious to see Hassan, from whom he made no doubt he could extract some information concerning his future fate, and the intentions of Cara Bey towards him. He, consequently, desired Stasso to remain where he was, and informed the servant that he was ready to follow him.

When he entered Hassan's room, he could scarcely recognize, in the pallid cheek and sunken eye of the face before him, the once animated countenance of his travelling companion and deliverer from prison. "Hassan, my friend!" said Osmond, "what has happened? What evil eye has stricken you? Who has thrown you into this state?"

The poor man could not find words to answer, for he, too, was struck at Osmond's altered looks; all he did was to uncover his feet and point to them. He could not have spoken more eloquently had he used the most pathetic forms of speech. Osmond understood at a glance the whole truth, and his blood ran cold with horror as he reflected upon the more than satanic wickedness which could have inflicted such punishment upon such a man.

At length Hassan found strength to say, "My feet will soon get well; but, alas! my fever! I burn—I can find no relief! I have sent to you; perhaps you, in your goodness, will tell me what to do."

Osmond took up the sick man's hand, which was indeed scorching with fever, and, feeling his throbbing pulse, mournfully shook his head. "*Chok chey!*—it is much!" said he, with an expression of great sympathy in his tone and manner; "I can do nothing, alas! You know I lost everything at Kars: had I my medicines here, with the help of God, I might cure you; but now, whither can I turn me?"

Hassan's countenance fell as he heard these words; there

was a look of despondency in Osmond's face that unmanned him, and he almost felt as if death were about to overtake him.

"But stay!" exclaimed Osmond, struck by a sudden thought, and at the same instant thrusting his hand into a side-pocket of his Tatar's coat, "let us see; perhaps—they may still be here; I used to carry some always about me. No—I fear—I have none. Still I think I ought to have some:" then inserting his hand still deeper, he cried out, "Yes, yes! thanks to God! I have. Here are two powders left; by the blessing of Heaven, I may save you yet!" Upon this, he drew forth two papers containing the well-known fever-powders, which during his travels he had always been in the habit of carrying about his person, whilst a thrill of joy ran through his frame and communicated itself to the sick man.

"*Shukier Allah!*" exclaimed Osmond.

"*Shukier Allah!*" repeated Hassan, in response; such faith did he put in Osmond's knowledge and sagacity.

Had any one of his own countrymen produced two such miniature papers before the eyes of Hassan, and assured him that they contained medicines which would effect his cure, he would have laughed him to scorn; but Osmond's word was enough: he believed at once everything he said, and although he might imagine it was through the agency of a charm, or a talisman, that he was about to receive relief, still he believed in the efficacy of the medicine, because it was administered by Osmond.

Osmond saw that Hassan wished to speak to him without a witness, and therefore devised a pretext for getting rid of the servant, who had remained in the room. "Brother," said he to him, "run in haste, get me some hot water; see that it be boiling—do you hear?"

"Upon my head be it!" said the other, unwittingly, and left the room.

The instant he had disappeared, Hassan rose from his bed, and with astonishing alacrity and strength, making an effort upon himself, seized Osmond's hand, and exclaimed with animation, "My lord, my master, you have saved my life twice! You will, please God! save it a third time. But hear me—let me save your's. Cara Bey is a murderer—a demon!

Listen to these words ; for God's sake listen, and hearken to my advice ! On the evening of his return from this expedition to Kars, a large dish of pillau (rice) will be served up to you and your companions. Eat not a grain of it—it will be poisoned—Do you hear?—but thrust your hand under the rice,—at the bottom of the dish you will find a key; that key unlocks the postern-gate leading from your prison to the face of the mountain. The moment you have opened it,—fly, fly, in God's name ! You will have the whole night before you ; for, trusting to the effects of the poison, the villain will not go near you till the morrow : he will then expect to see you dead. He has done so before—I know the monster ! I know him—villain ! coward ! traitor ! Thank God, I have said it !” Upon which, the poor fellow sank down so exhausted, that he almost fainted in Osmond's arms.

Osmond was deeply affected by this mark of attachment : he felt that he had greatly wronged the suffering man by suspecting him of being a party concerned in the treachery of his master and he also felt himself relieved from the necessity of holding any measures of faith towards Cara Bey, who would thus barbarously have put him to death. With this prospect of emancipation before him, his mind naturally turned towards Providence with feelings of gratitude ;—having made up his mind to the worst consequences, he felt cheered by this unexpected prospect of relief.

Elated by such an accession of new hopes, he remained for awhile absorbed in thought, until he found the sick man whom he was supporting, revive. As soon as he could speak, Osmond anxiously enquired what he meant by the expedition to Kars, although he too well suspected the mischiefs which it foreboded.

“He has determined to carry off Suleiman's daughter,” said Hassan.

“Ah ! I thought as much,” said Osmond, scarcely able to draw breath as he spoke. “Tell me—can I go with him ? Tell him I know the house—I know how to procure an admittance !”

“The ruffian is too wary, too jealous ; I doubt whether he will allow you to go.”

“I must, I must go !” said Osmond, with passion and despair

in his heart. "My friend Hassan, endeavour to persuade him that the expedition cannot take place without me. You know all that has happened; the maiden must not fall into his hands!"

"Ah!" said Hassan dolefully, "I see you are not yet fully aware into whose power you have fallen; if you think it possible to deceive him where a woman is concerned, you are mistaken. Besides, the only chance of leading him is by contradiction; perverseness is his first characteristic,—recollect that: we must be very cautious."

"What, then, is to be done to save her?" said Osmond despondingly.

"Save yourself!" answered Hassan, who was a true Mus-sulman in his ideas of women. "What is a woman, after all? there are many women in the world; but you have only one soul—save that."

Osmond perceived all the kindness of Hassan's feelings towards him, and, impelled by his desire to protect Ayesha, and his fear that this grateful barbarian would himself be led into danger, entreated him, whilst he planned the safety of others, to think of his own, and not expose himself to Cara Bey's vengeance.

"Fear not," said Hassan; "fear not for me: we know how to settle our own quarrels. Let it not be said that the stranger has been entrapped to meet his death by my means. I am a match for the traitor; he shall feel that the worm which he now spurns under his feet, can turn upon him. Save yourself—save those who are with you—and leave the rest to me!"

By this time the servant returned with the hot water, when Osmond, having administered one of the powders, gave directions about preserving warmth, described how they would act, and desired that he might be called again after the lapse of a certain length of time. He then left the room and returned to his prison.

Cara Bey had watched with impatience for the termination of Osmond's visit. As soon as he heard that it was over, he returned to the sick room, and anxiously enquired what had been its result; when Hassan described the talismanic powder which he had just taken, prognosticated its effects, and informed him that he hoped soon to be well. Cara Bey shook

his head, incredulous of its virtues, and again would have sent for a Karabash, or wise man, who, he affirmed, by laying his hands upon his neck and shoulders, would do more for him than any Frank, or father of Franks, be he who he might.

In due time the medicine began to work its desired effect. Its violent and refreshing action upon the pores soon procured such relief that the fever disappeared like magic, and with it much of the general infirmity complained of by the patient. His wounded feet, too, partook of the good effect, for his fever having abated, the wounds bore a more healthy appearance. In short, he announced himself convalescent. Cara Bey was the first to cry out 'a miracle!' Believing that he possessed in Osmond a physician who could cure all ills, he contemplated the securing him for ever in his service, and thus, armed with his priest on one side, and his doctor on the other, felt fresh confidence in the prosecution of his nefarious designs. But still his most pressing object was the formation of the expedition to Kars; and, notwithstanding the certainty that he might soon again enjoy the services of his lieutenant, so great was his impatience, that he could scarcely prevail upon himself to wait the few days necessary for the re-establishment of his strength.

His principal object now was to ascertain the distribution of the interior of Suleiman Aga's house, in order that he might effect the seizure of Ayesha with the least possible difficulty. Of this Hassan was ignorant: he could point out which was the house, but could do no more. He was aware, however, that both Lord Osmond and Stasso knew a passage into it through the Armenian's terrace; and of this he informed his chief, who no sooner heard the important fact than he determined to see and question them.

Hassan would have taken advantage of this opportunity to urge the necessity of taking Osmond with him on the expedition, had he not been afraid of too early awakening the suspicions of his chief on that head; he therefore said nothing for the present to influence his mind, hoping that he would of his own accord adopt his wishes.

Cara Bey having returned to his own room, ordered Osmond and his two attendants to be brought before him; and having now an object to gain in the communications which he wished

to draw from them, adopted the utmost obsequiousness in his behaviour to them, thereby exhibiting the whole baseness of his deceitful nature. As soon as they appeared, he invited Osmond to be seated, enquired officiously after his health, and put into play every fawning art to make him forget his ill-treatment.

Osmond received his advances with the most repulsive coldness, and, without giving him leave to proceed, stopped his fulsome speeches by asking, "What he meant by detaining him a prisoner, who had sought his protection, and come to him on the faith of his officer's word?"

"*Ai guzum*—my eyes!" said the crafty wretch, with a hypocritical smile; "what words are these? We are rude men, untaught in the ways of the world. You would not have me unmindful of my own security? This is a bad world, and there are wicked men in it. You come to me, by your own account, a fugitive from the authorities of my own government. You are said to have disobeyed its laws; you would have infringed one of its sacred observances, and invaded the sanctity of our harems. Am I not to be upon my guard when men come to me under such circumstances?"

"You know," said Osmond with indignation, "this is an excuse and a base subterfuge. The authorities of Kars had as little right to detain my person as you have. I am an Englishman; if you insist upon keeping me a prisoner, my government will find means to overtake with its power those who insult me. I demand of you to set me free, and to allow me to return to my own country. Wherefore do you detain me?"

"Be not so hasty," my friend, said Cara Bey: "every thing will be right in time. We are not men to harm the stranger, or to close the gate upon those who seek our skirt. *Yavash, yavash*—slowly, slow. You have this castle for your residence; no one will harm you here. We have need of your assistance. *Mashallah!*—praise be to Allah! you are a man of wisdom and of resource. You have received protection from us. You must give us your advice in return. Have you understood me?"

"If by protection you mean shutting me up, between four walls, and keeping me in durance vile like a criminal—like one of the many poor wretches whom you detain in your dungeons,

let me tell you that I do not understand you. Set me free, and then you may talk to me as a friend. Until then, I must treat you as my enemy."

"So be it," said Cara Bey with assumed frankness; "you shall be free, and you are at liberty to return whence you came. I will myself conduct you back to Kars; to the Russians you cannot go—they are my enemies; to the Persians still less—they drink my blood. We will return to Kars together. Will that suit you?" he enquired with a most sarcastic smile.

"You are aware," said Osmond, "that, if I return to Kars, my life is in danger. What words are these?"

"Do you know the house of Suleiman Aga at Kars?" said Cara Bey, putting on a look of indifference.

"I do. What then?"

"And you have seen his daughter?"

"I have. What more?"

"Could you conduct me there?"

"Wherefore do you ask? If by this question you mean to ask me to be a party to sever an innocent maiden from her home, I tell you at once that I will not. I would protect her with my life from insult and danger; but I will never lend myself to make her wretched."

"You will not?" said Cara Bey, putting off the obsequiousness of his smile, and assuming his own ferociousness of aspect. "*Bakalum*—We shall see! Mashallah! you are a wonderful man. You come into our country, seduce our women, invade our harems, and then, forsooth, set yourself up as a saint! Am I a fool, or you a rogue—which?"

To these words Osmond would have answered with all the warmth of indignation; but, as he felt that the existence of others as well as his own might depend upon his conduct, he did his best to smother his wrath, and remained silent. He hoped, however, from the manner in which he had received Cara Bey's intimations concerning his projected scheme, that sheer perverseness would lead him to require his attendance. And so far he was not mistaken: for at that moment the tyrant had determined to take advantage of his services. After a pause, Cara Bey continued the conversation by endeavouring to draw from Osmond every particular concerning his acquaintance

with Ayesha ; but in this he met with little success. Finding himself foiled, he gradually gave vent to the dictates of his coarse mind, and said things so abhorrent to the ears of a lover, that Osmond's patience was exhausted, and he exhibited, by the violence and impetuosity of his answers, how much in fact his affections were engaged. This circumstance confirmed in Cara Bey's mind the suspicion which he had entertained of the nature of their acquaintance, and made him doubt whether he should insist upon Osmond's accompanying him or not. He reserved this subject for future consideration, and in the meanwhile ordered his prisoner back into confinement.

His doubts increased as he thought on the subject, and he therefore determined to have recourse to his priest. This personage, jealous of his power over Cara Bey, had taken alarm at the success which had attended Osmond's treatment of Hassan. It was rumoured all through the castle that he had worked a miracle upon him. That the sick man should have been restored to health by merely swallowing a diminutive powder, was altogether so improbable, that every one attributed the cure to the agency of some power more than human ; and this was touching so closely upon the province of the Kotchek, that he was immediately determined to overthrow the influence which he foresaw Osmond might obtain. No sooner, therefore, was he questioned by Cara Bey, than, with a short reference to the power which he pretended to worship, he gave a decided negative against Osmond's going. This decision had the effect of settling Cara Bey's doubts, and he resolved forthwith that Osmond should not accompany him, but remain where he was until his return. Still, he had not yet acquired the information so necessary to his success upon the interior of Suleiman Aga's house ; but then it occurred to him that Stasso, or the Boshnak, as he was called in the castle, might furnish it just as well as his master. Accordingly he ordered him to appear, and the interview was successful ; for in the answers which he received to his questions, he learned everything which he could desire.

The expedition was at length finally settled. Cara Bey, accompanied by Hassan, Stasso, and twenty chosen men, were to proceed to Kars, and to introduce themselves into the city

during the course of the day. The chief was then to make a survey of the premises, and at about night-fall they were to proceed to work. The prize being once seized, she was to be conducted to the castle with all possible expedition; and to crown the event, a general feast was to be given to the whole establishment the day after the return of the party.

Osmond returned to his prison in a state of mind truly deplorable. All his fears, he foresaw, were now about to be realised. When he was told how the expedition had been arranged, and that he was excluded from it, his heart smote him with apprehension; for what torture that was ever imagined could be greater than that which he was now called upon to endure? Here, under his own eyes, had been planned, with all the coolness of calculation of the most consummate art and villainy, a tragedy unparalleled in the wickedness of man. A city was to be invaded; blood was to flow; lives probably would be sacrificed; an innocent maiden was to be torn from her parents—all to gratify the lusts of one selfish, remorseless monster; whilst he, her ardent admirer, was condemned to remain conscious of the perpetration of these outrages, and unable in any manner either to prevent them, or give succour where it might be in his power. The agitation into which he was thrown, as he contemplated all the horrors with which the seizure must inevitably be attended, threw him into a state of mind bordering upon frenzy. All the religious feeling which he could command, all his habitual resignation to the decrees of Providence, proved unavailing in calming the transports of his rage. When his imagination presented to him the fair form of his beloved Ayesha struggling with her vile oppressor, when he heard her unavailing cries, and thought he could distinguish the exulting and demonlike accents of his voice, his hand would clutch an imaginary dagger, and drive it headlong into the breast of the murderous wretch. Yet still, when it came to the point—how he was to act—what directions he was to give to his servant as to the conduct he was to pursue—he was thrown into greater perplexity than ever. He would willingly have said, Slay the monster—use your dagger, plant it straight into his heart—or, when you draw your pistol, place it to his temple ere you draw the trigger;—but these awful injunctions stuck in his throat ere he gave them

utterance. The true man, the Christian, in fine, prevailed, and he relapsed into hopeless wretchedness.

There was one precaution, however, which he felt he could take,—he could arm the feeble girl herself :—she, whose only weapon was the retiring modesty of her nature—who could oppose no other resistance to the brutality of the man save the dignity of innocence—she, he knew, would prove a dragon of intrepidity and resolution when it became necessary to defend her honour. Osmond drew from his girdle a small dagger, which is not unfrequently worn by Asiatics, and giving it to Stasso, said—

“Seize the opportunity, when you can do it unperceived, to slip this into the hand of Ayesha, and tell her it comes from Osmond; she will understand you.”

With this solitary consolation he was obliged for the present to rest contented. He would again have had communication with Hassan, with a view of quickening the desire of revenge which he knew existed in his breast; but he checked himself. He still could not forget that the decrees of Providence are inscrutable; that in spite of man's short-sighted endeavours to dispose of events according to his own wishes and for his own purposes, there is an intelligence beyond his reason which holds the scales of justice, and promotes his well-being, in spite of his puny efforts.

Everything throughout the castle soon after wore the appearance of preparation: the men were busied in looking to their arms, and in selecting the best horses; the chiefs held consultations. It was ordered that all traces of the Yezidi costume should be avoided, and that every one should appear either as a Kurd or an Osmanli. Stasso was provided with a suitable horse; Hassan hobbled about as well as he was able, and showed, or pretended to show, the zeal which was usual to him whenever any expedition was on foot. No unnecessary persons were permitted to go; two or three led horses were the only supernumeraries allowed; and the whole was conducted upon the principle of a secret marauding excursion. At length, when all was ready, and the fortunate moment arrived for the chief's putting his foot into the stirrup, Cara Bey, throwing uncommon seriousness and resolution into his tone and manner, stepped up to Stasso, and said—

“ Now, open your eyes, man ! Recollect yourself ; and recollect that, if you show the smallest symptom of treachery, your master dies : I say no more.”

Upon this the gang took its departure.

CHAPTER XXI.

“ Alley exclaimed, ‘ In the most holy name, Crohoore, where are you going and where are you dragging me ?’ ”

Tales by the O'Hara Family.

DURING the events which we have recorded in the last five chapters, Ayesha passed her life in the seclusion of her father's harem, living upon the recollections of Osmond. Whether she should ever see him again, was a question which she was constantly asking herself. The last words which he had spoken to her were as strongly imprinted on her memory as the incisions of the diamond are on the crystal ; his last look was as vividly present to her as the parting gleam of the sun is to the inhabitant of the Pole, who loses his cheering aspect until the next revolving season. Every evening, precisely at the same hour at which he had left her, would she proceed to the terrace, stand on the very spot where they had stood together, repeat, word for word, the conversations which had passed between them, and, looking over the parapet into the street, earnestly gaze at the very place where, urging on his horse at full speed, he had turned round to give the last long, lingering look, which spoke his melancholy farewell. Then she would pass whole hours in looking at the ring which he had given her—inspecting the trinket which had so excited his astonishment—and giving way to a fond affection for the handkerchief which had called forth his ecstasy. She was constantly meditating upon every question which he had put to her concerning those objects. He had suggested doubts of her being the daughter of those whom she had ever been

taught to call her parents. A man of his wisdom and excellence, she argued, could not have said so much, nor have been so struck by what he had seen, without very good reasons. Then, if she were not the child of Suleiman and Zabetta, whose could she possibly be? Although she sometimes fancied she had some recollection of another sort of people than those who now surrounded her, yet they were so faint that they amounted almost to nothing. The doubts which now existed in her mind about herself produced a restlessness, a desire to be more fully informed, which prevented her from applying her mind with effect to any rational occupation. Frequently would she endeavour to bring her father to speak upon her early life, and put questions to him which she hoped might lead to some remark or description explanatory of her doubts; but he always was sure to waive the subject, and intrench himself behind his pipe and his habitual silence. She was more afraid of her mother, and, as there was but little mutual confidence between them, she seldom ventured to talk upon subjects which were not proposed by Zabetta; but she often found her thoughts betraying to herself the little regard which she really felt for either of her supposed parents. Suleiman Aga was kind to her, it is true, but it was the negative kindness of an indolent passive nature, which would rather be well with all mankind than be at the trouble of being otherwise. He loved her perhaps better than most things—perhaps better than any other living being, but then he loved his own dear ease better. She was so beautiful to look at, that no eyes which had human feelings for associates, could see her without at least a pleasurable sensation of some sort or other—either of admiration, as a wonder of God's creation, or of actual love. Her demeanour was of that modest and unpretending nature that none but a fiend could ever have the heart to do her harm; and her manners were so free from all affectation, so simple and affectionate, that to speak to her once was sufficient in order to be her slave for ever: there was little credit, therefore, due to Suleiman for being kind to her, even supposing he was not her father; he could not help himself,—he must be either a man, and love her—or a fiend, which he was not, and find pleasure in doing her harm.

Zabetta, her nominal mother, on the other hand, was of a

totally different disposition from her father. She loved Ayesha, but her love was that of property, of possessing a gem of great value, by the best disposal of which she might raise her fortune and advance her views in life. Although she had not passed the age of vanity, and was still proud of her own beauty, it never occurred to her to be jealous of the charms of Ayesha; for she was too much interested in their intrinsic value, that is, in what they would be likely to fetch in the market of human passions and desires, ever to feel jealous of them. She had speculated greatly upon them when Osmond was her neighbour; and, had it not been for the intervention of the priest on the minaret, she had fully calculated that they would have insured her emancipation from her present existence, a return to the joys of civilized life, and perhaps the acquisition of dignities which her imagination had whispered to her might be the portion of the mother of a royal sultana. But all this had vanished with Osmond, and, her mercenary calculating spirit having been disappointed, she was reduced to return, with a proportionate increase of peevishness and ill-humour, to her old drone of a husband, and to the monotonous existence of a Turk's wife. She would occasionally revert to the past in her conversation with Ayesha, for she entertained a sort of lingering hope that something might still be forthcoming from what she hoped was Osmond's ardent love for her daughter. On one occasion, having observed that Ayesha wore a ring which she had never before seen, she eagerly inquired where she had got it; and Ayesha at once owned that it had been given to her by Osmond.

"Tell me," said Zabetta, "do you think we shall ever see the Frank again? After all, he is a man, and not to be frightened away by that animal of a mufti."

"What can I say?" said Ayesha, "it is even as our fates may dispose; in truth he is a man, and not easily to be prevented from doing that which is right: but who knows where he is now?"

"If he proves himself to be a lover who runs away at a first fright, there is that for him!" answered Zabetta: upon which she threw her five fingers into the air, as the utmost mark of her contempt.

"Do not say so, my mother; certain death awaited him if he stayed. You would not have had him killed?"

"What do I know!" said her mother; "a faithless lover is worthy of death, and even worse. When once he returns to his own red-faced women, who show their faces to every comer, will he ever more think of us? it is all asses' talk to suppose it."

"But he assured me," said Ayesha, "that I was like one of his countrywomen; he started when he saw this locket." On this, she produced the locket with the engraved arms upon it, which she now always wore next to her heart.

"What say you?" said Zabetta, with much animation and eagerness. "When did he ever see this? why did you ever show it to him?"

"I never knew that there could be any harm in his seeing it?" answered her daughter. "He remarked it himself, seeing it upon my neck."

"Give it to me, it is mine," said Zabetta; "you must never wear it more: how could you be so inconsiderate as to show it to him?"

Ayesha delivered up this precious object of her lover's attention with tears in her eyes, but at the same time was awakened to the mysterious interest which it seemed to create in her mother, and felt determined to have some explanation on a subject which seemed to involve so much of her own fate. "Here it is," said she, "but if you love me, tell me its history. I am sure it is connected with something of consequence, or else why should you be so anxious about keeping it secret, or why should he have shown so much curiosity about it, and said that it belonged to one of his own nation?"

Zabetta manifested evident signs of confusion at Ayesha's questions. She took the locket from her, never returned it, and for some minutes after remained silent and in thought. Ayesha had never enjoyed so good an opportunity before for clearing up her doubts, and would not allow her mother to remain silent. "You shut up your heart from me," she observed. "There must be some reason for this. I must tell you, too, that he said I could not be your daughter. Why did he say so?"

"He is a madman, like all his countrymen," answered Za-

betta, in a tone of great peevishness, and evidently much disconcerted ; “ and you are mad to have paid attention to his lies. What say you ? not my daughter !—then who are you ? whose daughter did he say you were ? tell me that.” This last question she put with evident marks of disquietude at the answer she might receive.

“ He often looked into my face with the most inquiring look,” said Ayesha, “ as if he thought he could perceive a likeness to others whom he had before seen ; but he never hinted who he thought I could be, and never said who he thought I was.”

This answer, though far from satisfactory to the intriguing woman, still appeared to ease her of a load, which she expressed by saying, “ Go, child, go ! do not believe such nonsense. All men are flatterers, only they set about it in different ways : he thought to flatter you by saying that you looked like one of his odious women.”

“ Then I am your daughter,” said Ayesha with affection, “ and Suleiman Aga is my father ? Prove good parents to me, and I will ever be your grateful child. Allah, Allah ! my senses have been bewildered by doubt, but they shall be so no more.”

Zabetta’s heart (alas ! she had none) could not be softened by this simple appeal to her feelings as a mother. She made up a little show of sympathy ; but it was poor, indeed, when compared to the sincerity of the lovely maiden who addressed her. They, however, quitted each other with different feelings from those which previously existed between them. Zabetta felt like a criminal : she never after could see Ayesha without the terror of detection coming over her ; her manner towards Ayesha was involuntarily changed ; she dreaded to see her in confidential conversation with Suleiman, lest he might enlighten her mind ; and although so far away from all the scenes of her early life, still conscience—conscience was always setting watch over her, and would not allow her for a moment to hide herself from her own thoughts. On the other hand, Ayesha, however willing she was to persuade herself that Suleiman and Zabetta were her real father and mother, still, from the sort of mysterious backwardness which they both showed in answering her questions, from her mother’s conduct about the locket, and, more than all, from the re-

collected words of her lover, she could not preserve herself from feeling a secret conviction that she did not in fact belong to them.

The day after the conversation above recorded, Ayesha, as usual, had taken up her station on the terrace; and after having passed the evening in her wonted meditations, just before returning to her chamber, she leaned over the parapet, and looked down into the street. Near the very spot where Osmond had turned round to give her his last farewell, she observed two men who seemed deeply intent in examining her father's house. Both were strangers in the city, and by their dress might be Kurds, and none of the higher order; at all events, they wore a suspicious look. One of them she had decidedly never seen before; the form of the other, tall and handsome, she recognised; but as her view of them was transient—for she drew back the moment she became an object of their attention—the impression which they made upon her was but slight. The circumstance, however, of two strangers examining her father's house, struck her as remarkable, and she dwelt upon it just long enough to divert her thoughts from their usual channel. She was about descending the terrace steps, when, casting her eyes towards the mountains, she perceived the moon rising behind their rugged summits, shedding so soft and soothing a light over the surrounding landscape, and, as it were, inviting her to stay, that instead of returning to the house, she called to Nourzadeh to bring up a carpet and cushion, that she might sit undisturbed in the enjoyment of her meditations. She placed herself behind the projecting wall which formed the separation between Suleiman Aga's terrace and the Armenian dyer's; and sometimes giving a vibration to the chords of her guitar, sometimes in a half-meditative, half-dozing mood, she allowed her mind to run through every stage of her existence, from her first childhood to the present moment. Nourzadeh sat in a distant corner, half asleep. Ayesha, with her eyes fixed on vacant space, all at once, to her surprise, perceived the shadow of a head on the wall before her, which disappeared as quickly as it had appeared. "Who is there?" she exclaimed, half sinking with tremor and half inclined to cry out for aid. No one answered. She thought it might perhaps be the Armenian himself, and therefore made no more

inquiry; but, in a low voice to the black slave, said, "Did you see that, Nourzadeh?"

"No, I saw nothing!" said the girl, starting from her sleep.

The small tip of a shadow still played upon the wall, which might be the fringe of a head-dress. Ayesha's fears increased: she arose—she heard the step of her mother at the bottom of the terrace steps, and cried out to her, "Mother! here! come up! I am sure there are men on the neighbour's terrace! this must not be." At this call, Zabetta, almost angry at the appeal, came shuffling up the steps, when, on a sudden, from behind the wall issued four men, in the dress of Kurds, armed at all points, and without uttering a word seized upon both Ayesha and her mother. They gagged their mouths as well as they were able, forced them across to the entrance-door of the Armenian's terrace, and carried them straightway to the street-entrance. They both made every resistance in their power, but what was woman's strength when compared to the power of men of the most herculean forms? Their cries, their struggles, were of no avail; they were instantly mounted upon two horses, and led away in rapid motion through the streets. It need not be said who were their assailants.

The adventures of Cara Bey and his gang, after their departure, were briefly as follows. They had met with no impediment in their journey to Kars. Hassan was still so weak, and so little able to use his feet, that it was thought most advisable to leave him at some small distance, sufficiently near to be within call, with a reserve of ten men, in case an increase of force were necessary. Cara Bey, with Stasso, entered the gates first, accompanied by two men, and, little by little, others slipped into the town, with orders to be in readiness at and about the house of the Armenian Bogos, whence the abduction was to be effected. Several of the most resolute were to take possession of the town-gate at the prescribed time, in order to allow of a free egress. Silence and caution were strictly enjoined. Everything had hitherto promised success, although many of the town's-people, and particularly the guard stationed at the gate, remarked that more strangers than ordinary were seen entering the town during the day. Still no suspicion had been raised, and matters went on as usual.

Cara Bey and Stasso were the two whom Ayesha had seen

from the parapet of the terrace. Stasso had several times been tempted to betray the whole plot to the authorities, but, when he recollected the parting threat of the chief, and the certainty that it would be put into execution should he waver, his fidelity, riveted by his fears for his master's safety, remained unmoved, and he plunged headlong into the whole scheme as if he really had been one of the assailants. When night had fairly set in, by the means of his knowledge of the habits and ways of the Armenian's home, he procured a quiet and easy entrance. The horses were in readiness, and a party of the most determined of the gang were at hand. Cara Bey was close in attendance with two others, whilst Stasso by himself stepped up to the door and let fall one solitary rap of the iron knocker. "Who is that?" said the well-known voice of Bogos from within. "It is I." "Who?" repeated the voice. "It is the Boshnak; don't you know me?" Upon which the rumbling of an opening bolt was heard. Stasso beckoned Cara Bey to approach. The door was opened with caution, but, as soon as Bogos perceived his old friend, he uttered an exclamation of joy, and threw it wide open. Followed by Cara Bey and the two others, he immediately entered and closed the door after him. "Say not a word, or you are a dead man," said Cara Bey to the Armenian. "I am Cara Bey—do you hear?—if you stir until we leave your house, you shall surely die. Give us a light." Stasso then taking a lamp, immediately led the way up the well-known steps to the terrace, and there, followed by the robber chief and his ruffians, proceeded to act that part of the tragedy which we have already described, seizing the two unhappy women, whilst the terrified, half-fainting dyer remained in too great a state of fear and astonishment to be able to stir.

A gathering of so many strange people around the Armenian's house had, however, attracted attention, and one who did not like their appearance had run with the news to the Pasha. When Ayesha and her mother were seated on their horses, the cavalcade, headed by Stasso, and brought up in the rear by Cara Bey, was ordered to advance, and such was the commotion throughout the streets, that the shouts of the frightened inhabitants were heard, and shots were fired by way of alarming the guard. Its progress was unchecked until it reached the city gate, and there it was evident it would not be

allowed to pass without a struggle. The guards were overpowered in the first instance by Cara Bey's men, who had opened the gate with violence; but the delay caused by the scuffle had enabled some of the Pasha's horse to come to their assistance; upon which a conflict ensued: the flash of pistols, the gleaming of swords, occasional shots mingled with the hoarse cries of men and the screams of women, all produced a confusion so great that it was difficult to distinguish the assailants from the assailed. All this was confined within the space of a gateway, which being arched and covered with a dome, made the reverberations of the noise doubly loud and terrific. Cara Bey took a conspicuous attitude, and dealt about him with all the recklessness of a gambler who had staked his all. Perceiving fresh troops coming against him, he had just time enough to despatch one of his horsemen to order Hassan's immediate advance with the reserve. Stasso's only desire was to save Ayesha and her mother. He watched their motions with the jealousy of a friend and a countryman. Foreseeing that he never again should have so good an opportunity of speaking to Ayesha, he approached her, and as he placed in her hand the dagger which Osmond had charged him to give her, whispered, "Osmond Aga has sent you this; he says you will know how to use it. You are in Cara Bey's power: more I cannot say." The astonished maiden, from fear of her life, passed with rapid emotion into dread of the monster whose name she had heard. She now began to utter the most piteous cries, hoping that either death would come to her relief, or that the Pasha's troops would be victorious. But she was not destined to see her wishes accomplished; for as soon as the Turks saw the fresh troops arriving, headed by Hassan, they thought it most prudent to retire from the contest, and opened wide their gates in order to give the enemy a free exit,—upon the principle that it is better to bring a bad secretion to the surface of the body, than to suffer it to destroy the vitals. The strife did not end without loss of life. Two of the Pasha's men were killed, several of the robbers were seriously wounded, and their chief himself did not remain unhurt. But heedless, at the time, of his wound, which had been caused by a sabre cut in the arm, he only thought of retreat; and, having once gained the open country, he allowed nothing to stop his progress until he

reached a place of safety, out of the possibility of being overtaken by the Pasha's troops.

Ayesha and Zabetta had been placed under the charge of a guard, who conducted them in silence, and with all the respect due to women who were the property of their chief. Ayesha had not recognised Stasso in the dark, but the repetition of Osmond's name, and the nature of his gift, had called forth a train of thought in which she endeavoured to unravel the thread of the mystery with which she was surrounded. The feeling that Osmond must in some manner or other be nigh at hand, and that, if so, he was watching over her safety, gave her a momentary gleam of delight, and she abandoned herself to the idea with rapture: but when she reflected into whose power she really had fallen, when she recalled to her mind the thousand stories which she had heard of the Devil-worshippers' licentiousness and cruelty, her heart drooped, her courage failed, and the most dire apprehensions of the fate preparing for her took possession of her faculties, and left her a prey to terror and grief.

Zabetta, on the other hand, having got rid of the fears which during the fight she had entertained for her person, when she found herself free from those objects of her aversion—her husband and his dull city, began to hope that her wishes for emancipation were about to be realized; and when she learned into whose hands she had fallen, instead of bemoaning her hard fate, she congratulated herself upon having made so good an exchange. Her intriguing, restless, and unsteady character was much better calculated to flourish in the turmoil of a robber's castle than in the peaceable somniferous walls of the house of a Turkish elder. Cara Bey's reputation had in her eyes many charms. The revelry with which he was said to be constantly surrounded, sounded agreeably in her ears. Within the precincts of Suleiman's dull house she had never heard the sound of mirth; all wore the garb of mortification: instead of genuflexion, she would have had dancing; instead of silence and holy invocation, she would have been pleased with much talking, much intriguing, and with the noise of instruments and the voices of singers. The exchange which she was about to make, she therefore foresaw, would be all in her favour; and besides, she felt her importance by being the

owner of a daughter whose charms would ever command for them both a paramount influence over men. And her own attractions, too, she flattered herself were not to be despised; she was of that age, and of that substance, which she knew were better adapted to the taste of the man with whom she was about to become acquainted, than the slight, graceful, and vanishing form of her daughter. With such consolatory reflections, she was far from allowing her spirits to be depressed, and she journeyed onward full of hope of future enjoyment, and of schemes for future elevation.

Cara Bey, in the meanwhile, little heeding either Ayesha or her mother, but giving his whole attention to his troops, thought only how he might best make good his retreat to some place of safety for the night. Having at length reached a mountain village, where he knew he should be free from molestation, he called a halt, and, quartering his men upon the inhabitants, took possession for himself of the zabit's (the chief's) house, whilst he ordered the women's apartments to be cleared for his captive females. Ayesha dismounted from her horse in such a state of feverish and nervous agitation, that, instead of wearing the bloom of youth, her whole appearance rather betokened the approach of dissolution. At that moment there was but little in her person to attract attention; she met with no sympathy in her sufferings, and indeed where could such a feeling be found among barbarians accustomed only to scenes of blood and unmoved by faces of woe? Zabetta, on the other hand, was all animation; long had she been unconscious of such buoyancy of spirits; and when Cara Bey at length made his appearance, she was ready to receive him with smiles and welcome, and with such demonstrations of pleasure that he thought he had never yet seen any one so highly to his taste. At first, he took her to be Suleiman Aga's daughter herself, and was congratulating himself upon his prize, when Zabetta thought it right to undeceive him. He cast his eyes upon the unfortunate Ayesha, whose haggard eye, wan cheek, and grief-struck features made him start with surprise that she should ever have acquired the reputation which made the whole country ring with her charms, and caused him to turn from her with disgust, in order to occupy himself exclusively with, to his eyes, her

more attractive mother. Zabetta exerted herself to please. When he talked of his wound, she immediately insisted upon inspecting it, prescribed for it, and very soon, by her attentions and care, afforded him considerable relief. Her attentions were not thrown away; Cara Bey was quite enchanted with the mother, and totally unheeded the daughter; whilst Ayesha, putting up a mental prayer of resignation to the decrees of Heaven, thanked God for being thought worthy of neglect by the wretch into whose hands she had fallen. And thus passed away the first night of her captivity.

CHAPTER XXII.

————— 'Tis time, 'tis time,
Round about the cauldron go;
In the poison'd entrails throw.

Macbeth.

THE next morning the whole cavalcade left the village at an early hour, and proceeded with all diligence to Cara Bey's castle. Nothing worthy of remark occurred during its progress, excepting that Zabetta, among the surrounding horsemen, had discovered her old acquaintance and countryman, and, perhaps, we may add, admirer, Stasso; who, although from motives of caution he carefully abstained from looking towards the women, still could not occasionally refrain from observing their motions. It so happened that, during a short stoppage on account of some impediment on the road, they had approached sufficiently near for a look of recognition to pass between them. † This look was remarked by Cara Bey. Jealousy of the direst nature instantly sprang into his heart, for an Asiatic, like a flint, strikes fire upon the least collision; and he resolved that, the moment they had reached his stronghold, Stasso should instantly return to his master and his prison. This feeling towards Stasso, by a natural train of thought, extended itself

to his master, of whom he now became doubly jealous. He dwelt upon the precautionary steps which he had taken previously to his departure with demonlike complacency; for he thus hoped to secure himself from all farther annoyance on his account. He exulted when he reflected upon what he esteemed a masterpiece of deception, the having entrapped Osmond and his man into a prison, after having extracted from both all the service which they could give.

Having got rid of his prisoners, his next step would be, so he determined, to despatch a messenger with large presents to his patron, the Capidan Pasha, who he knew was both able and willing to shelter him from harm, in the complaints which doubtless would be made against him by the Pasha of Kars, and the authorities there, for his late attack upon their city. Having succeeded in this, he felt that he should be secure and at liberty to take his pleasure in his castle. His harem stored with beauties greater than any which Circassia could afford, and his person surrounded by men devoted to his service, he determined, before he engaged in any further schemes of robbery, to give himself up to joy and revelry. Of wine he had a store, provisions abounded in his kitchens, of dancers and musicians he could command the best, what more could he want? A more finished monster of cruelty, lust, licentiousness, and wickedness of every kind, than this Asiatic, never had existed: but the security in which he indulged proved to be false, for he had not anticipated the consequences of the punishment which he had inflicted upon Hassan. He improvidently supposed that, as all were submissive to his will, they were equally ready to forget his injurious treatment as soon as he was pleased again to notice them. He never calculated that the once faithful Hassan was now a mortal enemy seeking for revenge. What that revenge would be, Hassan had not yet determined, but he had sufficiently shown his inclination by the steps which he had taken for securing the escape of the preserver of his life. During the late expedition he had found no opportunity to gratify his revenge, and a fit occasion was still wanting to pour out the full measure of his wrath.

When the return of the chief was perceived from the turret-tops of his castle, the gates were thrown open, and every preparation was made for his reception. The priest was in readi-

ness to offer the proper congratulation upon the success of his predictions, as well as to receive the order for his promised donation. Every man was at his post, and the women of the harem were on the tiptoe of curiosity to see their new inmates. At length the throng of horses and horsemen passed through the arched gate and entered the court-yard. Ayesha and Zabetta were immediately taken to the harem. Cara Bey eyed all around him with the triumphant look of a conqueror. Every thing had succeeded to his heart's content, saving the wound which he had received, and of which he hoped soon to be cured. He enquired whether the rice, the lambs, and all the requisite necessities had been accumulated, to furnish the forthcoming feast with becoming plenty to his whole household; and he now extended the limits of his generosity by ordering appropriate presents in money to all those who had been sharers in the expedition.

As soon as Zabetta entered Cara Bey's harem, the seat of her future existence, she immediately took upon herself the airs and consequence of its mistress. She had at one glance seen enough of her new master to know that neither timidity, meekness, nor mildness of demeanour, was likely to secure influence over him; and as she possessed all the contrary qualities in a high degree, she felt that it was in her power to bring under her subjection this terror of Kurds and Turks. The old stock in the harem were too happy at first to see anybody, or anything, which could break the tedium of their existence; they paid almost divine honours to their new guests; nothing, in their eyes, was good enough for them. They dwelt upon the words which fell from the lips of Zabetta as oracles; and endeavoured to charm away the melancholy of Ayesha, by deafening her ears with the sound of their tambourines, accompanied by their best songs. But as Zabetta's pretensions to superiority became more open, so those of the former chief of the harem began to awaken, and it was evident that, ere long, there would arise two factions; and as a harem is ever a hot-bed of passion, it was also evident that such factions would soon come to open hostilities. Ayesha would have kept herself an object of disgust for ever, if possible, rather than have attracted the least notice of her oppressor; but, as the fatigues of her journey, and the first terrors of her mind wore

off, her fatal beauty would return, in spite of every effort to conceal it, and make her shudder as she gazed in the glass, lest she should be esteemed attractive by the monster. From all that she had seen and heard, she conjectured that Osmond must be a prisoner in the castle. Oh ! to be so near him, and be debarred the possibility even of letting him know of her existence ! So tantalizing a thought wrung her heart to its very core ; but she cherished the present which he had sent her, as the true believer cherishes the book of his salvation. She secreted the dagger within the folds of her dress, and there it rested ever at hand, as a faithful friend, ready to protect her ; there she let it remain until the awful moment when, with a high resolve, she determined it should be called forth to protect her from the infamy to which she felt she was exposed.

As soon as Stasso had dismounted, his first impulse was to seek the society of his wretched master ; and Cara Bey was too happy to get rid of his presence to throw any obstacle in his way. Osmond had heard the commotion which had taken place in the castle, and had anticipated the return of his faithful servant, but with shuddering apprehension at the many miseries which must inevitably follow in its train.

When the door of his prison was thrown open, the eager Stasso rushed in ; but what were his feelings, upon looking at his master, when he observed the sad alteration that had taken place in his features and person ! He started with dismay at his sunken eye, his hollow cheek, his restless motion, and his thin emaciated form. The effects of anxiety, watchfulness, and apprehension, had overpowered him ; and, notwithstanding his constant effort to tranquillize his mind by submission to the decrees of Providence, still he so keenly felt the horrors of the position in which the unfortunate Ayesha was likely to be thrown, that his thoughts were perpetually distracted with fear for her safety.

The first words he uttered when he saw Stasso were, " Is Ayesha come ? is she safe ? is she well ? " Stasso, still gazing at his master with the most affectionate solicitude, answered every enquiry, and then proceeded, in as few words as possible, to give a narrative of the whole expedition. Osmond gave ear to him with breathless attention, and, when his tale was over, walked about the room in silence for some time, as if revolving

some great scheme in his mind. At length breaking silence, the old jailor Mahmoud having left them, he said, "Stasso, I have resolved upon making a desperate effort to save the maiden. Listen to my words. I am sure that I can rely upon you—much will depend upon your zeal and activity. First, tell me, are you quite certain that you could find your way to the Russian station which Cara Bey attacked?" After a little thought, Stasso said, "I will forfeit my life if I do not! You may depend upon me. I recollect every stone; there is not a path that Stasso has trodden once that he cannot recollect." — "Well then, my scheme is this," said Osmond: "On the day when we receive our portion of the projected feast, if Hassan spoke the truth, we shall gain possession of the key which opens the postern of this our prison. You shall guide Captain Ivanovitch to the spot where his troops are stationed. It is intended that we shall be left to ourselves during the whole night: that night must be employed in leading a detachment of his men hither; and then may God direct our efforts to free ourselves from this detestable tyrant!" Stasso heard him out with emotions scarcely to be described, and fell at his feet in a rapture of delight at the prospect which the scheme held out. He avowed his readiness to undertake his share of it with alacrity, and could foresee nothing but success. Osmond, trusting in Hassan's fidelity, would also willingly have unfolded to him the nature of his intentions, and asked Stasso whether he thought they might secure an interview with him, for then they should ensure an accomplice in the enemy's camp; but, from the excessive precautions taken by Cara Bey, Stasso feared that such an interview would be impossible, and therefore they determined to trust to their own efforts, hoping for his co-operation when the moment for action should arrive.

Osmond, communicating with Ivanovitch in French, and with Stasso in Greek, had purposely refrained from making Mustafa a party concerned in his scheme; for, through excess of fear, he most likely would have managed to mar its operations. From the moment of his imprisonment, Mustafa seemed to have lost the use of every faculty but that of eating and drinking. He had consigned himself to his *kismet*—his fate, as a mariner, in distress, consigns himself to a floating

spar when his ship is about to sink. He sat in a corner, and uttered nothing but now and then a hollow "Allah kerim!" which would portrude from the recesses of his lungs, and give relief to his mind, as a moan may be said to quiet pain. Though he saw that something of importance had taken place, still nothing but "Allah kerim!" seemed in the least to interest him. He contemplated Osmond as a stark-staring madman, and would hold as little converse with him as he possibly could: looking upon himself as the wisest of created beings, because he had warned his master against Cara Bey; for now he saw that all his predictions were fulfilled. He endeavoured to submit, in the spirit of a true Mahomedan, to the decrees of predestination; but he was too infirm of mind to practise so high a virtue. Whilst, on the one hand, he felt sure of being put to death; on the other, he would be concocting plans for riding post to Constantinople on the very first opportunity,—like one on a swing, who, when flying upwards, looks into the sky, and when downwards, sees the earth ready to receive him.

Cara Bey had abstained from visiting his harem until he had arranged to his satisfaction the whole economy of his castle as it related to the department of the males. He inspected their quarters; gave attention to the wounded; had an eye to his stables; and saw that everything was in proper order for the approaching carousal. He then visited the women. Zabetta received him with the same appearance of welcome and satisfaction which she had shown upon their first meeting; and had already given such an air of comfort and freshness to the interior of the rooms allotted to the use of the females, that he found a great deal more attraction in this part of his establishment than he had ever done before. He viewed her with delight; was charmed with the brilliancy of her eyes; admired her person; and spoke to her with more confidence and apparent cordiality than he had ever shown to womankind before.

Ayesha still kept herself as secluded as possible. She carefully covered her face, and endeavoured to clothe her whole appearance with that sort of negligence of dress and carriage, which might make her least attractive. Cara Bey, however, anxious to obtain a fair survey of her face, with the rudeness that belongs to a barbarian, forcibly drew back her

veil; and there he saw, for the first time, what could not be concealed—that bewitching harmony of features, that splendid contour of face and profile, and that whole artillery of eyes, brow, colour, and overshadowing hair, which make up the catalogue of beauty, and which must strike the monster as well as the man of refinement. Even his coarse nature was touched, not with desire, nor with love, but with a feeling to him before unknown—a sort of respect and lowliness of bearing: a proof how great is the power of a beautiful woman when she puts on the armour which Nature has provided for her, that of modesty, self-respect, and dignity. He did not intrude himself farther on this occasion, but, as she thrust forward her white and graceful hand to grasp her veil, the ring which Osmond had given her shone conspicuous on her finger.

“What ring is that which your daughter wears?” said he to Zabetta, his jealousy catching fire at the sight. “No maiden ever wears a ring. Where did she get it?”

Upon hearing these questions, Ayesha’s colour forsook her cheek, and she shrank within herself from apprehension. “What do I know?” answered Zabetta, quite aware of the mischievous tendency of the enquiry: “I believe it was given to her by her father.”

“Let me see it,” said Cara Bey; “it looks beautiful.” Ayesha would rather have sunk into the earth than have given it up; but recollecting that the Yezidies do not know how to read, she obeyed the commands of her mother, took it from her finger, and delivered it to Cara Bey. Upon seeing letters engraved upon it, he enquired what the writing meant;—both the women were silent. Supposing they too could not read, he without farther ceremony retained the ring, and, leaving them in haste, immediately sent for his Kotchek, who was his scribe as well as his priest.

Having desired the Kotchek to decipher what was inscribed upon the ring, the solemn man, with great swelling of importance, taking from a little greasy case a pair of old-fashioned spectacles, mounted them upon his nose, and at first sight, without hesitation, pronounced the word “Osman!”

An electric shock could not have produced a greater effect than did the announcement of his name upon Cara Bey.

"Osman!" he repeated aloud, as he took back the ring, engrossed with contending feelings—"Osman! May his father and mother be burnt! *Eki vah!*—See what is fate!" said he, as he muttered to himself, "*Chok chey!*—This is much! Here have I given myself all this trouble, nearly losing my life, all to bring two lovers under one roof, and that roof mine! Wonderful! But the son of a dog does not know Cara Bey yet!"

Upon which, rising up with much agility and haste, the enraged chief left the priest to draw his own conclusions from what he had seen, and, proceeding to the small room near the harem door, immediately sent for Mariam, the slave who had attended Hassan in his sickness, and whom we have before described as cook to the harem. As soon as she entered, he ordered her with much mystery to close the door, and then said, "Mariam, I have words to say—draw near." The woman approached with fear and trembling; but although there was timidity in her demeanour, the reader of character might have discovered at the same time that she possessed great firmness and resolution.

"Have you provided all the materials necessary for to-morrow's *ziqfet*, or feast?" said he.

"I have, my Aga," replied Mariam.

"We must have great profusion of rice—there is to be pillau in every room, are you aware of that?"

"I am; everything is ready at your service."

"Pepper, cinnamon, and other spices, are to abound. Make the pillau of the Lady Zabetta and her daughter very good—Do you hear?"

"I will—I will do my best."

"There must be lamb, and *keftehs*, and *dolmahs*, and *kavorma*, and all sorts of sweets—all this for the harem, and for my dinner. Do you understand?"

"I do—I will do my best, with the blessing of Allah!" said Mariam, with meekness.

"But now hear what I have to say," said her master. "There must be one large, rich, well-boiled, well-spiced pillau, for the prisoners in the adjoining keep." At these words Mariam put on a look of great anxiety, whilst her master threw his features into the dogged cast of villany apper-

taining to one who is bent upon the perpetration of some horrid crime.

"Now listen," he continued to say: "when you have made your pillau, which must be boiled in a vessel by itself, you must insert the whole of the powder contained in this paper." Upon which he took a small parcel from his breast, and gave it to her; then looking well into her face, he said, "Mind ye, it contains poison!" Mariam maintained a fixed and unaltered countenance, for she anticipated the word that was about to be pronounced. "Recollect now, Mariam," he continued, "I depend upon you; if you fail, you know me. As soon as you have prepared the pillau, and before you mix it, let me be called. I will not be trifled with. Now mind ye—have your eyes about you—a mistake will be your destruction, as perhaps it may injure me. To-morrow is the day—the next morning will tell me if you have been faithful to your trust:—if you have not—beware!"

Mariam received the paper from his hand without the vibration of a nerve. "Take care of it," said he; "I bought it fresh at Kars but the other day, it cannot fail of doing its work."

"*Bashustun!*—upon my head be it!" said Mariam; "it shall be as you have commanded." Upon which she left the room, but, having done so, she felt an oppression at heart, that nearly had induced a fainting-fit. She caught a glimpse of Hassan, as he was gliding by the door; for he, too, had been on the watch: they made one of those signals of recognition which are the earnest of a mutual understanding, and, fearing the appearance of their ever suspicious master, both retired to their usual avocations.

It must be here remarked that, on this day, Osmond and his companions were served with a much smaller allowance of provisions than on former occasions. When old Mahmoud the jailor entered their room in the morning, with a melancholy face, for he was in truth a kind-hearted man—"Here," said he, "here is your pittance! As God is great, our master has forgotten us to-day; he has not sent us more than will feed one mouth, instead of four. But to-morrow is the feast, and we will then make up for to-day's starvation."

Osmond listened to these words with throbbing attention,

for he could read in their meaning that Cara Bey's scheme was in full operation. "He starves us to-day," said he to himself, "in order that we may be ravenous to-morrow, and eat our way into the other world!" He sighed as he exclaimed, "May the wretch be mistaken! Let us pray to God for strength, and still all may be well." His principal apprehension was, that Hassan might fail him, and that the scheme which he had so generously planned in sickness might be forgotten now that he was restored to health.

Every moment, as the time for action drew near, appeared an age. Ivanovitch was burning with impatience at the bottom of the well. Stasso gathered together what arms they could muster, and put them in proper order; Osmond inspected his cartouch-box, and found several precious cartridges still preserved therein; whilst Mustafa, who was entirely ignorant of what was about to happen, allowed his imagination to run riot in pleasing anticipation of the quantity of rice which he would on the next day have it in his power to insinuate into his earnestly expectant jaws.

At length the day of festivity arrived—the day decisive of Osmond's fate. The whole castle felt its influence. Every one put on his best clothes, smoked his best pipe, and clothed his face with such smug looks as the barber could best create. In succession, all the individuals of the chieftain's gang paid their respects to him, and made the speeches peculiar to Asiatics on occasions of ceremony; whilst he himself, tottering under the richest accumulation of shawls, embroidery, and furs, received their addresses with appropriate dignity. Hassan alone wore not the face of alacrity which the others did; his brow was striped with wrinkles, there was a restlessness in all he did and said which denoted his solicitude. He felt that he had laid the foundation of a scheme which might or might not succeed. Impelled by a strong desire of revenge, he hoped to have an opportunity of gratifying it; but still he was not quite determined how to act. Ardently wishing to set Osmond free, he was resolved to do so at all hazards, but then he was aware that the key which was to procure his freedom was so strictly watched, that he doubted whether Mariam could take possession of it without its being missed.

The labours of the kitchen throughout the castle began with

the early dawn. The food preparing for the multitude was cooked in a separate place, distinct from the kitchens of the harem, where Mariam alone presided. She had undertaken her task with a heavy heart. The circumstance which most weighed with her was, how she could without being observed purloin the key, which was kept in the very chamber and close to the place where Cara Bey was wont to sleep. Every one knew that the key was a key of importance, and none dared touch it for fear of punishment. Mariam had, however, free access to the room, for she occasionally swept it out; and on that morning after her master had risen, she had ascertained the key to be in its usual place. Busied in her kitchen, already had she selected the vessel which was to contain the fatal food. The whole operation of cooking began, under the superintendence and amidst the apparent mirth of the ladies of the harem (Ayesha excepted), who did not cease going in and out at all moments, too happy to have anything to do which might draw them from the every-day sameness of their lives. Cara Bey himself occasionally looked in, and, casting a mysterious look at Mariam, made himself acquainted with every particular relating to the culinary preparations about to be attended with such awful results. Zabetta, too, who esteemed herself an excellent cook, did not fail to hover about Mariam, and obtrude her advice as she proceeded in her task. "More pepper here, less butter there—boil this longer, bake this less," and such like monitory phrases, came from her with all the officiousness of her nation, and all the volubility of her sex.

At length the moment for serving up the important dish was at hand, Mariam left her kitchen for a minute, and, without being seen by any one, succeeded in securing the key, which she secreted about her person. Cara Bey did not fail to come at the time he had appointed, and, no one else being present, saw with his own eyes the poison mixed with the rice. As he stood over the boiling cauldron, he might well have personified the demon of wickedness mixing up the ingredients of some magic spell. The next thing to be done was to transfer the contents to the large earthen bowl, in which it was to be carried to the prisoners; and this was the critical moment for the exertion of Mariam's ingenuity. She began deliberately with a large spoon to place it in the bowl, but when she had pro-

ceeded half way, she exclaimed, "I hear the new Khanum coming—she will insist upon tasting it." Upon which Cara Bey thrust his head out of the door in order to prevent the intrusion of Zabetta, and at that moment the intrepid Mariam, drawing forth the key, thrust it so well under the accumulated rice, that no trace of it was to be seen when her master returned.

Without a semblance of suspicion, he then inspected the mess with the same sort of apprehensive feeling that a conspirator might look upon a barrel of gunpowder to which he is about to lay the match preparatory to the conclusive act of his conspiracy. He felt, it is true, that he held the power of life and death in his hands—a power which he had many times before exercised to inflict death; but on this occasion he was aware that his victims were no ordinary men, and that, sooner or later, he might be called to account for his treatment of them. However, resolutely blinding himself to all consequences, he sent for Mahmoud the jailor, and, apparently confiding to him the materials of good cheer instead of the instruments of destruction, ordered him forthwith to carry the smoking meal to his charges, with a recommendation to eat and be merry: he ordered him, moreover, to leave them to themselves during the whole night, in order that they might meet with no interruption in their festivities.

The old man carried off his burden with exultation. The murderer went his way exulting with a fiendish satisfaction at the success which had attended the secret that he would have kept; whilst the kind-hearted woman, the intended instrument of his cruelty, ceased from her labours only to anticipate the horrors which might be her fate were she ever detected. Trusting implicitly in the truth and judgment of Hassan, she had, at her interview with him in the sick room, communicated to him the murderous intention of Cara Bey, which the monster had imparted to her by way of trying her firmness; and had then been so impressed by his eloquence upon the wickedness of the transaction, that she promised to cooperate with him in endeavouring to preserve the life of the man who had twice saved his, be the consequences what they might. They then formed the plan of secreting the key, and now was come the moment of trial to all parties.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Siward.—This way, my lord; the castle 's gently rendered.

Macbeth.

THE sounds of revelry were already heard throughout the castle, and had reached the ears of the unhappy prisoners. The sun's last rays could just be perceived glancing over the small portion of the distant landscape which could be discerned from the prison window. Osmond was waiting with nervous impatience and excitement for the moment, which he was aware was now nigh at hand, decisive of his own fate, of that of his mistress, and of his companions in wretchedness. Every noise startled him; the least approach to the door of his prison awakened his attention. At length the well-known step of Mahmoud was heard. By the deliberation with which he moved, it was evident that something more than ordinary was forthcoming: the key turned in the lock, and, as the door opened, he appeared staggering under the burden of a large dish of the prepared rice, smoking and inviting to the eye, followed by another man who bore a provision of bread, and moreover a copious jug of wine.

"Here, my children," cried out the old man, as his eyes sparkled with delight—"here is food to make your hearts glad. This will make up for your scanty fare of yesterday. The Bey has also sent you wine. You have leave to invite the Muscovite; let us therefore draw him up."

Upon which, setting down the food, he lowered the rope to Ivanovitch, and, with the help of Mustafa and Stasso, landed him upon the floor.

"And now, my friends," said he, "*Affet ullah*—much pleasure attend you! I leave you for this whole night: I have orders not to return till to-morrow morning. Here, take this lamp, and so *Allah esmarladek*—God take you into his holy keeping.

Thus taking his leave, and duly looking and bolting the door after him, he was no more seen for that night.

As soon as they were left to themselves, half-starved as they all were, ravenous and ready to rush upon the food before them, Osmond with stern resolution stood forward, and with extended hands exclaimed—

“Let no one approach these things at his peril; they are spread for our death—they are poisoned!”

A dead silence ensued. Mustafa could not and would not believe the words which he heard, and was already sidling towards the wine, such was its magnetic attraction, when Osmond instantly seized upon the jug, and spilled the whole of its contents upon the floor, saying—“Our safety depends upon our coolness. Mustafa, at your peril, I say, stand away. Trust in me, then all will be well.”

The poor Turk, nearly mad with disappointment, and more than famished by excess of anticipation, could almost have slain his master, as he stood with his eyes intent upon the food, his mouth open, and his hands clenched. Osmond was, however, too much taken up with the crisis of his fate to heed him; and of the others, who were acquainted with the secret, he was sure.

“Stasso,” said he, “put your hand into the rice, and search out the key.”

The faithful servant immediately did as he was commanded: his first attempt was unsuccessful. “It is not here!” said he.

Osmond’s cheek became blanched; his arms and hands fell powerless by his side.

“Try again, my Stasso,” said he, his voice failing him, and tears gushing into his eyes.

This time Stasso made a desperate grasp, overthrowing the whole pile, and there, true enough, was the blessed instrument of their deliverance.

“Thanks to God!” escaped from the lips of the sentient Englishman. A silence ensued, as he poured forth a mental prayer. He stood for some minutes motionless, when all at once, as if his prayer had been heard, the glow of energy beamed upon his features and actions, and he said, “Now, my friends, to work; a moment’s delay may prove our destruction. Ivanovitch, are you prepared?” The youth in an ecstasy of

joy sprang to his deliverer, embraced him with tears pouring from his eyes, and said "Let us begone."—"Stasso," said Osmond, "now have your eyes about you; our safety depends upon you. Go; my blessing attends you!" Then leading on to the postern, which in another country, where prisons are better understood, would not have been so easy of access as it was here, he placed the key in the lock, which with a cheering though grating friction answered to his hand, and to their united joy they saw the open though precipitous rock before them. Stasso stood for some time taking a good survey of the great tract of country encircled by the horizon; and, as there was still a sufficiency of twilight left to enable him to ascertain the direction of the Russian station, exclaimed: "I know my way: trust to me. In four or five hours let us hope we shall be with you again. Let us go."

Upon which, Stasso leading the way and Ivanovitch following, they plunged down the steep side of the mountain, and disappeared. Osmond stood for some time wistfully gazing at the calm and soothing scene, so much at variance with the jarring passions, the loathsome vice, and the actual licentiousness of which the castle was the abode. His heart expanded at the unrestricted view of the extensive scene which met his eyes. Long regions of mountains rose one above the other in receding ranges, the first strong in outline and depth of shade, the more distant vanishing into vapour which "blended the distant landscape with the sky." The pure atmosphere, broken into light clouds everywhere began to glitter with stars, whilst the moon, in a graceful crescent just shed light enough to throw the imagination into doubt and speculation. Far, far away, the ear occasionally distinguished the baying of a distant watch-dog hovering about some mountain-flock, the property of the wandering tribes so common in this region; or perhaps would be struck by the tone of some drowsy bell denoting the step of the careful camel ranging over the scanty pasturage of the stony plain.

Osmond's feelings almost overpowered him, as he considered what might be his future fate, and in how short a time it was likely to be decided. He might perhaps, he thought, once again be master of himself, free to roam at large over the beautiful surface of the world; and he trembled with delight at the probability of possessing her for whom alone he lived,

enjoying the rapture of changing the whole fashion of her mind, pure and spotless as it was, from the gross errors of her present belief, to the truth of the consolatory and overpowering faith of the Christian.

He would have stood where he was, perhaps, the night through, rapt in deep contemplation, had he not missed Mustafa from his side; and in consequence he rushed back into the prison, fearing lest the poor wretch, overtempted by the food, might have given way to his appetite, and thus found his death. In fact, his foreboding was true; but an instant more, and he might not have been able to preserve him from self-destruction. Like some wolf, maddened with hunger, forcing its way into the baited trap which would lead to its death, so sat Mustafa opposite to the still smoking pillau, occasionally dallying with the dainty morsels which it contained, and enhancing the urgent demands of his lips by a preliminary negotiation with his nose. At length, giving way to the too violent temptation, he really was about to insert a large handful of rice, meat and all, into his mouth, when Osmond had just time to rush forward, give his rising arm a blow, and thus defeat his fatal intention. The disappointed man positively screamed with impotent rage.

"In the name of Allah!" exclaimed his master, "are you mad? Will you die? Are you not aware you are about to eat poison?"

"How do I know! how can you know!" roared Mustapha, like a child deprived of its cake, "whether it be poisoned or not? You want to kill me! You want to starve me! Why am I to starve, when here is food before me?"

"Am I again to tell you," said Osmond, "that this is poison—poison, man! Do you hear me?"

Upon which he thought it right to relate the whole story, from beginning to end, of the manner in which this fact had come to his knowledge; and in order to settle the question by a still shorter argument, he took the dish into his hands, and stalking out with it towards the open postern, threw rice, dish and all to the winds, and had the satisfaction of hearing it fall down the precipitous rock.

In the meanwhile the revels which were to crown the night had begun in Cara Bey's own apartments, which, lying con-

tigious to those of the harem, enabled the chief to allow his women to be spectators thereof. They did so through the means of certain small windows which looked from their apartment into that appropriated to the men. Already had his meal been served, during which he drank more than a due portion of his favourite wine. He had invited Hassan to his board, together with the priest, and three or four of his principal officers. They talked long and much of their different feats of prowess—of the caravans attacked, of the traveller slain, and of the villages invaded. The last expedition was particularly brought under discussion, a subject which naturally led to the object of it, and to the success by which it had been attended.

"By my head!" exclaimed Cara Bey, beginning to be flushed with wine, "we have performed a marvellous feat—but the best of our destiny has been, that, instead of securing one bit of happiness, we have secured two. I don't know which is best, the mother or the daughter. *Ajaib chey!*—they are wonders both. *Eh, pezevenk*—eh wretch, what do you say?" said he, addressing himself to an old rough marander, whose tanned face was more like the seat of a well-worn saddle than the seat of intelligence—"what do you say?"

"All I can say, O my Aga," said the other, "is, that there is none other in the world like you." Upon which he masticated with renewed vigour, and drank with fresh impulse.

"*Hai hai!*—true true!" exclaimed the arrogant chief, "true—Cara Bey is in truth somebody in the world. Of men there are many, of somebodies few. *Bah, bah, bah!*" he continued, chuckling, and shaking his head at the same time with delight and presumption, "they are wonderful creatures—these two women! but the older one, the older one—she is a wonder!"

Hassan heard all with heaviness of heart—his mind was overflowing with a variety of emotions—he could scarcely sufficiently command himself to appear pleased. He thought of the preserver of his life—he was anticipating the results when the discovery of his flight, which he expected, should take place; for he had formed a plan of absconding that very night with Mariam, and seeking the Russian frontier, where he hoped to overtake Osmond, and therefore only longed for the moment when the festivities would break up, that he might be at liber-

ty to steal away. He watched with satisfaction every progressive cup of wine which flowed down the throat of the chief, for he hoped soon to witness its effects. He would have taken his departure, but he saw the time was not yet come for the dancers and their deafening accompaniment of music being called, and it was necessary to see that part of the entertainment entered upon ere he ventured to stir.

The dance began—two youths, the down of whose chins had scarcely begun to sprout, with hair flowing behind their ears, arrayed in gorgeous fancy-coloured dresses, like those of women rather than men, first stepped forward. They were accompanied by a buffoon, an old Turk with a beard, who held a long candle in his hand, wearing a cap from which emanated a quantity of small tapers, “like quills upon the fretful porcupine,” which being occasionally lighted by stealth by some wag of the company, were intended to produce mirth when other incentives failed. This constant attendant on such like scenes, probably a descendant from the fabulous satyrs of old, well personified, both in look and calling, one of those ancient worthies. When the dancers performed some feat, or threw themselves into some extravagant contortion, he mimicked or applauded them with still viler action.

The whole exhibition was well suited to the gross taste of the audience; and step by step, from one feat to another, led on to displays of coarseness which none but Asiatics can enjoy. It was accompanied by music and singing, if a concert made up of yells and discordant sounds may be so called, which seemed well adapted to excite the admiration and jollity of the rough men who formed the company, and who, seated round the room in solemn row, might every now and then be discovered through the smoke of their pipes, in the act of allowing their bearded faces to be cheated out of their habitual gravity.

Renewed sets of performers succeeded each other—more wine was supplied—Cara Bey drank deeper, and, as he roared with approbation, became more flushed. Hassan observed that the moment for slipping away unobserved had arrived. He arose and left the room, and soon after quitted the castle with his companion.

Osmond, in the meanwhile, had passed the time in a state of feverish impatience and excitement, which, perhaps, may be

conceived, though difficult to describe. His imagination was conjuring up a thousand fears regarding the dangers to which his mistress might be exposed from the brutality of her oppressor. His ears were struck by the din of the music; he well knew what it meant, and to what horrors it led: he was fully aware of the excesses by which similar orgies were accompanied; and when Asiatics, breaking through their law, gave way to drunkenness, he knew that they then became in appetite lower than the brutes of the field. To think of the shrinking, timid, and lovely Ayesha, and then to dwell upon the gross, lawless, and unrestrained character of the monster in whose power she was, inflamed as he would be by wine and maddened by the licentiousness of the scene then in full action, produced fears and forebodings greater than his reason could well bear.

Every fresh burst of mirth or applause, sounding like the revelry of fiends, excited his renewed apprehensions. He walked to and fro in his prison, swelling with impotent and unavailing rage. He counted the minutes as they passed. Every succeeding quarter, or half, or whole hour, as it revolved on the dial of his watch, was recorded with more than the vigilance of the condemned wretch who is waiting for the last visit of his jailor to conduct him to the scaffold.

Four anxious hours had now elapsed since Stasso and his companion had departed. Osmond took up his station at the postern, hoping that he might hear some indications of their return. He watched with all his senses on the stretch. Sometimes the wind, sweeping over the mountain's side, brought with it, as he thought, the sounds of distant voices; at others, he fancied he heard the clank of arms; and then, through the darkness, his too impatient sight was deluded into a certainty that he saw the forms of approaching men,—but in every instance he was deceived. Nothing was there but Night in all her majesty, Nature in her calm; and all that was now left to him was Hope, with her blessed anticipations.

Returning to his prison, his ear was first struck with what he thought was the shriek of a woman—the blood forsook his heart, a cold tremor ran through his frame: he listened again—all was silent save the eternal din of the hellish music. This fear, this forerunner of all his apprehensions, was sufficient to

rivet him to the window, which was nearly touching, though out of sight of those of the women's apartments. He listened with breathless attention, every now and then turning his head to the postern from which was to come his help. Another shriek struck his ear—this was no longer an illusion; the cry was one of distress, of supplication:—he panted for breath, his heart beat audibly in his breast, he seized his sword, he prayed earnestly to God for pity and assistance. More cries were heard; the music ceased:—his imagination was on fire; his senses had almost left him; he was nearly sinking to the earth with the complication of his sufferings, when he thought he heard from without the clashing of a musket as if striking or trailing against a rock. He revived; his eyes almost started from his head as he looked towards the door. Another louder shriek, which roused his looks into frenzy, brought him to his senses. Again he listened; he staggered towards the postern; when all at once his fears were hushed, as he heard the noise of hasty footsteps resounding through the low arch, and immediately after saw the form of Ivanovitch rush into the room, followed by Stasso, panting and exhausted from excess of exertion. Their first impulse was to throw themselves into the arms of Osmond; they wept like children: Stasso embraced his master's knees, Ivanovitch wrung his hand with the most tender sympathy. Instantly after the room was filled with soldiers—European soldiers—armed from head to foot, as on service.

“Hush, hush!” said Osmond, with a thrill of exultation now running throughout his frame, and gratitude to his Almighty protector pouring through every fibre of his heart, but still ardently impatient to rush to the rescue of his Ayesha, whose voice he was quite certain he had identified with the shrieks which had struck his ear. “Are they loaded?” was the first question which he asked the gallant young Russian. “They are.”—“Fix bayonets!” were the next words spoken, which Ivanovitch addressed to his men. The clang which followed this command threw a renewed impulse of resolution into every one's breast, excepting Mustafa's, who now began to have his eyes opened to the result of the whole proceeding, and who, looking towards the deserted well, would willingly have become its tenant. “Let us draw our swords,” cried Osmond, “and, in God's name, let us advance. No blood must be spilled, if

possible; mark that, Ivanovitch. I will go first. And now down with the door." Upon that a rush was made against it, and the butt-end of the muskets went manfully to work in securing its fall.

The first intimation which the inmates of the castle received of what was going on in the prison, was the noise proceeding from the blows inflicted on the door. Cara Bey had by this time drunk to such excess that all the brutality of his nature was brought out in its utmost exuberance. His frame had been so saturated with constant excess in wine, that its power was mitigated; for he never was so far intoxicated as not to possess a sufficient glimmering of reason to give directions in what might concern himself at the time. He had in vain looked for Ayesha among the women who appeared at the window to witness the revels below; and although Zabetta had secured to herself the principal share of his attentions, still he felt piqued at the obstinate seclusion of her daughter. In the fulness of his debauchery this feeling flashed across his mind; he thought himself outraged: his passions were all abroad, he determined to exert his power. Rising from his seat at a time when the dancing and the noise were at their height, he darted through the door which led into the harem, and, going into the room which Ayesha occupied, found her, as usual, seated in a corner, looking through a window which commanded a view of the surrounding country, and endeavouring to avert her mind from the miseries of her present state of bondage, by the contemplation of the night and its calm beauties.

Cara Bey, addressing her in a tone full of insolence, would at once have dragged her away and obliged her to be a partaker of the night's revelry. She resisted at first with mildness, and endeavoured to soften his brutality by timid remonstrance; but he was not in a humour to be trifled with: he seized her by the hand with violence, and this was the cause of her first shriek. She then pretended to accede to his request, and joined the women in their seat at the window; but as soon as she became aware of the horrors of the scene which she was called upon to witness, she abruptly retired. Cara Bey again went in pursuit of her, and his violence called forth more cries. Having torn off her veil in the struggle, her whole beautiful face and bewitching form caught his eye, and from one act of

violence he was proceeding to another, when the indignant maiden thought of the friendly dagger which lay in concealment at her side, and, as she invoked the name of her lover, placed her hand upon its hilt, still unseen by Cara Bey, hoping, however, that he would soon desist from urging his brutal suit.

He was in this stage of his depravity, when a messenger came rushing in, with mouth open and eyes scared, to tell him of the noise which was heard at the prison-door. The excited, half-drunken, half-conscious chief, received this announcement by taking a pistol from his girdle and firing it off at the messenger; at the same time, breaking into a fiendish laugh, he exclaimed, "Ha! the poison works, does it! They want to frighten me before they die!"

These words catching the ears of Ayesha, at once awoke all her fears, and, as the fatal horror burst upon her astonished senses, she screamed out with all the frenzy of madness. The monster, who held her in his power, calmly looked at her as if he enjoyed her woe, hugging himself in the ingenuity with which he had got rid of a rival. She writhed with agony; she fell at his feet, imploring his mercy for her Osmond;—her cries brought all the harem about her. The reason of her distress soon becoming known, a burst of horror against the murderer came from the assembled women. He became furious, his passions were uncontrollable; the screams increased. Ayesha was now thrown into a state, of which the next stage would have been hopeless madness.

The monster having approached her, his demon-eyes glaring, his hand outstretched to seize, she had at length clutched and unsheathed her dagger-blade—the frenzy had risen to its crisis—when the harem-door was dashed open with a sudden crash, and Osmond, sword in hand, rushed in like a descending angel from heaven sent to protect the wretched. Quicker than lightning he perceived the situation of his mistress, and beheld her ruthless oppressor. He roared out with a voice of thunder, "Miscreant, stay!—I am here!" The wretch, in a bewilderment of every sense, immediately drew his second pistol, and with a trembling hand fired at Osmond without effect; the next moment he was felled to the ground by the intrepid youth. And thus, from being one whose very name produced terror

and apprehension, he became at once a lost and powerless man.

But who can hope to describe the rapturous scene which took place between the lovers! From the depths of almost utter despair, they found themselves at once raised to the summit of every joy—of every hope! Ayesha looked upon her deliverer as a supernatural being: she would almost have sunk on her knees and worshipped him, so intense was the gratitude which beamed in her heart for having been saved from the wretch who had imprisoned her!

Osmond was never before so enthralled by the charms of his mistress. Her heroism, her humility, and her beauty, combined to endear her to him more than ever; and when he reflected that, in protecting her, he might perhaps be rescuing from barbarism one who was born to all the advantages of civilization, the success which had crowned his enterprise made his heart doubly grateful. Zabetta was in a state of amazement: this sudden change in her fortunes deprived her for the moment of all power of thought and action, and for once her spirit of intrigue and her volubility were checked by the imposing presence of Osmond.

The other women of the harem, who had acquired much experience in the ways of the robber, and had witnessed scenes of the same character as that which had just passed before their eyes, saw in the conqueror only a new master, and at once prepared themselves to obey him, as before they had obeyed Cara Bey. They immediately busied themselves in endeavouring to make their services acceptable to Osmond; who, on his side, never having anticipated this sudden acquisition of so large a family of wives, shrank from their attentions with the same repugnance that a newly-arrived traveller eludes the proffered offers of officious landlords; and being ever scrupulous of shocking the prejudices and customs of the nation among whom he sojourned, he determined to observe and maintain the sanctity of the harem even in this lawless den of the mountain-robber. However much against his inclination, therefore, for he willingly would have prolonged his interview with his beloved Ayesha, he withdrew from the women's apartments, and, placing a guard over them, retired to seek that rest which his exhausted frame so much required.

Having given every requisite order for securing the person of Cara Bey, establishing a proper watch over his adherents, as well as releasing from captivity all those who might be confined within the walls of the castle, he retired to rest for the night.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A mesure que le Calife allait en avant, on lui présentait toutes sortes d'objets pitoyables, des aveugles, des demi-aveugles, des messieurs sans nez, des dames sans oreilles.

Vathek.

THE capture of Cara Bey's castle had been effected without bloodshed, and with very little resistance. The sudden appearance of the Russian soldiers had so taken the garrison by surprise, that although some few had gathered themselves together, and drawn their swords by way of resistance, yet, deprived as they were both of the orders of their chief and the cheering voice of his lieutenant, they soon grew disheartened; and when they afterwards heard that Cara Bey was seized and a prisoner, they dispersed, and only studied how to secure their own safety. The confusion which ensued may perhaps be imagined. In a few minutes after the entry of the Russians, the assembled throng, which had before almost choked every avenue to the seat of revelry, had disappeared. The dancers and musicians, sweeping before them the old buffoon, the Yezidi priest, the half-drunken guests, the richly-dressed attendants—all had sought safety in rapid flight, and, almost rolling one over the other in their descent from the upper apartments to the lower courts, only stopped when they found themselves without the walls of the castle. The few who thought of making resistance, seeing their hopeless situation, also determined upon retreat; and thus, before the morning broke on the following day, the scene which had so recently rung with revelry and swarmed with drunkards, was silent

and deserted. A dead stillness had taken the place of turbulent merriment, and the vermin had been dispersed without the necessity of smoke.

Osmond, on retiring for the night, was much surprised that Hassan had not made his appearance. His first inquiry in the morning was for him, but to his still greater surprise, he was nowhere to be found. Anxious to have made him a partaker of his success, to have received his advice upon many points relating to the castle, and, more than all, to have made him the medium of releasing the captives, he was greatly disappointed at his absence, particularly as he could nowhere gain any intelligence whither he had fled. Old Mahmoud, the jailor, had therefore been commissioned to open the prison-gates; and perhaps never had the course of any hero's adventures been cheered by so happy a moment as was Osmond's on this occasion.

The flocking out of the prisoners from their cells presented a scene of stirring interest. Individuals of many of the countries of Asia made their appearance in rotation, most of them in different stages of misery; some naked and cripples, others mutilated; some half famished; many sick and dying; all a living monument of the cruelty and rapacity of the ferocious man into whose hands they had fallen.

From one cell in the court was seen to issue an old Turk, nearly bent double with age, but whose eye denoted intellect, and whose firm step still announced strength—his first question upon seeing the light of heaven may perhaps bring to the recollection of some of our readers a personage with whom they have been before acquainted:—"What is the price of lamb-skins at Constantinople?" said the old Omar Aga to one who he thought might have come from the capital. He had been seized by Cara Bey's gang at the last attack of a caravan, and as he was not particularly active to escape, he and his several loads of Bokhara lambskins had become the prey of the spoiler.

He had seated himself quietly with his back against the wall, scarcely exhibiting any surprise at this sudden change; so true a disciple of predestinarianism was he, for he received the good and the evils of life with almost the same spirit of unconcern, and sat there waiting to see what would happen next. And it was pleasant to observe the meeting which took place

between him and a middle-aged man, a Persian, who, issuing from another cell, seemed overjoyed at seeing him, by the many and various manifestations of delight which he made. He eyed the old man with pleasure, inspected the whiteness of his beard, looked at it with the eye of a connoisseur, asked many questions, and evinced much genuine feeling on finding that they had regained their liberty. This was a certain traveller and adventurer, who, having served the Shah in various countries, had been despatched by his majesty to Constantinople to purchase for him an assortment of gold-spangled silks, satins, and brocades, for the dresses of the ladies of his seraglio. He had travelled as far as the Savanlu mountain with great success, where he had been stopped and plundered by Cara Bey, who would have been satisfied with the possession of his rich goods, not thinking him either worth the killing or the keeping, had he not spoken loftily of the power of his Shah, of his own inviolability as his ambassador, and of other rights belonging to his person, about which Cara Bey knew but little and cared less, but which he thought might be as well suppressed in one of his dungeons, until he should be more enlightened upon the subject.

From a third place of confinement issued three Jews, who were travelling from Bagdad to Arzeroum, with the produce of the successful clippage of gold coin, which they intended to lay out in copper to sell at the capital. Their riches were so easily secreted about their persons, that the robber had been foiled; but he chose to keep them for the ransom which they might probably fetch. They had lived so well at free cost during the time their imprisonment lasted, that they rather rejoiced in its duration than otherwise, since the gain was thus all on their side. With them had been immured an Armenian bishop, whom Cara Bey had stolen as he strayed from the walls of the monastery of Etch Miazin, and who was conveying a certain portion of the holy oil manufactured by the patriarch to the monks at Van. Many others issued from different parts of the castle; many who had been imprisoned from sheer wantonness and caprice; many from the hope of ransom, and others again from policy. As soon as they were congregated, they were led by Mahmoud, instigated by Stasso (who was not willing that his master should

lose the credit of the benefits which he had conferred), to the foot of the stairs which led into the upper part of the castle; and when Osmond appeared before them as their deliverer, he had the satisfaction of receiving their united expressions of thanks and gratitude, and hearing their prayers for his future happiness. But what was their joy and astonishment when he ordered the warehouse, in which all the accumulated spoils were preserved, to be thrown open, and every man to select his own, previously to a final departure! Omar Aga on this occasion breathed forth "*Shukiur Allah!*—praises to God!" as he reclaimed his packs of lambskins. The Persian, in regaining possession of his spangled stuffs, felt that he had saved his heels from a bastinado, and that he might again hope to make his face white before his royal master. The Armenian bishop received back his oil; the Jews alone carried away nothing, although they willingly would have appropriated to themselves certain unclaimed bales, and thus realized the best venture they had ever made, had not they been stopped by Mahmoud, who had an eye to them himself.

Osmond ordered that beasts, of which many were found in the stables of the castle, should be provided for those who were in want of them; and every man, upon loading his goods, took his departure rejoicing. He ordered also that Cara Bey's women, who were natives of the Kurdistan, and whose homes were principally in the villages of the neighbourhood, should be provided with every necessary and comfort which the castle afforded, and be conducted thither in safety, giving to each such a share of the robber's wealth as he thought in justice she was entitled to. But still, after having made all these and other arrangements, he found himself much perplexed what to do with the castle itself and all it contained. He was anxious to leave it as soon as possible; and all things considered, like the sailor in nautical history, he was determined never to take a castle again as long as he lived. He was, however, much relieved when he heard that a large detachment of Russians was seen in full march towards the principal entrance, and soon after was charmed to hear Ivanovitch inform him that it was commanded by a superior officer, a major, who had proceeded on this service the moment he had heard of the circumstances of his, Ivanovitch's, expedition.

As soon as this officer appeared, Osmond immediately delivered over to him the whole and entire possession of the castle; stating that he thought it justly due to those who had been the means of taking it, that they should have the disposal of it, begging at the same time protection for himself, Zabetta, Ayesha, and his and their attendants, and liberty to depart wheresoever they might choose to travel.

This was freely and joyfully granted. The Russians treated Osmond with every consideration, for they saw in him one who had opened to them an easy path to distinction; and by the capture of this rock and castle, they hoped that that object of their ambition, a bit of ribbon and a cross, would soon be an appendage to their dress.

But there was one object still left to be disposed of, and that was Cara Bey himself.

On the night of the seizure of Cara Bey, Osmond, having ordered him first to be bound hand and foot, had made him over to the custody of Mustafa, being quite certain that he could not be placed in more watchful hands. And indeed, if, during the commotion and bewildering excitement of that night, any one could have given heed to the proceedings of that personage, he would have found abundant amusement. Never was the fable of the sick lion and the ass so thoroughly illustrated.

When the first rush of the soldiers, headed by Osmond and Ivanovitch, took place after the breaking down of the prison-door, Mustafa, remaining behind, retired as far as he could from the scene of action, until he found himself close to the open postern. There he fixed himself, with one foot on the threshold and the other on the rock, lending a most attentive ear to every sound, and drawing conclusions as to the probable result of the contest then going on,—ready either to run away or to advance, as it might best suit his safety. At length, when he found that no one seemed disposed to return, he stole quietly on tiptoe to the room he had left. No one was there; silence reigned in the castle. He proceeded onwards, warily, but with more confidence. He then found himself at the door of the harem. Still he heard but little noise; women's voices were all he could distinguish. He

opened the door quietly, and there, the first thing which greeted his eyes was Cara Bey—that demon which had haunted his thoughts, sleeping or waking—that one black spot in his apprehension—there he was, pinioned and a prisoner! Osmond was standing over him with a drawn sword, whilst Ivanovitch and Stasso were tying his hands behind his back and otherwise securing him. Mustafa's courage rose in a moment at this sight—he became all at once several inches taller.

“Ah, Mashallah!” he exclaimed, “we have done well! we will not let that fellow escape again. Did not I tell you that you do not know these rascals? He would have killed us all, and poisoned us like rats if he could, but we were too much for him.—Ah, Mashallah!” looking at the fallen wretch, who, in sullen and dogged mood, seemed to have been struck by sudden fatuity—“Ah, Mashallah!” said Mustafa to him, “I thought you were a man! Such a one I want for my harem. Arise—will you go?”

This was the greatest torment which Cara Bey had hitherto endured. His eyes glared horribly, and his teeth gnashed with fury.

“You worship the devil, do you?” said Mustafa, giving his elbows an extra twist; “let us see; will he come to you? No, no! rather say now, *Lahnet be sheitan!*—curses on Satan! That is what you must say.”

Again the infuriated Cara Bey, taunted by this insignificant portion of a man, would have torn him to pieces had it been in his power to do so; but he was obliged to endure his misery until Osmond, having seen the wretch well secured, said to his Tatar, “Now, Mustafa, take that man under your care; if we fall again into his hands, it will be your fault.”

Mustafa lost no time in doing as he was ordered, and did not hesitate for a moment how to dispose of him. He led him immediately into the room in which he, his master, and Stasso, had been confined; and, giving himself all the airs of the governor of the castle, called with authority for old Mahmoud, and then, with his help, having passed a rope round the body of Cara Bey, lowered him down into the well, from which Ivanovitch, his former victim, had so recently been drawn. Mustafa immediately took his seat at the very orifice of the well,

loaded his pistols, drew his yatagan, and there remained fixed, ready to annihilate his prisoner at the very first symptom of an attempt to escape.

When Osmond had made over the castle to the Russian commanding officer, he wished to dispose of his prisoner in the same manner; but he was not at first aware in what place Mustafa had deposited him. After some search, however, Mustafa was discovered in the position above described, like a cat at the door of a mouse-trap, watching its every motion with undiminished attention.

The moment Mustafa was called upon to give up the charge of his prisoner, all his fears returned as if he actually saw him loose before his eyes. Nothing could persuade him to relinquish the post, or the charge which he had undertaken, until his master came to an explanation with him.

"You would not let him loose upon us again alive," said Mustafa, "would you?"

"I will not kill him, certainly," said his master; "he has been deprived of all power of doing further mischief, and more punishment I cannot inflict upon him."

"But recollect," said Mustafa, "if he be set free, he may turn robber again, and then his first object will be to twist my neck off. As you love your soul, my Aga, do not let us turn fools again, now that we have got on the right side of wisdom."

"I must ever recollect," answered Osmond, "that, but for his help, through his lieutenant and his men, and but for his horses, I might to this day have been in prison at Kara. Although he would basely have taken my life, yet he was once partly accessory in saving it; the death therefore which he so richly deserves shall never come to him through my hands. I will deliver him over to those who have a greater right to his person than I have; let them deal with him as they choose."

"But they are asses too!" said Mustafa. "It is only our Turks who know how to deal with such like fellows. They seize their sword, spit in their hand, cry out '*Y'allah*,—in the name of the Prophet!' and then, with one back-handed slice, take off the head as clean as if they had cut a cucumber in twain."

All this conversation took place at the orifice of the well during the time preparations were making to draw the miser-

able wretch from it. When he at length was landed, it would almost have melted the heart of those who were ignorant of his crimes, to witness the misery of his demeanour. The whole demon was still painted on his features; but, overcoming his fierceness, he was now become abject, fawning, and full of servility. Seeing Osmond before him, attended by the Russian major, he fell at his feet in a most imploring attitude, disgusting in any man, and doubly so in one who but the day before had swelled with arrogance, and had made his power subservient to every infamous purpose.

"O my soul! my lord! my pasha!" exclaimed the fallen man. "Oh, forgive, forgive me! I have been in fault: I have eaten much abomination. Here is my head; strike; take all I have; but let me entreat of you not to deliver me up to the Moscovites. Do with me what you like: I will take all from you. You are my father,—my mother; I have only you in this world as my sanctuary. Will you allow me to be dragged from it? Englishmen are men: they know how to forgive. Oh, forgive your slave! I will become your servant for the rest of my life; but oh, do not—do not give me over to mine enemies."

To all these nauseous supplications Osmond opposed a stern and decisive countenance.

"Were I willing to listen to your wishes," said he, "I could not; for here," pointing to the Russian officer, "here is your master. You must account for your conduct to his countrymen, whom you have so frequently outraged. I have no other course to pursue than to deliver you over to him."

In vain did the abject wretch continue his entreaties. Osmond heeded not his words; but, having delivered him over to the guard appointed to watch over him, he left him, in order to make the necessary arrangements for his own departure, and for that of Ayesha and her mother. But, previously to taking this step, it was necessary that he should have an interview with them, in order to ascertain from their own lips what might be their wishes; for, however much his thoughts might be engrossed in the future well-being of Ayesha, still he was determined not to control her wishes, or put any violence upon her inclinations.

Zabetta had now had time to collect her ideas, and form

schemes adapted to the new turn which her affairs had taken. It was as easy for her to turn her affections from one object to another, as it is for the weathercock to revolve on its pivot at the smallest change of wind. Cara Bey's short reign being over, her former scheme was succeeded by a determination to take possession of Osmond himself: she resolved to wean him from his love to her daughter, and to excite it for herself; or, if that should fail, in a Russian camp, she imagined, there would be no want of competitors for her preference. She argued thus:—She had been a Mahomedan, she determined to be again a Greek. She was now going among those who professed her original faith; she would return to that faith. Who was there now to check her resolution? Old Suleiman, who might have controlled her, was far away. As for the Mufi, his sacks and his drowning, he was welcome to throw any one into the river but herself.

But the object of all her wild dreams, and such it had been ever since she had witnessed the daily increasing beauty of Ayesha, was the getting to Constantinople—the enslaving of the Sultan in person with her daughter's charms, and securing to herself the high situation of mother to the reigning favourite. This hope she now felt was about to be realised. If she could but persuade Lord Osmond to follow up the project of returning to Stamboul, which he told her he had in view, she felt she could desire nothing more; and she longed for an opportunity of trying her best entreaties upon him for that purpose.

Ayesha, ever since her release from the violence of Cara Bey and her deliverance by her lover, had passed her time in such a state of happiness that it almost bordered on delirium. Although still subject to the confinement of a Turkish harem, she was far from complaining; she knew no other mode of life. She would have shrunk from the impropriety of being left under no restraint. But although she could not see him for whom she would lay down her life, although she did not wish to see him, yet still she knew him to be there, ever on the watch for her welfare. She placed such devoted confidence in him, loved him with an ardour so blind, though still repressed, that that feeling alone sufficed for her happiness. She knew he would judge for the best, and act for the best.

All that she had to do was to attend to his wishes and follow his bidding: how could she better show her devotion? There was only one drawback to her happiness, and that was the recollection of him whom she had ever called her father, old Suleiman Aga at Kars. From habit, from a feeling of gratitude, and from a thousand other causes, she was attached to him: father is an endearing word; it reminded her of the duties of a child to a parent, which are so strictly enjoined among Mahomedans, and she occasionally longed to be present with him, in order to assure him of her existence and her safety. Still she was well acquainted with the quality of his mind; she was aware of the apathy and indifference of his character; and thus she felt consolation in the conviction that although he might have lamented her loss at first, still every regret would ultimately give way before the fascinations of his pipe, and his habitual submission to the decrees of fate.

Osmond having desired to see Ayesha and her mother, they appeared before him, properly veiled, at the door of the harem. Zabetta at first began to try the whole artillery of her eyes upon him, dropping her veil, and making use of every art which Asiatic coquettes are apt to do when they wish to make a conquest; but she soon found that such manœuvres were entirely thrown away. Osmond opened the object of the interview by asking her whither she wished to bend her steps in the present posture of her affairs?

She was so awed into respect by his manner, and by the decision and gallantry of his late conduct, that she at once assumed an appearance of rectitude. She said that, if she were to return to Kars, she must ever be looked upon, after what had taken place, as a degraded woman, and that to such a mortification she never could submit. She had long deplored her error in having abjured her faith, and to that faith she now wished to return. Could she but once reach Constantinople, she made no doubt that, under his protection, she might be restored to her parents and her own home, and that was the object nearest her heart: if he would help her in its attainment, she asked no other boon at his hands.

This was the language most likely to win Osmond's approval, and to her request he without further hesitation gave his ready assent, particularly as in fact it accorded with his own

inclination. Finding her in a mood which appeared to him reasonable and tractable, he thought he could not have fallen upon a better opportunity of extracting from her some information upon a subject which was ever uppermost in his mind—the real history of Ayesha. He said to her, “Zabetta, I have no wish to pry into your secrets, or to insist upon your disclosing to me anything which you may wish to conceal; but as you love Ayesha, tell me, am I to believe that she is really your daughter, and the daughter of Suleiman Aga? I have reasons for suspecting that some mystery hangs over her, and that you are able to dispel it. Speak to me as you would to a friend.”

Zabetta, taken unawares, drew her veil over her face to cover her confusion, and answered in a half-angry, half-taunting manner, “Not my daughter, say you! how could you ever dream that she is not my daughter? Whence can your suspicions arise? what have you ever seen to make you believe that she is not my daughter?”

“My suspicions are mainly founded, laying aside other considerations, upon a casual sight which I obtained of a trinket suspended around her neck, with some coins used in my country. It is a trinket made by English workmen, and must have belonged to English people. May I ask you how it fell into your hands?”

“Oh, that talisman!” said Zabetta, with some perplexity, but with more assurance; “that was given to me by Suleiman Aga when first we married: he bought it of some Franks, when he was an attendant upon the governor of Athens. The coins came into his possession at the same time.”

“But the handkerchief?” eagerly remarked Osmond: “I also casually saw a handkerchief, which, I am sure, must have belonged to some one of my countrymen—tell me how you became possessed of that?”

Here Zabetta was evidently much puzzled for an answer, and, after making several attempts at explanation, at length swore that she had bought it in the bazaar, and that, although it might be made of European linen, it was sewn by herself.

However little Osmond might be convinced by what she said, he was obliged to remain satisfied on this occasion with her very unsatisfactory answers. He hoped time would bring to light that which at present was hid in obscurity. He did not

prolong his interview farther than to give her directions about their departure, which was fixed for the morrow. It was determined that they should proceed, in the first place, to the nearest Russian station, escorted by such troops as were unnecessary to garrison the castle, and then travel to the headquarters of the Russian commander-in-chief in Georgia.

At parting, Osmond availed himself of the opportunity to pour forth every feeling of his heart to his devoted mistress, which she returned in a manner that exalted her in his esteem more, if possible, than ever.

CHAPTER XXV.

A la pointe du jour suivant, on ouvrit les grands battans des portes du palais, et le convoi se mit en marche.

Vathek.

ON the following morning, at an early hour, everybody was astir in the castle. The sounds of the animating drum, the clash of arms, the appearance of soldiers in marching order, everything so much reminded Osmond of Europe, that Asia and her barbarous inhabitants appeared all at once to have vanished, and he felt restored to his own place in the world. The procession was opened by the infantry, in the centre of which was placed the prisoner, Cara Bey, who, casting his eyes about him as he bade adieu to all his by-gone power and possessions, afforded a melancholy, though impressive, spectacle of the instability of human affairs. Osmond and the Russian officers, attended by Stasso, and Mustafa, who, once again seated on the saddle, seemed to have left behind him all his fears and miseries, followed next in order. The women, at some small distance, duly guarded and attended, brought up the rear; and never, perhaps, were met a gayer set of hearts (the prisoner's excepted) than were collected together on this occasion.

The day broke with unusual splendour, and the vast scene

which developed itself as they issued from the castle-gates, acted upon the spirits through the medium of the eyes, in the same manner as the examination of divine truths does upon the understanding. The summits of the mountains were receiving their first crimson tints from the rising sun; the snow-capped cone of Ararat was streaked with most delicate tints of pink, rose, and vermillion, whilst its roots were still embedded in darkness. The eastern clouds nearest the sun, receiving the brightest touches, shone in the most brilliant hues of gold and amber; whilst those more distant were still in shade, although, as the light gradually fell upon them, they soon partook of the general refulgence. The plain was involved in misty shadows, waiting in its turn for the enlivening presence of the great har-binger of warmth and light; and as the procession wound along the sides of the castle-cone, each individual in his turn, as the sun shone upon him, received the sharp lights on the one side of his person, whilst the other still remained in undefined shade.

After such adventures as those which Osmond had encountered, in which he had undergone every vicissitude, from the fear of death to the restoration of all which he held most dear, such a scene as this was felt with more than usual delight: his inmost soul glowed with gratitude; he enjoyed his existence; the very act of inhaling the purity of the morning air being of itself sufficient to produce unmixed rapture. What then, thought he, will be that state of existence, when such pleasures will be enjoyed, unalloyed by any mixture of human passions and human cares, when our sole occupation will be the rapturous contemplation of the glories of that Being who called us into life!

They proceeded straight to the nearest Russian station—a spot which brought to the minds of Cara Bey, Osmond, and Ivanovitch, though with different feelings, the recollection of that event which had led to the present state of things; here they stopped. One of the first objects which met their sight as they were crossing the ravine, was Hassan. This circumstance to Cara Bey was bitterness and anguish; to Osmond it gave unmixed satisfaction. The one glared at him, as he crossed his path, with the eyes and countenance of a demon; the other received him with all the demonstrations of the sincerest friend-

ship. Hassan soon related his story; his evasion from the castle, with his companion Mariam, had been most successful; but his disappointment at not meeting Osmond as he had expected, would have driven him to madness, had not the appearance of Stasso and Ivanovitch, which had taken place before his arrival, explained the whole state of the case. He would have returned immediately to the castle had his feet enabled him so to do; but he still felt the effects, and perhaps would through life, of that fatal bastinado. He expressed his joy so naturally and unaffectedly at the result of their enterprise, offering himself as an attendant upon Osmond as long as he should remain in this part of Asia, and altogether showed such genuine feeling, that Osmond was quite at a loss how to repay him in any adequate manner for his kindness and his services. He invited him, at all events, to proceed with them to the headquarters of the Russian commander-in-chief, where something might be done in furtherance of any views of his own which he might have; and proposed that Mariam should be taken into the service of Zabetta and Ayesha as their waiting-maid. This scheme being agreed to, after a short stay at the Russian station, the travellers set off again to seek the head-quarters of the commander-in-chief, under the escort of Ivanovitch, who commanded the small detachment sent in charge of the prisoner. His appointment to this service had been made at the immediate desire of Osmond, who thus might have an opportunity of expressing to the Russian general the great obligations he was under to his gallant young friend, as well as of securing to him the glory both of the capture of the castle, and of the person of the noted Cara Bey.

At the time we speak of, the Russians were in full possession of the whole of Georgia, and had extended their conquests nearly as far as the range of the Aligez mountains; an extension which at this day includes Erivan and its fertile plain, with the Araxes for its boundary. They were then at war with Persia. The Russian commander-in-chief was expected to leave Tiflis, the capital of Georgia, about this time, at the head of an army, to march to the southward, in order to establish itself on the Persian frontier; and it was a question whether our travellers would reach him before he left Tiflis, or meet him in his camp. They reached Gumri on the first day, where they

found a considerable garrison ; and in succession, passed several nights on the road, after having crossed a difficult country, full of abrupt mountain-passes, everywhere exhibiting remains of its ancient consequence, and abounding in the finest mountain-scenery. Various were the reports which they heard on the road, of the motions of the Russian army. One traveller, coming straight from Tiflis, asserted that it was still in its cantonments at that place. Another, whom they met not long after, said that he had seen it on its march ; and a third swore, he had passed through its encampment near the Bambek river, but two days before.

At length it was ascertained that the last traveller had spoken the truth, and, moreover, that the commander-in-chief was with the army in person. This being the case, Osmond suggested the propriety of sending a messenger in advance to announce the approach of the prisoner Cara Bey, as well as those who accompanied him, in order that preparations might be made for their reception—a suggestion to which Ivanovitch immediately consented. In furtherance of it, he determined himself to proceed, leaving a subaltern in command of the escort during his absence.

On the morning when the travellers expected to reach the camp, every one was seen arranging his dress and equipage to the best advantage, preparatory to entering upon a scene so novel as that which an European army would be sure to present. Osmond in vain wished that he now had in his possession the clothes which he had left behind him at Kars, and which had become the prey of the Pasha and the Mufti. His uniform would at once have secured him protection and consideration, and have announced without any further explanations that he was an Englishman ; but when he looked upon the clothes which he wore, soiled, old, and weatherworn, and which gave him so thoroughly the appearance of an Oriental, he despaired to explain to the Russian commander, in such a manner as to secure his entire conviction, that he was what he pretended to be. It was plain that, unless some lucky circumstance intervened in his favour, he would be taken for a spy. The disguise which he wore could secure him no consideration, and the delay which might elapse ere he could procure testi-

monials of his identity, might perhaps be subversive of all his future schemes. However, as he felt that he had much to say for himself, he only hoped that in the Russian commander-in-chief he might be lucky enough to meet with an enlightened and an upright man, and then he made no doubt that his case, if properly represented, would carry conviction of its truth.

At length the approaches to the camp became manifest; stragglers were seen; cattle grazed on the mountain-sides; the advanced posts were observed on the crests of the hills, and distant smoke marked its site. Having ascended a hill of some height, all at once the camp broke upon the view. Thousands of pavilions, white as snow, extended themselves along a valley, which seemed to have been carpeted with the greenest turf expressly for their reception. On all sides arose mountains of the most picturesque forms, green to their very summits, only here and there broken by masses of a red earth, which contrasted richly with the universal verdure. The Bambek, a broad and tranquil river, flowed past majestically, skirted here and there by light and elastic trees, and gave a charm to the whole landscape, which, though wild when untenanted, now seemed the abode of civilization and pleasure.

Sounds which were unknown to many of the travellers, and which had long been forgotten by others, broke delightfully upon the ear as they approached, cheering the latter with recollections of the past, and the former with the promise of coming pleasure. Military music streamed through the air; the beating of drums, the shrill fife, the swelling trumpet, combined with occasional shouts, the neighing of horses, the traffic of wheeled carriages, and all the busy hum of men, together made up such a congregation of sounds, that those who had but lately left far-distant scenes, felt that they were approaching quite a new order of things.

Ivanovitch had made the best use of his time, for he was the first person to greet Osmond as he entered the camp, and to conduct him to a set of tents prepared for his reception. A separate pavilion was appropriated to the women, whilst Cara Bey was secured as a prisoner, and placed under the superintendence of a guard. He informed Osmond that the commander-in-chief had expressed himself surprised and delighted

at the unexpected event which had rendered him master of Cara Bey's person and castle, and was anxious to see Osmond the earliest moment it would be convenient to him.

Osmond could not conceal from Ivanovitch the awkwardness which he felt in not being able to appear in his own dress, and of the difficulty which he feared he should have in convincing his chief that he was not an impostor. The young Russian, who had never taken this into consideration, agreed that the General was always severe upon the subject of passports, but he hoped that on this occasion, in consideration of the services which Osmond had rendered, he would wave his usual strictness on that head. They proceeded together to the commander-in-chief's quarters. They made their way through a crowd of brilliantly-dressed officers who were in attendance, and who seemed inclined to pay but little respect to one of Osmond's appearance, whilst they greeted his conductor with every demonstration of attention.

At length Osmond, accompanied by Ivanovitch, was ushered into the presence of his Excellency. He found him a fine old man, of most prepossessing appearance, of mild and conciliatory manners, attired in the full dress of a general, decked with every imaginable order of chivalry, hat in hand, and sword by his side, his whole official costume being such as he would assume when about to receive one of the highest rank.

Osmond was not slow in observing that he rather drew back when he perceived one of his sorry appearance enter; for Turks, Persians, and Orientals in general, are accustomed to be held very cheap by their powerful neighbours, and, as he could not in his dress exhibit the least token of being an European, so it is not extraordinary that the General could not at first sight believe him to be such. He was about to send for his interpreter, when Osmond in some measure dispelled the first difficulty by addressing him in very good French, and straightway entering into an explanation of the reasons which obliged him to appear thus disguised. He then gave as short an account as he could of the various circumstances which had thrown him into the hands of Cara Bey, and of those which had led to the seizure of the latter, and to the fall of his castle, in which he gave the whole merit to the gallantry and conduct of the young Ivanovitch; and finished by requesting that he

might be permitted to proceed on his journey to Constantinople, together with his servants and the women who were under his protection.

The old General, who, during the whole course of his life and campaigns, had never heard any story like that which had just been related to him, in which love, war, murder, poisoning, religion, and demonology, were mixed up in such various profusion, opened his eyes and ears with astonishment and curiosity, as Osmond proceeded; and, ere he finished, dropped his features into a look of doubt, shaking his head at the same time with incredulity. "All this, sir, may be true, and I make no doubt it is so," said the General, "but, during my long life, allow me to say, I have never heard any thing like it."

"I doubted very much," said Osmond frankly, "whether my story would gain credence; all I can say is, that my best documents to ensure belief are—first, the delinquent whom I have brought prisoner; secondly, his castle, which is now in your possession; thirdly, the women, the victims of his villany; and, fourthly, this young gentleman, who has been a witness, a more than unwilling witness to the winding up of my story. More I cannot say."

"But, sir," said the General, "however ready I may be to believe you, you must doubtless be possessed of some passport which will assure me that in your person I see my Lord Osmond, an English nobleman, the heir to a great house. Excuse my request; in times of war we are obliged to be very circumspect."

"I have nothing to show beyond a Turkish firman," said Osmond, "with which I have travelled throughout Asia. It never occurred to me that I should have occasion to enter the Russian territories, or else I should have provided myself with a passport from our ambassador at Constantinople."

"I fear," said the General, "I cannot be satisfied with such a document. My government is inexorable on the subject of passports; we must devise some mode of procuring you one."

Osmond looked upon the delay which was likely to proceed from his want of a passport with dismay; but, adopting the suggestion of the General, who said that he should be satisfied with a pass from the English minister at the court of Persia, with whom he was in correspondence, he immediately determined

to despatch Mustafa on that service. This would also give him an opportunity of getting letters of credit on some Armenian merchants of Tiflis, and thus he would be set up in that most necessary of all commodities to a traveller, a well-filled purse. The camp was to remain stationary for a fortnight, and by that time he hoped Mustafa would have returned.

All this being duly settled, Mustafa departed. In the meanwhile, the whole camp rang with the story which had been related both by Osmond and Ivanovitch. Osmond was looked upon as a wonder; he became the idol of the young men, who, envious of his adventures, would willingly have encountered the dangers to which he had been exposed, to become, like him, an object of so much interest. The women also excited the greatest curiosity. Their tent was constantly surrounded by those who were anxious to steal a view of them; and indeed they were not disappointed, as far as regarded Zabetta, for her head was completely turned by all she saw, and she willingly dispensed with her veil whenever a scrutiny of her face and person was desired.

The constant passage of brilliantly-dressed and plumed cavaliers; their handsome persons well padded in front, tightly compressed in the waist; their military bearing, and, more than all, their peering looks, had apparently drawn off her mind from her schemes of ambition at Constantinople; and she began to consider whether it would not be the most advisable thing she could do to take up her future abode where she was. She heard of a chapel which was erected in the skirts of the camp, in which the service of the Greek church was performed; and immediately settled that this was the most fitting opportunity for her to return to her original faith, and without further ceremony she went to church.

Ayesha had been dazzled at first by the novelty of the scene, and, for a few days, did not cease gazing with the greatest attention at every thing she saw. But she was still a Turkish girl, and therefore kept herself carefully secluded from the tent, for her whole and entire being was wrapped up in Osmond. He never passed a day without conversing with her; and, as her mind expanded under his direction, she daily made more progress in securing his esteem and admiration.

It was the current report throughout the camp that the

doom of Cara Bey had been fixed, and that he was condemned to suffer death. The Russians had so many just complaints against him, of the cruel manner in which he had frequently put to death the prisoners he had taken from them, and of the wanton attacks which he had made upon their military stations, that, as a terror to others, it was determined that he should be executed in the most public manner. This the Commander-in-chief communicated to Osmond, who was too sensible of the justice of the sentence to oppose it. It had also been communicated to the offender himself, who received the information with more firmness than could have been expected from one who had shown himself so abject and pusillanimous in his conduct to Osmond. He said, he had but one favour to ask before he met his fate, which was, that he might have an interview with Zabetta without witnesses, which appeared so harmless a request that it was immediately granted.

When his request was made known to her, she shrank from it, and willingly would have avoided him; but when she recollected certain confidential conversations which they had had together, in which he had developed certain schemes for pushing their mutual fortunes in the world, and to which she agreed, she determined to accede to his wishes, lest, ere he died, he might betray her views and blast her future prospects.

She found him alone in the corner of a small tent, with his hands and feet secured by irons, looking the picture of woe and wickedness. As soon as she appeared, his countenance brightened up; and throwing off as much of the demon as he could, he laid himself out to the best of his power to make himself agreeable to her.

"You are welcome," said he. "You, Mashallah! are one of those whose conduct does not consist in mere words. You are a woman of whom there are few such in the world. You come to a fallen man when he can give you nothing in return. May Heaven reward you!"

"What words are these, Cara Bey?" exclaimed Zabetta. "May you live long!—this misery may pass. What would you have of me?"

"What say you? May I live long!—I might perhaps still live if you would help me; but, if you too condemn me, I die as sure as the sun will set to-night."

"I help you!" exclaimed Zabetta in astonishment. "What can a poor weak woman like me do?"

"You can do much," retorted the artful man. "You have power over your daughter. She has power over the Frank, Osmond. He can demand my life from the Muscovite dogs. Have you understood me?"

Zabetta paused to consider what course she ought to pursue, and what answer to give; for with his ruin had fallen whatever scheme she might have planned in conjunction with him, and she dreaded to be farther implicated; but he, full of wile and cunning, reading her thoughts, said—

"Are you fool enough so easily to throw away the advantages which you possess, and which would raise you above all the women of Asia? You have wealth, honours, and power held out to you, and straight you go and seat yourself on a dunghill, and turn your back upon them."

"What say you?" said the excited woman. "I do not understand you."

"You would easily understand me," answered Cara Bey, "if, when I had got to Constantinople, I came to you and said: 'Zabetta Kadân, here is the kishlar aga of the Sultan coming to wait upon you; he comes to kiss your feet on the part of his highness; he invites you and your fair daughter to the seraglio: you will be its mistress: your words shall be a law: the treasures of the empire are open to you: the mother of the favourite Sultana is only second to the Sultan.' You would understand me then, as you understand me now. Is it not so? Speak."

"I do understand," said Zabetta; "but these are mere words. Who is to ensure me this happiness, this power, and these riches?"

"Who?" said Cara Bey. "Not the Englishman, surely, in whose hands you have fallen; but I. Secure me from death, and I will ensure all this for you. I have more friends at the Imperial gate than you can possibly know. I have a direct channel to the ear of the Emperor, which has never failed me yet; and, when a beautiful maid is in the wind, it never fails to lead to all which I now promise you."

"What am I to do? How am I to act?" said Zabetta

dazzled by the prospects held out, and ever ready to put her hand to an intrigue.

"Listen!" said the Bey. "You must make Ayesha work upon the feelings of the Frank. He is a good man—an upright man: there is no denying that. He has already told me that he does not wish my death. Who placed me and my castle in the hands of these Russian dogs? he, and he alone. They cannot refuse to set me free, if he insists upon it."

"And suppose they do," answered Zabetta, "how will you ever get to Constantinople, destitute and a castaway as you will be?"

"Leave that to me. There is no path, no hole, and nothing stirs in this country that is unknown to me. Accompany the Frank: appear to put your full trust in him. Make him the slave of your daughter, and all will go well. And here," he continued, taking a ring off his finger, "return to her this ring which I took from her. Tell her it is the last present which a dying man makes her: it will soften her heart towards me. She cannot withstand that and your entreaties combined. Say you will help me."

Zabetta sat in silence for some time. She saw in truth how brilliant were the prospects held out to her by Cara Bey, when compared to those which any connexion with Osmond might promise. She allowed herself to be persuaded, and at length said: "I will do my best endeavours. I am but a woman; still I will try. Osmond, I know, is a good man, and I can depend upon Ayesha; but we are in the hands of hard-hearted men."

"You promise, then, to try," said Cara Bey. "Go your way, and depend upon success."

"May Heaven protect you!" said Zabetta, and took her leave. She went her way, absorbed in thought. The words of the tempter had made a deep impression: she determined to do her utmost to save him; and when she appeared before Ayesha, she studiously put on a look of care and grief.

"What has happened?" said Ayesha; "surely some misfortune is about to take place! What has the vile man" (for she knew that she had been to see Cara Bey) "said to make you unhappy?"

"Ah, my daughter!" exclaimed Zabetta, "may you never pass such an hour as I have passed! The wretch has been condemned to death, and he knows it. Never have I seen such profound sorrow, such sincere repentance as his! Ah! could we but save his life! Indeed, it is cruel to see a fellow-creature die!"

This language, Zabetta was aware, would touch her daughter in the most tender point; for her heart was ever ready to sympathise with sorrow; and although she knew that of all men who might be doomed to die, Cara Bey would excite the least of that sympathy, still she also knew that, if properly affected, Ayesha would not refuse her endeavours to save even his life.

"What would Osmond say if we were to attempt to save him?" said Ayesha; "does he not think him worthy of death?"

"He would not, and does not require his death," said Zabetta in exultation; "he told Cara Bey so himself."

"Ah! were I certain of that," exclaimed Ayesha, "I would entreat our kind protector and friend to exert his influence to save him. But can such a wretch be ever permitted to live?"

"Cara Bey has lost all hope himself," said Zabetta sorrowfully; "see, he has sent you this! — of this, he says, he unjustly robbed you." Upon saying which, she gave her the ring.

Ayesha bounded forward upon regaining possession of this object so precious to her, and exclaimed, "Praises to Allah for this! He deserves to live, were it only for this act. I should never have thought the wretch capable of such generosity. We must try to save his life, in order that he may have time to repent of his iniquities, ere God requires it from him."

Zabetta was charmed to find how well the plot had hitherto worked. The more she pondered over his words, the more she saw how truly they might come to pass; and her next step was, when Osmond visited her tent again, to soften his heart, and, united with Ayesha, to make him promise to exert his best endeavours to save the life of Cara Bey.

districts, the people were invited to attend. Cara Bey was a name so well known, that when it was reported that he had fallen into the hands of the Russians, and was about to be put to death, it required but little incentive to bring people together. So many individuals had been despoiled by him, and so many families ruined or rendered miserable by his atrocities, that a universal burst of satisfaction at his capture was expressed, and it was pronounced that a common death was too good for him.

The day before the execution, Ayesha, at the instigation of Zabetta, had fulfilled her intention of persuading Osmond to interpose with the Commander-in-chief to save the wretch's life. It required but little to touch his heart; for benevolence and tenderness were among his principal characteristics: he held in abhorrence every act approaching to violence or cruelty; always on the forgiving side, there was ever a leaning in his mind towards the unfortunate, however wicked or criminal they might be. He was on all occasions ready to make allowances for temptation acting upon the weakness of our nature. The best of men, he was aware, require constant watchfulness to preserve them in the path of duty; what allowances ought not then to be made for such a poor benighted creature as the present offender? Born and educated in the grossest of religious beliefs; a very child of Satan by birth; and exercising a profession which, among the rude people with whom he lived, was not only permitted but esteemed honourable; certainly there was much in the all-forgiving doctrines of Christianity to sanction excuse and pardon.

It required, then, but little persuasion on the part of Ayesha to influence her lover to do that to which his principles as well as his inclination already prompted him. Her heart swelled with affection, and tears flowed from her eyes, when she remarked how much his feelings responded to her own; and when at length he agreed to second her wishes, and to busy himself in obtaining a reprieve of the awful sentence, she was but too happy to seal her gratitude with the sincerity of a lover's embrace. Zabetta, who had watched the progress of her concerted stratagem, with all the wile of the serpent in her heart, although with the innocence of the dove in her aspect, when she observed this last proof of its success, could have

clapped her hands with joy; but she kept her real feelings to herself, and exclaimed, when Osmond informed her of his determination, "May you live for ever, O Effendi! but let us hope that you may never have to repent of your kindness. The wretch! life from your hands ought to be more bitter to him than death from the executioner!"

The Russian General had not ceased to extol Osmond's conduct in the whole business of the capture of Cara Bey and his castle, as something so heroic, generous, and disinterested, that he quite persecuted him to ask some boon from the hands of his Emperor; assuring him at the same time, that he would guarantee its being granted, accompanied by the thanks of his whole nation. In the General's estimation, and, indeed it may be said, in that of his countrymen, honours and distinctions were the rewards most prized; and he would, in truth, have wished to see his friend Osmond decorated in the same manner as himself; such was the high estimation in which he held him. But Osmond was unconcerned about personal distinctions; all he required was, that his gallant young companion in suffering, Ivanovitch, should receive those marks of his sovereign's favour which might have been awarded to himself, and, moreover, that every one of the Russians who had come to his assistance when he was in distress, might also be distinguished by some token of reward. To these terms the General willingly submitted, and Osmond was delighted to see the man whom he had once been obliged to use so roughly, the happiest of Russian mortals.

On the very morning of the execution, when the marching of the troops to their different stations was already heard, and the whole camp was teeming with preparation and curiosity, Osmond walked to the tent of the Commander-in-chief, and demanded an audience. No sooner was his presence announced than he was introduced. The General was already arrayed in his fullest uniform and decorations; his staff wore their best; there was great attention given to display. He received Osmond in the kindest manner, took both his hands into his own, and kissed both sides of his cheeks. "My friend," said he, "we are now going to put the finishing hand to the extraordinary work begun by you. You must attend to see that it be well done."

"I am quite ashamed of your unceasing kindness," said Osmond; "but I fear that our ideas of how the work which you are about to accomplish ought to be finished, will be at variance when I explain myself."

"How!" said the old man, his face beaming with good-nature; "we have agreed hitherto in all things, we cannot disagree now."

"Hear me," said Osmond: "I hope you will agree with me to the last. You have frequently pressed me to require a boon at your hands; I am more than grateful, and I would have acceded to your request were it only to please you, but that I had really nothing to ask. But now I have a petition to make, and I am sure you will grant it, for it is in your power."

"What is it?" said the General, with pleasure and alacrity in his accent and manner.

"It is this," said Osmond; most impressively;—"that you spare your prisoner's life—that you allow Cara Bey to live and be free."

"How!" exclaimed the old man, opening his eyes in astonishment. "Save his life! how can such a thing be done now? Is not all the country prepared to witness his doom? have we not made preparations for this event greater than were ever made before; and shall we not prove the laughing-stock of all the world, if they end in nothing—in an act of weakness? Believe me, my friend, I will do any and every thing to meet your wishes, but it seems to me that you have here allowed the goodness of your heart to get the better of your judgment."

"It may be as you say," said Osmond, "and I will not willingly put my judgment in competition with yours; but hear my reasons for the request I make, and you shall decide whether I am right or wrong. But for that man, I should probably be at this moment wasting my existence in a Turkish prison at Kars. At first he received me and gave me protection, and although his subsequent conduct cancelled my first obligations, still I cannot bring my conscience to acquiesce in his death; I cannot bring myself to be a party to it. These are my scruples; I am sure, in making them known to you, I am confiding them to the breast of an upright man."

With some hesitation, and after a pause, the General said, "You have said enough to shake my resolution, whilst you

have increased my respect for your character; but think of my situation. Here am I Governor-General and Commander-in-chief of this great country, which the Emperor has confided to my management, with the power of life and death in my hands. The numerous and various tribes which I have to control, and to keep in constant check, watch my actions as foxes do the lion. Wild as the winds of heaven, living in mountains difficult of access, full of deceit, stratagem, and resource, if they perceive any weakness or want of decision in my conduct, they are ever ready to revolt; forgive their delinquencies but once, they look upon forgiveness as their right, and act in their lawless warfare as if no retribution were at hand. What is to be done in this advanced stage of our proceeding?"

"I fully enter into your views," said Osmond, "and I should be sorry to interpose my petty interests when yours of so much greater importance are at stake; but let me observe, that I differ from you when you say that, by showing mercy, you show weakness. I have always looked upon it that mercy, properly exercised by the hand of power, increases strength. It may be looked upon as weakness by the foolish and the thoughtless, but those who know what power means, know best how to appreciate an act of mercy; and the strength of a nation consists, not in the fools, but in the wise heads which it contains. Marshal the latter on your side, add them to the bayonets by which you are surrounded, and you will more easily quiet the rebellious, and more essentially increase your moral power (which is, after all, the greatest strength), than if your executioner's scimitar were always drawn and always at work."

The old general rubbed his eyes upon hearing this doctrine, and knew not how to answer. He was staggered in his opinion, but still he only saw before him the great preparations which he had made, and the consequent disappointment which would ensue were he to allow them to go for nought. At length he said, "But something must be done; we cannot dismiss all this collected world, without some exhibition!"

"No, no," said Osmond; "it is quite right that there should be as solemn an exhibition of your power as possible, which will render more impressive the solemnity of the mercy you intend to grant. At the moment when the wretch expects his death,

let his shackles be knocked off, and let him be set free, a wanderer and an outcast, with this proclamation ringing in his ears, 'As his hand was against every man, so let every man's hand be against him.' Set a mark upon him, as a mark was set upon Cain, and, like him, let him be a wanderer and a fugitive. Many there are whose blood he has spilled, who will be ready to take vengeance; but let the blood be off my head, and perhaps you will feel happy that it is off yours. He can no longer do you harm; his castle is in your hands; his gang is dispersed; and a branded wretch, without wealth, friends, or a home, will never again be likely to find adherents."

The discussion on this subject lasted for some time, for the General was not at all disposed to accede to Osmond's wishes; but as the moment approached when Cara Bey's doom must be settled in one manner or another, they were obliged to separate, and the result of their deliberations was kept secret.

The sun had risen about an hour above the summits of the mountains which surrounded the valley of the encamped army, when everything was in readiness for the execution of the criminal. The troops, with drums muffled and with every military solemnity practised in the awful case of death, were drawn up in a semicircle in front of the camp, upon an open space of verdure; and their whole appearance, flanked by artillery, their bayonets bristling in the sun, and their ranks varied by the admixture of their waving standards, gave an impressive idea of the power of Russia, as it stood in the wilds of a country so distant from the seat of her rule. Behind the line of troops might be seen the mass of natives who had come to witness the scene; some seated in groups upon rising ground, others stealing a look between the soldiers' ranks, and others encroaching too much upon the spot appointed for the execution. Here might be seen Georgians, Circassians, Imeretians, men of the Ossi tribe, Tuschians, and Lesguis. The Georgian, known by his close vest and dagger on his thigh; the Circassian, by his helmet of steel, his chain-armour, and his straight sword; the Imeretian by his crimson dog's-eared cap, his many chains, and his sword covered over like an umbrella; the Ossian by his shirt and hairy *yapuncheh*, or cloak; the Tuschian, by his needy and vagabond look, carrying a spear, which is a mark of obligation to avenge the blood of one of his relations; and the Les-

guian, remarkable for his peculiarly wild and ferocious appearance. Besides these, there were Armenians, a few Jews, men from the Carabagh with their large sheep-skin caps, Turks, and Persians. In short, the congregated mass, with its variety of dress, colours, features, and complexion, mixed with the never-failing veil of the women, might be compared to a collection of flowers planted in different beds, flowers of each bed having their separate name and quality.

This assembly had been kept for some time in expectation, and the sun had made considerable progress in its ascent, when at length the Commander-in-chief, surrounded by his staff, and accompanied by Osmond, who walked close to him, and who, from his oriental costume, attracted the particular attention of the multitude, made his appearance, under the salute of the whole line. Much was said, and much was ordered, ere the prisoner was allowed to appear. A band of six grenadiers, chosen for being good marksmen, were drawn out in front of the line, to carry the sentence into effect. A halberd, stuck in the ground, marked the spot where the prisoner was to kneel: a wooden coffin was at hand, under the charge of two corporals. A dead silence ensued as the time drew near for the prisoner's approach. At length, one of the brazen field-pieces was fired as a signal, and, shortly after, the condemned man was seen walking at a slow pace, with a guard of five grenadiers before him, and five behind him, whilst a band of muffled drums beat a solemn march appropriate to the occasion. The culprit was worn and haggard; his naturally saturnine complexion was now become a livid white, the blackness of his hair and beard contrasting strongly with the unhealthy hue. In the cast of his countenance, although there was an expression of fear, still there was a lurking beam of hope. He walked erect, eyed the scene before him with composure, and seemed to say by his gesture, "I am not to die."

Nothing was heard save the clanking of his irons and the beat of the muffled drum. The breathless silence of the assembly, and their looks of intense interest, increased by the effect of the surrounding scenery, were in every way most striking and impressive. When he had reached the halberd, the officer commanding the firing-party stepped up to him, and, obliging him to kneel, tied the fatal handkerchief over his eyes. And now

it was remarked that an universal tremor seized his frame. He began to think that all hope was gone. He became faint: he would have cried out for mercy. Then he heard the words "Make ready!" followed by the clashing of the muskets and the ominous click of the lock. A scream of despair came from the wretched man, and was heard in thrilling echo all around. The word "Present!" was loudly given, and the six muskets were pointed directly at the breast of the prisoner, and would have been followed by the last doom—"Fire," but the voice of the Commander-in-chief was heard, strong and decisive—"Recover arms." The order was obeyed, and a general pause ensued; but the wretch, upon hearing the last words, fell flat with his face to the ground, in a state of insensibility.

The effect of this action upon the spectators was almost as great as if he had actually been shot. A general murmur and agitation were produced by the various feelings which pervaded the assembly. After some delay, during which Cara Bey had in some measure recovered his senses, and soon after his self-possession, the Commander-in-chief, accompanied by Osmond, in great form, followed by his staff and all the principal officers of the army, walked towards the prisoner. Having formed a circle round him, he ordered the handkerchief to be withdrawn, allowed him to take a full survey of the scene before him, and then addressed him, through the medium of an interpreter, in the following words:—

"Wretched man! in but a few minutes your miserable soul would have been plunged into the eternity of another world, to meet the reward of the many crimes which you have committed in this;—but, through the intercession of this brave man," pointing to Lord Osmond, "and by God's mercy, your life has been saved. However, as you have shown yourself a public pest, so a mark of infamy must be fixed upon you, that you may be shunned by your fellow-creatures. You will be branded as a villain ought to be, and this proclamation will go throughout the country, 'As the wanderer Cara Bey's hand was against every man, so now let every hand be against him.'"

Upon which a blacksmith in attendance was called upon to inflict the sentence, which he did by stamping a small heated horse-shoe on his forehead, whilst he was held forcibly down by two soldiers. He uttered a cry, though but of short con-

tinuance; for he forgot the pain he endured, when he saw his fetters knocked off his limbs, and could even indulge in a satanic smile of secret exultation, as he turned his ominous-looking eyes upon the surrounding spectators. Osmond now came up to him, and said:—

“Now you are free. Go and expiate your crimes. Go; henceforth be a wanderer and a fugitive.”

The satanic man, throwing his face over his shoulder as he turned his back to depart, whilst an ominous scowl overcast his features, straightway, like a wounded wolf, gradually, slowly, accursed as he was, slunk out of view, and disappeared in the depths of an adjacent dell.

When the assembled multitude saw this result, a sort of suppressed groan of disappointment was heard, followed by a shout of execration at the departing villain. Every one was astonished at the mercy which had been shown; but as soon as the terms of his reprieve from death were known, all who bore a spite to him swore that he should not long live to enjoy his liberty, and that rather than he should exist in the country of which he had so long been the terror, they would hunt him down as they would a wild beast. In the mean while every one returned home, filled with the marvel of the scene which he had witnessed.

Among the most astonished and dissatisfied at the result of the proceedings was Mustafa. When he saw Cara Bey depart with his limbs whole and unfettered, to all intents and purposes as sound in body as when at first he had been made prisoner, his heart sank with dismay, and anger rose uncontrolled in his breast. He now fairly set his master down as one of those stricken madmen, of whose recovery there is no hope. That the villain,—the wretch who would have poisoned them—who had imprisoned them under false pretences—whose death would have been a public benefaction,—that such a being should have been allowed to escape, was in his eyes a crime not to be pardoned. He would have left Osmond's service immediately, had he been able to do so; it was only the prospect of soon getting to Constantinople, which he knew was their future destination, that prevented him from putting his wishes into effect. In vain did Stasso, who blindly approved of every action of his master, endeavour to persuade him that there

must exist some good reason for his conduct unknown to them; nothing could convince him of the propriety of suffering a wretch to exist who would not fail to cut each and all of their throats upon the first opportunity. As Osmond, however, now seriously talked of his approaching departure, these feelings were gradually absorbed in the preparations for their journey.

News having reached the camp that a large Turkish vessel was embarking a cargo for Constantinople at Poti, on the Black Sea, Osmond immediately determined to take his passage in her; and communicated his intentions to the Commander-in-chief, who could not but approve of them, although he would willingly have kept him as his guest for some time longer. A messenger was immediately despatched to the port, to secure all the accommodation which the vessel afforded, and to delay her departure until he should arrive. All sorts of provisions were supplied to Osmond by the kindness and generosity of his Russian friend; every facility was given for the conveyance of the women; and as the season was favourable, there was every chance before him of a good passage, and a happy deliverance from the barbarism of the rude people among whom he had so long sojourned.

Before, however, we launch him upon a new sea of troubles, we must say a word of the destinies of the faithful Hassan, who had been no unconcerned spectator of the result of his former master's seizure and enlargement. During his stay among the Russians, Osmond had taken care that he should be treated with proper attention, and now that they were about to part, he asked him, in what manner he could best testify his gratitude to him for all the services which he had rendered. Our hero having well replenished his purse through the means of an Armenian merchant, who attended the army, and who had freely given him money in virtue of his letters of credit, thought that one of the modes by which he could best show his gratitude to Hassan was, to make him a large present in money. But, strange to say, although he was really a lover of money, (and what Asiatic is not?) still it was not of money acquired in this way that he was fond; but money attained after a mode of his own—in short, he was a Kûrd and a freebooter. He, therefore, rejected Osmond's offer with all humility, and only asked one favour, which was, that he might receive an order

from the Russian Commander-in-chief to be allowed free access to Cara Bey's castle, and that he might be allowed to carry away with him whatever he chose. Osmond did not care to investigate too closely what that might be, for he naturally concluded that, to those who knew where to seek, much money must be there secreted, and, for aught he knew, Hassan might be as well entitled to it as any one else. He therefore procured for him, not only the desired order, but the strongest recommendations in his favour, which would secure him protection and security from the present possessors of the castle. He entreated Hassan to let him know, through Mustafa, where he might be found, in case it should be in his power to serve him more essentially; and, with mutual protestations of friendship, Osmond saw him depart, full of hope that his future existence would be crossed by fewer vicissitudes of life than usually fall to the share of an Asiatic in his circumstances.

CHAPTER XXVII.

J'ai ouï dire à des vieux capitaines Turcs, qu'il y a 1500 bâtimens sur la Mer Noire, et que tous les ans il s'en perd cent.—*Voyage de CHARDIN*, v. i. p. 100.

IN order to reach Poti, and the shores of the Black Sea, it was necessary to take the circuitous route by Teflis, whence there was a road practicable for horses only. As far as Teflis, carriages might be used, though with difficulty; and as the warm-hearted Commander-in-chief was anxious to see Lord Osmond depart with every honour and attention which it was in his power to show him, he insisted upon his friend making use of his carriages as far as they could be of any service to him. Osmond, with every expression of gratitude, declined any conveyance but that of horseback for himself, but willingly accepted of a carriage for the use of Ayesha and her mother,

who would be happy to be saved any part of the fatigue of the long journey before them.

The day being fixed for departure, Osmond, with the greatest regret, left the camp, where he had met with so much hospitality, accompanied by the General and his suite. Their parting was that of attached friends; he left a reputation behind him in every way honourable to himself and his nation, whilst he carried away with him an impression of the excellence and urbanity of those with whom he had had the good fortune to become thus acquainted. Ivanovitch had obtained permission to accompany his friend to the place of embarkation, and was placed in command of the small detachment of troops, without which it was dangerous to travel in this wild region, and which was to escort him as far as the Black Sea. Thus accompanied, he began his march. Of the party the persons who were most delighted, were Ayesha and Zabetta. They had never even seen a carriage before their arrival at the camp, much less been driven in one, and the pleasure which they enjoyed in their new conveyance is not to be described—it was, that of children. This foretaste of civilization was the more relished by Ayesha, because it confirmed to her much of what Osmond had related of the superiorities of European over Asiatic life. As for Zabetta, she almost forgot the schemes of ambition with which Cara Bey had so lately broyed her up, in the dignities which she imagined had been conferred upon her by being thus elevated to so enviable a position. No Pasha's wife that she had ever heard of, was ever so honoured—she doubted whether any of the royal sultanas themselves could command such a carriage. She began to regret that she was obliged to abandon the Russians; their equipages, and their handsome officers, for the uncertain prospects held out to her by her perfidious partner in stratagem. During the whole of the road to Teflis, she did not cease to dwell upon her present happiness; and when she reached that city, which was now gradually losing the character of an eastern town, owing to the European arts and civilization which its present rulers were daily introducing into it, she showed still more that her taste for Franks predominated over that for the long-robed, rough-bearded Mahomedans.

They tarried but a short while at Teflis, giving themselves time only to lay in the comforts and provisions which are essential on board a Turkish vessel, and then resumed their journey. The women, leaving their carriage with regret, were mounted on horses. For several days they travelled over a mountainous and thickly-wooded country, difficult of access, and inhabited by a thinly-scattered population, whose wild and lawless habits were with difficulty kept in check by all the rigour of Russian military rule. At length, after many a dangerous descent and many a wearisome ascent, from a commanding height they caught the first view of the sea. The Black Sea, or, as the Turks call it, the *Kara Dengiz*, lay before them—that sea, so famous among Asiatics for its terrors and its storms, and which none of the present party (excepting those who really knew what a ship properly managed might encounter) could behold without involuntary tremor.

“*Akh!*” exclaimed Mustafa, as he wrapped himself close with his fur pelisse; “there is the sea! Where are the post-horses and the post-houses, and where this odious water? Perdition take its father and mother!”

“There it is at last,” exclaimed Stasso; “may the evil one take it!”

Ayesha viewed it with unmixed delight. Its vastness infused a new light into her mind; and when she was told of its terrors, she only cast a look towards her lover, and thought to herself—‘Be he but near me, and I can fear nothing.’

To Zabetta’s mind it brought nothing but bitter recollections, and she sighed in silence as she cast her eyes over it; but to Osmond it gave the greatest pleasure. From its shores he reflected that he might make his way at once to those of his own land. By a natural transition, his mind all at once was led to think upon the dear parents and friends from whom he had so long been absent, and who perhaps, ere this, had given him up for lost. His whole frame thrilled with joy when he thought that he was now in a fair way of returning to them. The navigation of the Black Sea once overcome, in the course of a short time he would be again in England. Those only who have been long absent from it, among barbarians and Mahomedans, can truly con-

ceive the delicious feeling of happiness which the prospect of a return to it creates !

The small Russian fort of Poti is situated at the mouth of the ancient Phasis, called Rione by the people of the country, a river which, taking its source in the mountains of the Caucasus, is navigable nearly up to Cotatis, in Immeretia. A small village is situated near the fort, consisting of a few wretched houses, and inhabited by poor and destitute inhabitants. It was well, therefore, that our travellers were provided with comforts at Teflis ; here they found none. Osmond established his quarters within the fort, whilst the best house in the village was taken for the accommodation of the women. His first object on his arrival was to inspect the vessel which was to convey him and his suite to Constantinople ; she lay at the mouth of the river, with two anchors thrown out ahead, and two astern. Osmond, on first hearing of her, had conceived that she might be one of those extraordinary, ancient, classical-looking barks, seen in such numbers on the Bosphorus, with a high circular prow and a high circular stern richly decorated with tassels and fringes, carrying one low mast on the prow, and an immeasurable boom appended to it : which altogether, he recollected, looked perilous machines wherewith to encounter the capricious and boisterous Euxine. Luckily, however, the bark in question, which was called a saique, was square-rigged, and had two masts and a bowsprit. She could hoist two sails upon each, and one on the bowsprit ; occasionally she could also display a trinquetto over the mainsail, but the usual practice is only to hoist one sail on either mast. The masts were secured by backstays, but were without shrouds, the only method of ascending being by a small ladder up the sides. There were two cabins astern, one of which was occupied by Osmond, the other by Ayesha, her mother, and Mariam. Of the cabins constructed on the forecastle, one was made over to Stasso and Mustafa, and the remainder were taken up by passengers. On the poop, close to the mizen, was erected a small wooden kiosk, duly carpeted and cushioned, which was the peculiar property of the Reis, or captain. What we call a quarter-gallery, was a sort of circular cage, which hooked on at pleasure on any exterior part of the ship. Altogether she was as rude a specimen of a vessel as could be seen in modern

times, and the only wonder was how she ever got where she now floated.

The first day passed away in making preparations for departure. The cabins were swept out, and spread with carpets. All the materials for cooking were taken on board; for in a Turkish vessel every one carries his own. Many passengers had already established themselves on the deck, and, from all appearances, their numbers would be great, besides an abundant cargo. Osmond was anxious not to be detained, but he had to do with men to whom the meaning of the words 'being in a hurry' was unknown; and during the whole course of his journey he perhaps had never been so much called upon for the exercise of his patience as he was here. The only answer which he could ever obtain from the captain was, "*Yavash, yavash*—slowly, slow," or "*Bakalum*—we shall see!" or "*Inshallah*—if it pleases God!" He was an old weather-beaten personage, with red cheeks and a white beard, whose legs had grown quite arched from being constantly seated tailor-like on the deck, and whose eye had sunk deep into his head from gazing at the weather. Though Osmond insisted that the wind was now as fair as it could blow, all the answer he got was, "Let us see how it will be to-morrow." With such a person all that could be done was to adopt the Persian's philosophy—to spread the carpet of hope, and to smoke the pipe of expectation.

We have already said that Zabetta and Ayesha inhabited a house in the village. It was situated almost immediately upon the banks of the Phasis. The windows of the room which they occupied, looked upon the broad stream as it flowed past in tranquil majesty. The day had closed, darkness had come on, when the rising moon lighted up in slow gradation the various objects which formed the surrounding scenery. Its principal beauties consisted of several small islets, situated in the centre of the stream, diversified by wood; on the summit of the largest were seen the remains of an old Turkish fortress, built by Sultan Murat, whose broken turrets and crumbling walls reared their rude outlines in the most picturesque form amidst the rank vegetation. At intervals might be heard the wild and harmonious song of the sailors on board some distant ship heaving its anchor; and this, combined with the soft and ever-return-

ing fall of the surge on the beach, produced sounds which, perhaps, are to be heard only in the still calm nights peculiar to the Levant.

Ayesha had taken her seat at the open lattice, enjoying the beauty of the night, and, among other thoughts and speculations, doubting whether the stillness of the sea, which she saw before her quiet as a lake, brilliant as a mirror, could ever be so disturbed as to create the danger which she had been told was so frequently experienced. The image of the moon was reflected in a thousand little silvery agitated streaks down to the very margin of the river near her window. On a sudden she perceived a man issue from the darkness into the moonlight. He stood for a minute on a small wooden pier which jutted into the river, with his eyes fixed on the shipping in the roadstead; and when his figure was thus brought out in strong relief, he presented the outline of a powerful man, with broad shoulders, his head rather stooping on his breast, and inclining to corpulency. Ayesha's cheek blanched as she looked at him, for she thought she had seen his form before. And indeed she was not mistaken, for when he turned round and walked a few steps towards her, she vehemently closed the lattice, and screamed out in terror, "Ahi, Cara Bey!"

"What say you?" exclaimed Zabetta, who was seated at the other end of the room; "are you mad, Ayesha?"

"It is he, I declare," exclaimed Ayesha, highly agitated and trembling with fear; "it can be none else."

"It is impossible; let me see," said Zabetta: when, opening the window, looking out, and seeing no one, she added, "you must be mad, there is nothing here."

"I am sure it was he," said Ayesha; "let us send to Osman Aga,"—so she called Osmond.

"Nonsense, child," said her mother, "we shall only create an alarm for nothing. Let us go to bed. To-morrow, please Allah! we set sail."

But it required some time to pacify the maiden, in whose mind the recollection of all that she had suffered at the hands of the monster, produced a return of uncontrollable fear. They sat and listened with anxiety. Every sound alarmed the daughter, and evidently disquieted the mother, until at length, nothing

more being heard, they retired to their beds. Ayesha soon after fell into a profound sleep, but Zabetta remained on the watch : she apprehended, in fact, that it might be Cara Bey. How he was ever to reach Constantinople at the same time with herself, had been to her a difficulty which she could not solve; but now her eyes were opened. She watched for a long time—midnight had struck—an hour or two still passed on,—all was silent,—she was about yielding to overpowering sleep, when she heard a slight tap at her window. She listened with all her senses awake, as she sat upright in her bed;—she then distinguished a second and louder tap. With beating heart, she softly rose, and on tiptoe stole to the window and opened the lattice. There indeed she saw Cara Bey in person standing close below it. The moon shone bright upon her, and he recognised her.” “Zabetta,” said he in a low voice, “give ear. When you reach Constantinople, mind you assert that you are a Turkish woman, and your daughter a Turkish girl; much depends on that. You have been to a Christian church, I know that : be no longer a fool, but recollect my words : now go.” Upon this, putting up his hand to his mouth in token of silence, he disappeared.

Zabetta returned to bed, but not to sleep. She pondered all the night through upon what she had seen and heard, and, when the day broke, she was still absorbed in thought. Ayesha arose refreshed, and having heard no more of the apparition which had alarmed her, allowed it no longer to disturb her thoughts.

With the morning came the bustle of departure. A messenger had been sent to them with injunctions to be ready for immediate embarkation. The wind was fair, the anchor was heaving. Boats were seen plying to and fro. Most of the vessels in port were about setting sail. Every one appeared to be visited with unusual fits of activity, and the whole scene was full of animation. A boat was despatched to take the women, and returned for Osmond and his attendants. Ivanovitch stood on the beach to see his friend embark. They took a tender farewell of each other, and sincerely hoped that by some lucky accident (an event not at all unlikely), they might be again thrown together. As Osmond stepped on the

deck of the saique, the anchor was tripped, the sails were given to the wind, and the bark glided smoothly on into the bosom of the deep.

Osmond, although dressed as a Turk, and looking in every respect like one, was known to be a Frank; for, having embarked with all the honours and attentions that could be shown by the small garrison of Russians at Poti, he could not have concealed his being an European even if he had wished it. The women passed off as Christians, and were known to be under his protection. The other passengers consisted of a Turkish trader in slaves, who was carrying an assortment of six women and two men, whom he had gathered along the coast (consisting of one Circassian, two Mingrelians, three Abkasians, and two Immeretians, all known under the general name of Circassians); of several Jews, and of a large company of Armenians. There were also many Turkish merchants, and one who had his harem on board, returning from Caffa. The principal cargo of the vessel was salt, taken in at Douzla, or the salt-works, about fifty miles south-east from Caffa; the remainder consisted of wax, honey, and different sorts of skins, particularly those of the jackal, which are some of the few articles that the inhabitants of Mingrelia, and the other parts of Circassia, have to barter against the merchandize brought from Constantinople. The decks of the saique were greatly-encumbered, not only with the numerous company, but with all their different articles of necessity—their beds, kitchen-utensils, and provisions, comprising both live and dead stock. She was worked by thirty sailors, and, all together, there might be about one hundred souls on board.

Osmond having made every arrangement for securing such comforts to Ayesha and her mother as the rude nature of the accommodations on board would admit, and having formed a tolerable estimate of the utter incapability of their vessel to resist a gale of wind in case it should be their misfortune to be overtaken by one, was anxious to ascertain the extent of their captain's acquirements in the science of navigation. He saw a compass, it is true, but nothing else—no charts, no hour-glass, no log-line. He stepped up to the old Reis just after he had finished his evening prayer in his little kiosk, and the following conversation ensued.

"*Oghour allah!*—a good passage to you, Omar Reis," (for that was the captain's name), said Osmond, accosting him with the frank familiarity of manner which is most likely to win a sailor's heart.

"May Allah give us success, friend!" answered the old man: "please Heaven, we shall get on well."

"Inshallah!" answered Osmond.

"Inshallah!" repeated the Reis.

"Are we likely to have a good passage?" inquired Osmond.

"What can I say?" answered the other. *Kismet!*—fate! we are in God's hands! The wind is fair; please God it will last."

"Whither are you steering now?" inquired Osmond, finding that they were nearly out of sight of land.

"To Sinope, Inshallah!" said the old man, extending his hand right a-head.

"By what point are you steering?"

"By what point!" inquired Omar; "what do I know? by the way I have always gone. Don't I know that there lies Trebizond?" pointing with his left hand on the larboard beam; "and don't I know that Caffa is there?" pointing with his right hand. "Besides, have I not got my compass?"

"Ah, the compass! do you ever steer by compass?" said Osmond.

"*Evallah!*—to be sure!" said the old man in great exultation, expecting to surprise the Frank by his knowledge; then, calling for the compass, which was kept in a square box, he placed it before them, and pointed to the fleur-de-lis on the index, "There, that is north; here is south; on this side is east, and on that, west. This is the direction of the blessed Mecca. We—praise be to the Prophet!—we know many things!"

"But have you no chart?"

"We have no chart," said the old man.

"Then what is the use of a compass?" replied Osmond.

"Of what use is it!" said Omar. "I have always done very well without a chart: my father did very well before me; and my grandfather before him. After that, what can you want more? Give me only wind—I want nothing more; after all, that is the father and mother of sailors; charts are *bosh*—nothing!"

"But were you to meet with a *fortuna*—a tempest, what would you do then? You ought to know where you are."

"Inshallah!" said the Reis with a sigh, "we shall have no *fortuna*! *Allah büyük der!*—God is great!"

"Are the gales violent in this sea?" asked Osmond.

"What can I say?" said Omar, evidently wishing to waive the subject, pulling his jacket over his breast, and looking miserable at the very thought. "Inshallah! we shall have no gale! *Allah kerim der!*—God is merciful!" he repeated several times with great seriousness, at the same time shaking his head and throwing up his eyes to heaven. "Inshallah! *fortuna yok!*—we shall have no tempest!"

"Inshallah!" repeated Osmond, and walked away fully satisfied that *Inshallah*, *Allah kerim*, and the fleur-de-lis on the compass, was about the only science to which they had to trust in case they should meet with bad weather. However, it served perfectly, as good luck would have it, to conduct them to Sinope, where the saique was to touch in order to take in an additional stock of passengers and more merchandize.

All the passengers, the merchant and his slaves excepted, immediately landed to obtain a transient relief from the miseries of shipboard. Among the rest, Osmond also landed, to visit the birth-place of Diogenes, but left Ayesha and her mother on board, giving directions that they should show themselves as little as possible, in order not to attract attention. The wind continuing fair, Omar Reis, with more alacrity than he had hitherto exhibited, hastened again to set sail; but what was the dismay of every one on board to find that they were to embark at least fifty additional passengers, the principal part of whom consisted of a *bairak*, or flag of janissaries, with their commander. This party entirely overspread the deck, and scarcely left any room for working the vessel. The Reis wished very much to dislodge Osmond from his berth, in order to dispose of it to some great personage who was expected; but to this our hero would by no means agree. The Turk, conceiving that he might lord it over the giaours at his pleasure, would have taken forcible possession of Osmond's cabin, had not its owner, with Staggo and Mustafa at his side, stoutly opposed the innovation, and exhibited such fierce determination

to resist, that the great man's quarters were prepared with reluctance in some less eligible place.

The vessel was already under weigh, when the expected personage was lifted on board. By the large turban on his head, he was apparently a man of the law, but so enveloped in shawls and pelisses, evidently made up to discharge all the duties of sea-sickness, that his face could not be seen. When deposited on his carpet, which had been spread in a snug corner on the deck, having his little court of attendants about him, he listlessly called for the eternal chibouque, and then uncovering his face, to the great discomposure of Osmond, exhibited the severe and repulsive countenance of the Mufti of Kars.

This encounter was in every way disagreeable, and foreboded no good to Osmond, particularly as they were likely again to be brought into contact in disputing the possession of the cabin. Putting, however, the best face he could upon this feature of his adventures, and feeling himself the more secure from molestation the nearer he approached Constantinople, Osmond conducted himself as if he were unconscious of the presence of his former enemy. The Mufti, who had a keen and observant eye, was not slow in recognising him; but, as he was not possessed of much nerve when in power, he found himself much less vigorous now that he was out of it; and recollecting the personal prowess which Osmond had exhibited at Kars, he for the present said nothing, keeping to himself the discovery which he had made. This worthy was now on his way from Kars to the capital on business connected with his office, and, as it was said, to give an account of the state of the frontier on the Persian and Russian side of the empire, which was deemed necessary after the recent events by which it had been disturbed. Whatever his energies might be, they were soon extinguished when the vessel was fairly at sea; for, having given himself up to fate and squeamishness, he rolled himself up in his pelisses, and endeavoured to forget his miseries by remaining in a state of total inaction.

The first day after their departure from Sinope proved fine. The Reis kept his vessel as close to the shore as possible, and cared for little else to direct his course, the headlands standing

him in lieu of all the science of navigation. In proportion as they approached the mouth of the Bosphorus, increased the spirits of those who were well enough to enjoy themselves.

Osmond now in good earnest began to hope that he might soon be restored to civilized life. He did not cease to form schemes in his mind for making Ayesha his own ; and although he indulged himself in conversing with her but little during the passage, still he did not pass an hour without reflecting upon her conduct ever since he had first known her. It had been in every way so superior to anything which could have been expected from one brought up as she had been, that, in addition to the ardent love with which her beauty had inspired him, he felt for her the highest respect and esteem. Again and again did he revert to the trinkets, the coin, and the handkerchief, as corroborative of her mother's mysterious conduct ; and again did he determine, the moment he should reach Constantinople, to set every investigation on foot to discover what might be her real origin.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Boatswain.—Here, master: what cheer?

Master.—Good: speak to the mariners: fall to't yarely, or we run ourselves a-ground: bestir, bestir!—*Tempest.*

THE second day after the departure of the saique from Sinope, the wind began to die away, and towards the evening it had fallen entirely, and a dead calm ensued. The vessel did not answer her helm, and rolled about most-fearfully, very much to the discomfort of all on board. Who that has ever seen a company of sick Asiatics, but must confess the sight to be infinitely more deplorable than a similar exhibition of sick Europeans ! Their beards and flowing robes, their large head-dresses, their listless habits, however picturesque they may be, are but ill calculated for meeting the thousand ills attendant

upon a sea life. The Mufti presented a picture of genuine misery; often did he sigh for the soft cushions and the comforts of his house, when, at every dip which the vessel made, he perceived the waves curling up towards him, as if they would swallow him up, turban and all. The janissaries, armed to the teeth, so full of swagger and audacity on shore, were here reduced, to make use of a sailor's simile, to the consistency of so many wet swabs. The poor Circassian slaves sighed when they thought upon the wild mountains which they had left; and we willingly draw a veil over the miseries endured by the gentle Ayesha and her intriguing mother. Mustapha was only kept from annihilation by the visions which occasionally floated in his mind, of the luxuries awaiting him at the gate of the ambassadorial residence at Constantinople, varied by reflections on post-horses and post-houses; whilst Stasso, who proved one of the stoutest, and was the least incommoded of the party, only thought how he might be of the best use to his master.

Osmond had observed with much anxiety symptoms of a change of wind: the weather was sultry; he remarked a bank of clouds gathering to the south-west, the precise direction of their course; the sun, as it descended below the horizon, appeared heavy and ominous, and there was altogether a general sensation of approaching storm. He looked about for the Reis, to discover by his looks (the best barometer to consult, for there was no other on board) what might be his feelings on the occasion, and he perceived him quietly counting his beads after his evening prayer, perched up in his little cage, as if all was going on well.

"What do you think of the weather?" said Osmond, stepping up to him.

"*Guzelik*—good, pretty good," answered the old man.

"Our wind is gone," remarked Osmond.

"What can we do?" said the Reis, with resignation: "it will come again."

"Don't you think it will come a-head?" enquired Osmond: "It looks dark yonder."

"Let it come," answered the other, "we can always run back to Sinope."

"But see, it is come! Why don't you brace up your yards?"

"*Bakalum!*—we shall see!" said the other, totally unconcerned. "*Allah kerim der!*—God is merciful!"

By this time the vessel had drifted towards the shore, having felt the influence of the current which runs in the direction of the Bosphorus. Darkness increased to the south-west; a black cloud, portending an immediate squall, was occasionally lighted up by slight indications of lightning, and very distant thunder was heard: still, old Omar sat cross-legged on his carpet, with two or three of his friends, smoking his pipe, waiting for his evening meal, and ejaculating ever and anon, "Praises be to the Prophet! All will be well, please Allah!"

Osmond could scarcely control the risings of his temper; he saw the coming squall—he thought he could perceive the agitation of the sea under the margin of the cloud; and when the approaching crisis could no longer be doubted, he made his way hastily to the captain, who, with his hand in the dish, was quietly ruminating a previous mouthful of rice, and implored him to lower his sails immediately, or else he would soon have none left.

"*Yavash, yavash!*"—slowly, slow!" mumbled out the old man, with apparent unconcern:—" *Bir chey yok*—there is nothing; *korkma*—fear not."

He had no sooner said this, than the whole violence of the squall took the vessel on her beam, the sea whitening with foam and throwing her very considerably on her side. This circumstance, accompanied as it was by a most vivid flash of lightning and an awful clap of thunder, soon produced a total change in the apathy of the Reis and his sailors, and a visible sensation among the passengers. Omar, jumping up from his carpet, left his pillau to the mercy of the winds, and ordered his sails to be lowered. This was not so easily done, for, the wind having taken them, they were now flapping about, making a tremendous noise, and flying out in every direction without control.

As night came on, the violence of the storm increased, and the cries and shouts of the sailors increased with it; as usual on such occasions, all were commanders, and none obeyed.—Wrong ropes were hauled, order and counter-order instantly succeeded each other—no one listened—the poor old captain in vain attempted to make himself heard; crew, passengers,

janissaries, mufti, all were vociferating at once. Every man had got on deck, the women alone were kept to their cabins—thunder and lightning succeeded each other in awful grandeur. Osmond had taken his stand close to the aperture of the cabin of his Ayesha, who, protruding her hand, had quietly placed it in his, thus instituting a channel of communication between their hearts, he encouraging her occasionally by a word of consolation, she showing her fortitude and confidence in him by her silence. A knot of men, sailors as well as passengers, were collected on the forecastle, with upturned faces, watching the aspect of the sky; when all at once a most vivid flash darted down from the cloud, and enveloped them for an instant in one immense blaze of apparently liquid fire; every object on deck was brought to light with as much precision as in the broadest day. Osmond was all at once struck as if the electric shock had overtaken him, by seeing in the crowd the face of a man whose features were so indelibly fixed on his mind that he could never mistake them; to call it the face of a demon, would immediately discover to whom it belonged—it was, in fact, the face of Cara Bey himself. Osmond involuntarily dropped his mistress's hand the moment this vision appeared, so strong was the effect which it produced upon him. Ayesha then for the first time ventured to open her lips, and, alarmed by his sudden action, said, "Osman! tell me, in the name of Allah! what has happened?"—"Nothing, nothing," answered her lover quickly, still looking intently through the almost impenetrable darkness which had succeeded, in the hope of being able to make out the person of the monster. He could see nothing more for some time, but kept his eyes fixed in the direction where he had first beheld him, until, Stasso coming up, he inquired with an anxious voice whether he had remarked Cara Bey among the passengers.

"Cara Bey!" exclaimed the ardent Greek in a tone of great astonishment, "*Ti diavolo!* what makes you think of him, O Effendi!"

"I have seen him," said his master, "of that I am quite sure; go a-head, look among the people on the forecastle, and tell me whether he be not one of them; go with caution, and say nothing."

Stasso did as he was directed, and in a short time discovered

Cara Bey seated behind one of the small guns which the saïque carried in her bows, crouched low on the deck as if afraid of being seen, with his tasseled turban well drawn over his eyes.—“The dog is there, sure enough,” said Stasso; “what shall we do with him, Effendi?”

“What can we do but bear his presence as well as we can?” said Osmond, evidently much discomposed by the discovery. “Say nothing to him—leave him to himself—we can have no more to do with him—the world’s surface is free to him as well as ourselves?”

“But,” said Stasso, who was not at all willing to let the wretch escape so easily—“but, Effendi, cannot we throw him overboard? what is to hinder us?”

“Softly, Stasso,” said Osmond, “in God’s name, be cautious; we are, here, Franks among Mahomedans, — giaours, as they call us, among true believers. If you talk of throwing people overboard, see that it be not our turn first. Go—be quiet—say nothing; — we shall soon be at the end of our voyage, and then all will be forgotten.”

By this time the weather had developed itself in a complete storm; it had set in with a squall, and was increasing to a gale. The old Reis did his best to manage his bark, but with her high stern and her scanty sails she was so difficult to navigate, that she lay at the mercy of the waves during the whole night. He would have run back to Sinope, but he required daylight to tell him where he was; for the land could not be seen; the stars were obscured by the darkness of the night, and he had no powers of mind left to puzzle out what to him were the intricacies of the compass. Osmond would willingly have helped him, but he would accept of no assistance, delighted to have hit upon a good reason for procrastination, by saying, “Let us wait till the morning.”

When the morning began to dawn, the gale still blew violently, and all hands on board were anxiously waiting to know what steps were to be taken, when a circumstance occurred which for a while took off their attention from the uncertainty of their situation.

Stasso, after the discovery which he had made, having quitted his master, sat down by his companion Mustafa, to whom, of course, he communicated the unpleasant intelligence. He

would willingly have kept it to himself, according to his master's directions, but could not, so violently was he agitated, and so impelled by passion to assault the wretch. Mustafa, as may be supposed, caught the whole of Stasso's violence, although it was much tempered by fear; he would willingly have lent his hand to throw Cara Bey overboard, but felt that there were consequences attendant upon such an enterprise which might not suit his own safety. They did not cease talking over this circumstance, and connecting it with another—that of meeting with their old enemy of Kars, the Mufti: they agreed that they must surely have sailed under the aspect of some evil star, or at some unlucky hour, or before the appointed time for sailing—that is, before the festival of St. Georgio, among the Greeks—to have been thus persecuted by ill-fortune. As the day began to dawn, observing the gale to be unabated in violence, Mustafa, who cherished all Asiatic superstitions, was at once struck with the conviction that this change of wind and this sudden turn of luck must proceed from the presence of some ill-fated man on board—some Jonas, who, in person, ruled the fortunes of the whole bark. "Who," thought he, "can this be, but that Yezidi, that son of the evil one, that demon of wickedness, Cara Bey?"

He soon communicated this thought to the officer commanding the janissaries, with whom he had struck up a friendship, who, when he heard that there was a Yezidi on board, immediately concluded with Mustafa that all the mischief had been caused by his presence; and seeing the gale still hopelessly violent, they, in their united wisdom, thought that the only way of securing a return of fine weather was to throw the devoted man overboard. This feeling having gained the minds of the janissaries and the other Turks, the question "*Hanih Yezidi?*"—where is the devil-worshipper?—was soon heard to issue from different mouths.

"There is nothing of that sort on board!" exclaimed Omar Reis, alarmed at the cry; "we are all good men! Heaven forbid it!"

"But there is, indeed!" said Mustafa.

"Yes," said Stasso; and, seeing the top of his turban protruding from behind the gun, exclaimed, "and there he sits."

The unfortunate Cara Bey having been thus pointed out, the attention of every one was soon drawn upon him.

"I do not know this man," said the captain; "how got he here?"

"He is a Kurd," said one. "He is a Yezidi," said another. "Look at his hair."

"*Lahnet be shaitan!*" exclaimed Stasso in malicious exultation; upon which the excited Cara Bey arose, and his eyes glared most horribly.

"Look at the horse-shoe on his forehead!" cried out Mustafa, concealing his own person at the same time. Upon which there was a rush among the most superstitious of the Turks to seize him, with the intention of throwing him overboard. Cara Bey, seeing his danger, repelled them as they approached him.

"He brings us ill-luck," says one; "Throw him over," said another; "Kill the Yezidi!" roared out a third. The tumult had now assumed a serious aspect. Every one on deck rose to see what was the matter. Osmond, hearing the voices of Stasso and Mustafa, immediately stepped forward, and perceiving what was about to take place, made his way with violence among the crowd. Three or four men had now seized the devoted wretch, and were about to plunge him head foremost into the sea, when Osmond, who could not thus quietly stand by and see a fellow-creature murdered, rushed in, and with all his might so thrust himself between the murderers and their victim, that, by dint of blows and violence, he succeeded in saving him from his watery grave. Standing over him, he drew his yatagan, which he usually wore, and vowed that he would kill the first man who should venture to molest him. This strange interposition of a Frank in favour of a devil-worshipper astounded every one. Some thought their religion was the same; others, that they were in league with one another. The violence of the tumult was about to fall upon them both, when Stasso, although enraged at his master's interference in favour of Cara Bey, immediately stepped forward to his rescue, followed by the Reis, and afterwards by Mustafa: thus united, and making a show of resistance, they prevented any further attack. Osmond addressed the crowd, and by his conciliatory words and manner succeeded in pacifying them; having in a

great measure persuaded them that the heavens would continue to be unpropitious, rather than turn in their favour, should they call down the vengeance of God upon their heads by committing the crime of murder !

The wind had continued very variable during the night, coming first from one point, then from another, and producing a most disagreeably agitated sea. As the day broke, just when the old Reis had managed to get his bark with the direction of her head for Sinope, it began to blow dead upon the shore, which was now so near that the surf could plainly be distinguished breaking over a reef of rocks, the black crests of which showed themselves fearfully above the water. Turks have no idea of beating to windward ; they either sail with the wind right aft, or not at all. The saique was not calculated for going close to the wind ; had she attempted it, she would have made but little way on account of her cumbrous construction ; and now that it became necessary to work off a lee-shore, it was evident that, if the wind did not change, there was every likelihood of her being thrown on the rocks.

Osmond saw their danger ; and immediately endeavoured to persuade old Omar to brace-up his yards, and to haul his vessel as close to the wind as possible. But his efforts were to no purpose ; the Reis was quite bewildered : he and his mate saw their situation, and, as long as the land was still at a moderate distance, lived in hope of a change of wind ; and what with "Allah kertim !" and "Allah buyûk der !" they managed to calm their minds, and even to smoke their pipes. But as the vessel approached the shore, and the rocks and their foaming crests were so plainly discerned that there could be no illusion about their dangerous vicinity, the dreadful nature of their situation seemed to break upon their minds all at once, and abandoning the tiller, and leaving the bark to drift as the waves might direct, they began to deplore their fate in accents not to be misunderstood. The doleful prospect was soon made known to every one, and death and all its horrors stared them in the face. If once the vessel ran upon the rocks towards which she was drifting, there was no hope for them,—every soul on board must perish. The Mufti, forgetting his sickness, unrobed himself of his pelisses, and, laying aside all his dignity, ran about the decks like one demented. The cries of the women were

heard. Ayesha and Zabetta, stepping from their cabin upon hearing the distress on deck, all at once became aware of their danger. Ayesha said not a word, but, keeping herself entirely veiled, quietly took her stand near Osmond, who was revolving in his mind what could be done to save their lives. All he could say to his mistress was, "My Ayesha, if death is to be our fate, let us die together. Stay by me, and we will pray to God for help!" Ayesha knelt down close to his feet in humble acquiescence with his proposal. Zabetta, on the contrary, began to bemoan herself in a manner truly pitiable. Many were the instances in which the resignation of the true believer might have been remarked; but many, also, in which the weakness of human nature got the better of every principle, and betrayed itself by the most uncontrollable fear.

There was among the crew a Greek, a palicari, of fine form and of great activity; Osmond had before remarked him, and now called him and Stasso to his side. Having endeavoured, in the first place, to allay their fears by soothing words, he told them, if they would coolly attend to his directions, and watch every change in the wind, much might be done towards saving the lives of the crew. He took charge himself of the tiller: he then got the yards sharply braced-up, hoisted the trinquetto over the mainsail, and got out another sail on the bowsprit; and, keeping her as close to the wind as possible, he hoped that, if they were in the least favoured by a slant, he might weather the rocks, behind which, and a protecting turn of the coast, he might run the bark into smooth water, and there anchor. The captain, the mate, the passengers, were all too much absorbed in their miseries to see what steps had been taken by Osmond, or, if they did perceive them, to have any confidence in his endeavours. Many would have taken to the only boat which belonged to the saique, but, in the heavy sea which was then running, who was bold enough to risk himself? Notwithstanding the exertions of Osmond, everything promised speedy destruction. The vessel made but little way, and went most bodily to leeward. He, however, still kept the tiller in hand, whilst his whole attention was fixed on the sails. Stasso stood close by his side,—the Palicari was at the mainbrace. The hissing of the waters over the rocks was now plainly heard; every effort seemed hopeless; the vessel was tossed to and fro with unceasing vio-

lence. The piteous, the heart-rending cries that proceeded from the passengers, mixed up with the howling of the storm and the lashing of the sea, were enough to deprive every heart of the spirit of exertion, and unnerve every arm; but Osmond, to the last, trusted that the wind might favour them, and, if ever so little, they would be safe. To his unspeakable delight, what he had expected came to pass. Just as the last hope had expired, when one might have almost jumped ashore upon the rocks, the wind suddenly veered two or three points, and enabled the heavy bark to lay up and weather the land.

The Reis, who was waiting with all the resignation of a true believer for the dissolution of his vessel and himself, seeing that she was gradually turning her stern to the danger, rushed up to Osmond, who was at the helm, and would have kissed his feet for joy: his exultation and his delight were quite affecting to see; he gazed upon the preserver of himself and his fortunes as one that did not belong to earth. To show his devotion, he immediately placed himself under his orders, and executed with alacrity every order which he gave. In the course of the morning, he had the unlooked-for happiness of seeing his vessel in safety and at anchor.

The friendly nook, which had thus so providentially given security to the vessel and saved their lives, was situated on the south coast of the Black Sea, not far from Elegri, a town occupying the site of the ancient Heraclea, or Penderaki, as it is most commonly called by the Greeks, and about eighty miles from the mouth of the Bosphorus. No sooner had the captain and his crew secured the vessel by anchors both ahead and astern, than all the passengers betook themselves to the shore as fast as they could. The difference between Osmond's feelings and those of the Mahomedans on being saved was striking: he acknowledged, and felt in the highest degree, that the hand of Providence had mercifully interposed between them and a premature death, and his first impulse was to vent his gratitude in prayer and thanksgiving; the feeling of the Mahomedans was a cold acquiescence in the decrees of predestination. They all felt, more or less, unbounded delight at their present safety, for it is our nature to shrink from danger and cling to life; but the same calm resignation which would make the real Mussulman bend his head to the bowstring, or

see himself involved in ruin, or meet his death by shipwreck, would also sear his heart to the love and gratitude which the Christian is prompt to feel for every dispensation proceeding from the hand of his Maker, and make him look upon his preservation as a mere occurrence which was pre-ordained and predestined.

All felt that, through Osmond's sagacity and presence of mind, their lives had been saved; but he received no intimation of their thanks beyond kind expressions. One said, "*Aferin, Frank!*—well done, Frank! You are a good man! Mashallah! the English are good!" Another, who had picked up a word or two of Italian, came up to him, and patting him on the shoulder said "*Bono Ingliz!*" A third presented him with an apple, and holding up 'his fingers, as denoting a whole handful, exclaimed, "*Mashallah!*—praises to Allah! Jack G—d d—m—*bono!*" This ebullition was followed by that of another Turk, who, coming up to Osmond, looked at him for some time straight in the face, and said, as he shook his head in token of astonishment, "*Ai gidi Ingliz—sen chok adam!*—Ah, you Englishman!—you are much of a man!" The chief of the janissaries invited Osmond to sit by him, and offered him his own pipe to smoke, first cleaning its orifice with his thumb: his observations upon the late event took an epigrammatic turn, for, pointing to the poor Omar, whose prowess had certainly been far from conspicuous, he said, "*Osmanli domous — Ingliz yaous!*—the Turks are hogs—the English clever dogs!" The Mufti did not deign to make the least acknowledgment, but, when the danger was over, wrapt himself up, as usual, in his pelisse, made up his face and mind to be wretched, and retreated to his corner.

As for Cara Bey, his mind had been so entirely lacerated by his downfall, that any benefit now conferred upon him, was like the heaping of hot burning coals upon his head. Instead of feeling the least gratitude to Osmond for having been the preserver of his life from the brutality of those who would have thrown him into the sea, or from the horrors of shipwreck, he seemed to have acquired a fresh accession of hate against him, and an increasing thirst for revenge. During the storm he remained unmoved, entirely wrapt up in the folds of his own diabolical nature. As soon as the vessel was at

anchor, he was the first to set foot on shore, and, after having been heard to mutter certain mysterious threats of vengeance, he disappeared, and never more returned on board.

Mustafa, who was always destined either to dread his master as a madman or to worship him as an angel, was now absorbed in the latter exercise. His gratitude, when it was really called forth, was sincere. He never, indeed, could discover why, when there had been so fair an opportunity to get rid of Cara Bey, his master should have stepped forward to save the wretch — he thought the mad fit must then have seized him; but when he recollected that, but for his endeavours, his own carcass would have been food for fishes, he did not cease eyeing him with looks of astonishment and admiration, saying to himself, "*Wallah billah!* — by Heavens, that is a good man!"

Both he and Stasso, when they found that Cara Bey had taken his leave and decamped, were sensible that they had much to dread from his revenge; and although they could not foresee how that revenge might be accomplished, destitute and a vagabond as he now appeared to be, yet they felt that they were exposed to meet him face to face, at any time, in a country where his delinquencies were unknown, and where he might be protected.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Brief time had Conrad now to greet Gulnare,
Few words to re-assure the trembling fair.

The Corsair.

THE weather having resumed its wonted serenity, and the wind being again fair, Osmond persuaded Omar Reis, who was now grown more docile with respect to his representations, to put to sea. In the course of a short sail, they reached the entrance of the Bosphorus, and, very soon after, the saique an-

chored in the little quiet bay of Buyukderé, previously to dropping down to Constantinople. The transition from the troubled waters, the uncertainties, and particularly from the recent storms of the Black Sea, to the calm and security of the narrow channel of the Bosphorus, more like a magnificent river than an arm of the sea, was, to use the Persian poet's imagery, "like going to bed in the executioner's prison-house with a rope round your neck, and awaking the next morning in a *gûlistan*, or rose-garden, with a cupbearer presenting to you a goblet of rosy-coloured wine." The dark open sea shaded by sombre clouds, became here a blue and transparent water, reflecting within its bosom the beautiful and refreshing scenery which decks the banks of this celebrated strait. From the anchorage at Buyukderé might be seen that picturesque village, with its row of painted and architectural-fronted villas, principally belonging to the ambassadors of foreign powers and to the rich European merchants, backed by gardens rising in terraces behind, green to the summit of the hills, and receding into one of the most delicious, quiet distributions of water in nature. This view is terminated by a prairie of the most luxuriant verdure, in the centre of which is a clump of some of the finest plane-trees, perhaps, in the world, conspicuous throughout the landscape from their immense size, and beautiful to look at, on account of the extraordinary grace with which the foliage is distributed upon their wide-spreading branches. To this spot, upon holidays, resort the whole of the population of this and the surrounding villages, great and small, Frank and Asiatic, ambassador and his dependent, Greek and Armenian, Turk and Jew—all bent upon pleasure and festivity.

On the other side of the strait, the shore rises into verdant knolls, intermixed with meadows, trees of all sizes, from the poplar to the plane, exhibiting, in stealthy vistas, those low-roofed, painted, and gilded kiosks, so peculiar to the Turks; and occasionally, villages, with the tapering and picturesque minaret rising from the midst. To row along the shore in one of the lovely caiques; to lose one's self in the numerous charming little nooks with which it abounds: to examine each beauty as it rises on the sight, is a luxury known only to those who have visited these unique and delightful scenes.

During the voyage in the Black Sea, Osmond had been solicitous to keep the women concealed as much as possible from observation. He was aware that difficulties might arise upon his arrival at Constantinople, as to their safe disposal. Still retaining the appearance of Mahomedan women, for they had not changed their mode of dress since they left Kars, it would be asked, how do women of the true faith happen to be under the protection of a *giaour*? They had themselves willingly adhered to their cabin, particularly since the Mufti had come on board, who, had he known that they belonged to Suleiman Aga, his townsman, might probably have insisted upon their returning to Kars. It was only during the moments of peril which we have described, that Osmond had held any communication with them, when every one was too much engrossed by his own situation to notice them. Now that they had reached their destination, Ayesha, still submissive to her lover's wishes, checked her curiosity to see the wonders of the Bosphorus; but Zabetta was not to be so restrained; she insisted upon coming on deck, and did not cease to examine with delight and astonishment the magnificence of the scene before her. She recollected the injunctions she had received from Cara Bey to declare herself to be a Mahomedan woman; and right well did she determine to put them into effect upon the first necessary opportunity. Surveying the new world which, like magic, had sprung up before her eyes, as the seat of her future greatness; building upon the charms of her daughter as a stepping-stone to her ambition; and with a full dependence upon the ability of Cara Bey, whose interests were now so identified with her own, to help her, she spurned the poor and insignificant prospects held out by any connexion with Osmond; and waited with anxiety for the moment which would release herself and Ayesha from his fellowship, and from the authority which he had hitherto exercised over them.

The Mufti of Kars, tired with the miseries of shipboard, had landed at Buyukderé, and proceeded to Constantinople by land. Osmond would have done the same, and immediately have sought out his friend Wortley; but he was determined not to think of himself until Ayesha was fairly settled in a suitable lodging. His intentions were to convey her with the least

possible delay to the first Christian place where they might be married, and then to England. How much better had it been for him had he landed at Buyukderé, and seen his friend! Upon such slight events, very frequently, hangs the whole of our earthly happiness or misery.

The saïque slowly made its way down the Bosphorus, stopping at each village on the coast, and giving its passengers every opportunity to examine the never-ceasing variety of its enchanting scenery. At length, on the second morning after leaving Buyukderé, Omar Reis brought up in the canal opposite to Orta Kieu, not far from its small though conspicuous mosque. From this point the eye might take in the whole of the splendid view, comprising the greatest part of the city, its celebrated Seraglio Point, the entrance into the harbour, or the Golden Horn, the suburbs of Galata and Pera, on the one hand,—with the town of Scutari, its magnificent scenery backed by the mountain of Bourgourlû, on the other; whilst the opening to the Propontis, or Sea of Marmora, studded with vessels of all sizes and denominations, at once produced a most picturesque break between the conformation of the lands, and showed the termination of the Bosphorus on its northern extremity.

Osmond could not sufficiently feast his eyes with this glorious view, however impatient he might be to deposit his lovely charge in a place of safety. Neither could he resist the desire of making Ayesha a partaker of his rapture and delight; he invited her therefore to take post on the deck beside him. She was well worthy of such a sight. Osmond watched all her emotions with the interest of one who tends the progress of nature from the first formation of the bud to its opening: all her observations were so just, and her exclamations so full of genuine feeling, that every time he gazed upon her and heard her speak, his conviction increased that she was not the person she appeared to be.

As they were casting their eyes about them from the deck of the vessel, all at once they heard guns fired from various batteries, and, among others, from that of the small tower in the Bosphorus called Leander's Tower; and not long after they distinguished the cause of it, for a suite of magnificent barges pushed off from the imperial palace of Beshik-tash, and, with the swiftness of the sword-fish, darted across the channel towards Scutari. The Sultan in person was proceeding to

perform his noon-day devotions at a mosque built by his predecessor in that suburb. The beauty of the boats, with pointed prows, surmounted by gilded ornaments of the most elaborate workmanship; the singular neatness, grace, and dexterity of the multitude of rowers; and the awful figure of the Sultan, seated by himself under a canopy of cloth of gold, were the objects which principally attracted their attention. Then came a second boat, similar in all respects to the first, with the exception only of its being in readiness instead of being in actual service; after which followed the principal officers of his brilliant court, in boats of the most beautiful construction, without the distinction of the canopy, and containing fewer rowers, but perhaps more light and graceful than the imperial barges. The whole scene, as the pageant passed, gave an imposing idea of royalty, and whilst it excited the pleasing delight of novelty in the breast of Ayesha, it drove all common-sense from the head of Zabetta, and made her perfectly mad with rapture. All her anticipations of the wonders of Constantinople were fully realized: she looked at every thing with delight, and longed only for the moment when her dreams of greatness might be realized.

The barges of the Sultan had scarcely reached their landing-place at Scutari, when Osmond remarked one of similar character, with a crowd of rowers dressed in the same manner, that is, with the small Bostangi cap and the white muslin shirt, coming from the Seraglio Point, and apparently making directly for the saïque. The sea foamed with the splash of the oars, and the exertion of the rowers. Those who knew Constantinople, immediately recognised it to be the boat of the Bostangi Bashi, the dreaded police-officer and comptroller of the Bosphorus. Every one on board the saïque was delighted that so fine a boat should pass so close, and rushed to the poop of the vessel to enjoy the sight. What was their surprise, however, to perceive it steering straight for the side of the ship, and then dashing alongside with the swiftness of the wind! Curiosity now yielded to fear; every one became alarmed at so dangerous a visit; each feared that it might be intended for himself: so capricious are human destinies under a despotic rule! Stasso and Mustafa approached the place where their master stood. Ever since the stealthy disappearance of Cara Bey from the

vessel at Elegri, Osmond had felt that it foreboded no good, and they participated in that feeling. To their surprise and horror, the first person who met their eye as they looked into the boat alongside, was the wretch himself, with that look of arrogance for which he was so remarkable, whilst his general bearing was that of one in authority. He was dressed in the richly embroidered costume of a Chaoush attendant upon the Capitan Pasha, with a brocade turban and a long knife in his girdle. The Bostangi Bashi was seated in the place of honour, whilst Cara Bey appeared as an attendant officer; and, apparently acting under the orders of that chief, he stepped on deck, swelling with importance, and exhibited in his whole demeanour a mixture of petty exultation and ferocious doggedness. He said in a loud voice:

“There is one Osman on board, who calls himself a Frank—where is he?”

Osmond immediately stepped forward, and facing his old enemy with a boldness and determination which greatly discomposed him, said, “I am the man you mean; what can you want with me, villain that you are?”

Appearing to give little heed to his words, Cara Bey proceeded, “There is also one Mustafa Tatar, and one Stasso, who is also called the Boshnak—where are they?”

“Here they are,” said Osmond; “they are my servants—who dares take them from me?”

“Bismallah! in the name of the prophet!” said the other, with the greatest self-importance: “Here is the boat of his excellency the Bostangi Bashi—haste—get in.”

“I am an English subject,” said Osmond, “and am not to be molested with impunity; these men are my servants, and are only commanded through me. We know who you are; it is but the other day that you were branded in the forehead as an outlaw; how is it possible that you can now be acting from authority? Explain, O man!”

On hearing these words, Cara Bey's countenance spoke the whole villainy of his heart; he would have drunk the blood of Osmond had he been completely in his power. His turban was thrust so closely over his eyes, that the brand which had been alluded to could not be seen; but the wretch felt it there, and it kept the feeling of his revenge alive, acting like a blast upon

a burning furnace. With a sullen tone, speaking through the fury which almost choked him, he said, "No more words, *kaidé*—come along, the Aga waits."

"If your Aga is at hand, I will speak to him," said Osmond, "and not waste my time upon such a wretch as you." Upon which he left the saique, followed by Mustafa and Stasso, and, entering the great barge, addressed himself to a stern and inflexible-looking Turk of high degree, who was seated on a carpet, propped up by cushions.

Having gone through the preliminary forms of politeness, Osmond, adopting the Turkish form of idiom, said, "My Aga, may you live many years! What business is this? We are straightforward men; I am an Englishman, and my country, thanks to Allah! is in friendship with the Osmanlies. You are an upright man, by the blessing of God! but where have you found this fellow?" alluding to Cara Bey. "This is a bad man, do not enter into his frauds. He is a *dinsiz*, a fellow without religion—a Yezidi. It is a shame for your government to make use of such a man.

The boat had already put off, and was bending its way with swiftness towards the city, when the Bostangi Bashi, with perfect composure and ease of manner, answered; "What can I do, my friend? I act upon the orders of my superiors; whatever is right is right, and whatever is wrong is wrong. If there be fraud, fraud will be discovered; if not, there is no harm done."

"But where are we going?" said Osmond. "This must not be; I am an Englishman, my government will not allow this." And having said thus much, he turned himself towards the saique, where he saw his Ayesha apparently convulsed with grief. There was a beseeching look in her attitude which seemed to say, 'Why do you abandon me?' But what could he do? Despair had arisen in his breast: he would have used violence to those around him; but still, what could he do?

"Patience, my friend," said the Bostangi Bashi. "This is Constantinople; things are not done here in a corner. The ass does not die of water here without its being known.* *Inshallah*!—please Allah! all will be well."

* This alludes to a well-known trick in Turkey, of swelling a beast up with water, in order to make it look fat, preparatory to its sale.

On looking round him, Osmond was surprised to find that Cara Bey was not in the Bostangi Bashi's boat. The fact is that the artful intriguer having, through the means of that superior officer, secured the persons of Osmond and his servants, remained on board the saique, to take under his care the partner in his wiles—the infamous Zabetta, and her now wretched daughter. The appearance of Cara Bey produced widely different effects upon the two women. The mother, on seeing him, understood at once the tendency of his conduct, and was in her heart delighted. The daughter, on the contrary, abhorring him from the very bottom of her soul, frightened by the appearance of authority with which he was accompanied, and fainting from apprehension at seeing her lover thus taken from her and apparently in his power again, relapsed into a state bordering on madness. The day which had been so auspicious, which seemed fraught with every bliss, all at once darkened, her prospects were blighted, and from a state of enchantment she was thrown at once into the veriest depths of woe. The monster having procured a boat, made them get into it, and ordered the boatmen to follow the barge of the Bostangi Bashi, and land them at the place which he should point out. During this short passage, Cara Bey was in close conversation with Zabetta; whilst the tears of the unfortunate maiden did not cease to flow, — a circumstance which under her closely clasped veil she carefully hid from her odious persecutor.

“Now, Zabetta,” said he, in so low a tone that he could not be overheard, “open well your eyes; all our future prospects depend upon your conduct this day. The Capitan Pasha is my protector. I have told him my story. He has taken me into his service; I am one of his chaoushes. I have described your daughter's charms to him: he is delighted. He wanted just such a person to present to the *Padishah*, the Sultan, and your fortune is made. But we must get rid of the Frank, happen what will; by right or by wrong, he must go. Still, there is caution to be used. His nation is all-powerful here: his ambassador is a misfortune. We must not let our right hands know what our left are doing. Have you understood me?”

Zabetta was bewildered with the importance of the subject

which was so suddenly presented to her mind. Never having been accustomed to come in contact with such great names and such great interests before, she became giddy with amazement. "Tell me what I am to do," she said, "for my soul is shrivelled up."

"We are now going before the tribunal of the Grand Vizir. You will see many things. You must not be frightened. Above all, keep your daughter quiet. You will hear a petition read, which I have caused to be written as coming from you, in which you complain of the Frank, who by his frauds has forced you to leave your home. When you are called upon, you must boldly swear to this. I have got witnesses to support your assertion. Open your eyes, and give your ears up to all that passes. You must not thwart what I have said, or the Pasha will never forgive me. Our cause cannot fail when he interferes; for who dares oppose his wishes? Should we succeed, then we may walk with our heads erect, and with a flower under our ear."

The Bostangi Bashi alighted at the landing-place nearest the Seraglio, where he found his horse and retinue waiting his arrival. Having delivered over Osmond and his servants to the care of a chaoush and some armed men, he ordered them to follow him, and took his way to the Imperial Gate, or, as it is called in Europe, the Sublime Porte. Cara Bey, with the women, landed at the fish-market, and proceeded thither also. They found the principal street leading to the palace thronged with a crowd expecting the passage of the Grand Vizir, who was proceeding in state to the public divan, or council, which is held daily, excepting Fridays, at the palace, for the despatch of public business, as well as for hearing and deciding causes of all descriptions.

They had not waited long before the procession began; and, as a specimen of Oriental manners and grandeur, nothing could be more characteristic. The Grand Vizir, the greatest officer of state after the Sultan himself, is preceded by the Chaoush Bashi, by a band of chaoushes and their inferior officers, bearing wands of office in hand, and accompanied by the principal dignitaries of the empire, who, surrounded by their numerous and richly-dressed attendants, swell the procession into an immense throng. The whole is accompanied

by the Grand Vizir's guard of Albanians, and closed by a body of more than four hundred horsemen; and they slowly pick their way through a dense crowd of the inhabitants, who are ever ready to make a thousand exclamations, praying for the prosperity of their minister. Upon the days of divan, it is to be remarked, three officers appointed for that purpose, proceed one hour before sun-rise to the gate of the Serai, or palace, there to make certain prayers preparatory to the arrival of the ministers of state; and, when those ministers appear, they salute them in a loud voice with appropriate expressions, naming them one after the other by their names, as they appear and pass on. The Pashas, for such is the etiquette, lose their wonted gravity of aspect at the sight of the palace; they put their horses on the full gallop some thirty or forty paces from its entrance, and then range themselves in due order on the right of the first court, waiting the appearance of the Grand Vizir. The Janissaries and the Spahis dispose of themselves in the second court under the galleries, the former to the right, the latter to the left. Each individual dismounts from his horse in the second court; but the gate of the divan is not opened until the arrival of the Grand Vizir, nor until a prayer has been repeated for the souls of the deceased sultans, and for that of the reigning sovereign.

The Grand Vizir, a venerable-looking old man, with a snow-white beard, wearing his white conical cap of office on his head, clad in a cloak of cloth of gold, covered with sables of immense value, appeared in due time, and, as he passed, ever and anon saluted the populace by placing his hand gracefully on his breast, and then extending it right and left towards the people.

Osmond was so taken up with the scene that he almost forgot the extraordinary and difficult situation in which he was placed. When the proper etiquettes had been performed previously to opening the divan, and all the great dignitaries had proceeded to the stations allotted to them, those who had business to transact made their way into the great saloon or hall where the council was held.

The great officers, and the Cadilesquers, who are the principal functionaries of the law, by way of showing their respect, never enter the hall but as accompanying the Grand Vizir, and then all prostrate themselves before him to the ground. When

he, the first minister, is seated, the two great lawyers take their seats on his left, which among the Turks is the place of honour, the Cadilesquer for the affairs of Europe next to the Grand Vizir, and the other, for those of Asia, second in rotation. After these come the lord high treasurer of the empire, the Defter-dar, and the Haznadar Aga, with their attendant officers. The Vizirs, of whom there are six, with the simple title of Vizir attached to them, are men learned in the law, who attend the divan, but do not give their opinions unless called upon by the Grand Vizir, and they are seated in due rotation; and if there be any Begglerbeggi, or governors of provinces, or distinguished men, the Grand Vizir generally gives them a place after the Vizirs. At the divan which we are now describing, the Mufti of Kars, who enjoyed great reputation as a lawyer, was allowed to seat himself at the end of the line of the dignitaries.

The business of the day opened with the affairs of finance. The Chaoush Bashi was first enjoined to proceed to the door of the treasury, and remove the seal, which is always impressed upon it, and to take it to the Grand Vizir himself, who, having examined it, assures himself that it has not been touched since the last inspection. The stronghold is then opened, either for the purpose of placing in it, or taking from it, such monies as are necessary for the payment of the troops or other purposes; after which the Grand Vizir gives over his seal, which he draws from his breast, to the same officer, who again closes the door and applies the seal to it. To the affairs of finance succeed those of war: every detail relating to the army and to its destination was then brought under consideration. Matters relative to the demands of foreign ambassadors were discussed, and answers were ordered to be made out. All orders emanating from the Porte, imperial firmans, passports, patents for exclusive privileges, and decrees for the accumulation of privileges, were next brought forward and despatched. The Reis Effendi, the minister for foreign affairs, then received from the hands of the Grand Vizir all the necessary despatches to be forwarded: if only those of ordinary business, they received the seal of the Chancellor, but, if secret and confidential, the Grand Vizir stamped at the bottom the seal of the Sultan, which he affixes with his own hand, covering it with the proper ink.

Osmond, at the end of the great saloon, had waited with patience for the moment when his case should be brought under discussion; at one time giving up his attention to the novel scene before him; and at another, considering what was likely to be the result of this his present dilemma; for such he was sure it must be, since that wretch Cara Bey was evidently at the bottom of it. His thoughts, too, were full of Ayesha. What had become of her?—where was she likely to go?—who would protect her?—were questions which he put to himself, without being able to solve them. When he found his fears gaining ground, he put them to flight by the reflexion that, being now within call of his natural protector, the Ambassador of his country, it was ridiculous to suppose that any harm, beyond a little delay, could possibly accrue to him. As soon as he should have discovered upon what pretext he had been dragged to this tribunal, he concluded that it would be time to determine what was to be done. He had a friend in Wortley, who he knew would fly to his rescue at a moment's notice. In short, he so satisfied himself that the whole of the proceeding against him could only be founded upon the falsehood and machinations of a wretch not worthy of notice, that he fully expected on that self-same day to take up his quarters in the British palace, to see his friend, to receive the news of the state of his family, and, what was of more consequence to him than everything else, to ascertain what had become of his beloved mistress.

Mustafa, however, did not view the case with quite so light a heart as his master. The tribunal of the Grand Vizir, in his eyes, had always been one of the last places at which he would wish to appear; and as he was well aware of all the tricks practised in Turkish courts of justice, he anticipated nothing but a disastrous result, particularly when he found himself opposed to such an antagonist as Cara Bey. He had anxiously looked about the court for some dragoman belonging to the embassy—some friend to whom he might apply for help; but he was unlucky, he saw no one. Stasso's spirits had forsaken him; they had been so much excited by the pleasure of having at length reached the capital in safety, that the reaction was overpowering: he could almost have wept. The only consolation which both he and Mustafa now felt, was in contemplating

the regret which their master must feel that he had not allowed them to promote the throwing of Cara Bey into the sea, at a time when it might have been done with so much ease. But that moment was gone by, and the wretch was still before them!

CHAPTER XXX.

Of all affliction taught a lover yet,
'Tis sure the hardest science to forget!

Eloisa to Abelard.

THE usual business of the day having been despatched, the court was open for the trial of causes between individuals. And here it must be said in favour of Turkish justice, however great may be the reputation of its judges for venality, that the poor man has an opportunity of making his complaints heard, and of seeking redress against the oppressions of the rich. In cities distant from the seat of government, justice is not of such easy acquisition; for the traffic of false witnesses is immense, and many an honest man has been known to lose his fortune and his life through their means. One of the reasons why justice is presumed to be better administered in the divan of Constantinople is, that the Sultan in person is supposed to be present, lending his ear to all that is going on, at a small window situated just over the head of the Grand Vizir, whilst his person is only screened by a blind.

Still the corruption is great. A cause had just been tried which had interested Osmond very much, owing to the insight which it gave him into the manners of the capital and the mode of obtaining justice. A Jew broker and a Turkish grocer, two rogues of the first quality, had entered into a league to defraud an Armenian merchant. The Jew went to the Armenian and said, "I have found a buyer for a large assortment of your goods, sugar, coffee, spices, &c.; he is an honest man, and one upon whom I can depend—will you sell?" The Armenian agreed; and saw the grocer, who brought him, by

way of lure, one thousand piastres in advance, and in consequence obtained possession of the goods. The grocer appeared at the tribunal of the Grand Vizir as prosecutor of the Armenian, swearing that he had paid in full, and complaining that the Armenian avowed having received only one thousand piastres of the amount. He backed this by the testimony of two false witnesses. After much litigation, the Vizir recommended the parties to settle their differences by arbitration : which being done, a compromise was made ; the Armenian lost two-thirds of his property, the Turkish grocer marched off triumphant, and kicked the Jew broker out of his shop for daring to ask a share of the spoil !

When the parties interested in this affair had left the court, nearly at the close of the day, Osmond's case came on. He was waiting with impatience to see who would be his accuser, when a rather shabbily-dressed Turk, with a large caouk bound with a piece of linen over his eyes, stepped forward, and seemed in readiness to proceed to business. The Vizir having asked the attendant Chaoush, " Which is the next cause to be tried ? Where is the plaintiff ? who is the defendant ? "—

The Chaoush, showing the usual document, answered, " This is your excellency's order."

The Grand Vizir then said to the Cadilesquer, " Sir, let this petition be read ; and be careful that the cause be tried according to the strictest rules of justice, so that I may not again be referred to."

The Cadilesquer exclaimed, " Chaoush, let the parties stand forward, side by side !"

Upon which, Osmond was called to stand forward by the Chaoush : which he did, without exactly knowing what was about to happen to him, and was followed by Stasso and Mustafa. The shabbily-dressed Turk, whose name was Mehemet Aga, was also called, and stood up near Osmond.]

The Chaoush then addressing the judge, said, " These are the parties : this man, Mehemet Aga, is the plaintiff, and this, Osman Aga, the defendant."

The Cadilesquer instantly addressed Mehemet Aga : " So, friend, this is your petition. You here set forth that you seek for justice, not for yourself, but for your relation, a woman,

one Zabetta Kadun, who claims redress for her wrongs. What do you require from this man?" pointing to Osmond.

Mehemet Aga answered—"My lord, my relation, the woman Zabetta, complains that, by divers frauds and cajoleries, this man inveigled her and her daughter from her house, and has, under one false pretence or another, drawn them hither, with the intent of disposing of them as slaves. She asks the protection of your excellency, that she may be rescued from the designs of this man, and be no longer open to his molestation."

The Cadilesquer then turned towards Osmond, and said, "This is a new and strange case—Well, Osman Aga, what do you say to this? We frequently hear of slaves being brought from Circassia, and are acquainted with respectable merchants who acquire them according to established rules; but it is new to see women, who are the subjects of our lord the Sultan, brought to Constantinople as slaves. Speak, what answer have you to give to this accusation?"

Osmond was so much disconcerted by the strangeness of the whole proceeding, that for some time he was unable to answer; but at length, seeing that there was a deep plot laid against him, in which the wiles of Cara Bey were but too plainly perceptible, he determined to oppose nothing but the plain truth to all that should be alleged against him, and to leave the rest to Providence.

"I declare," said Osmond in the most impressive manner, "that the accusation, from beginning to end, is an utter falsehood! I am an English subject, and I insist that some one be instantly sent to the Ambassador of my country, who will satisfy you on that head. The woman to whom my accuser alludes, has followed me of her own accord. I was the means of saving her and her daughter from the hands of a villain who had carried them off by force. She is free to go whithersoever she pleases. The whole accusation is false!"

The Cadilesquer exclaimed, "How is this? You can be no Frank! Your language, your dress, your name, your whole appearance, bespeak you to be otherwise. Besides, if you be a Frank, how came you to be the protector of Mahomedan women?"

Osmond to this answered—"The woman Zabetta, the complainant, is not a Mahomedan woman; she might have been

such once, but she is a Greek. She attended the Greek church in Georgia."

Upon hearing these words, a woman entirely veiled came forward with great animation, and exclaimed, "What words are these? I a Greek woman! I am a Mahomedan woman, and Osman Aga knows it well; let him answer to my accusation with truth, and not with lies!"

The Cadilesquer seemed to be much puzzled as the cause proceeded, and consulted at various times with his colleagues. A reference was made to the Grand Vizir, who ordered that the great head of the law, the Mufti, should be consulted; and a note was sent to him with a short statement of the case, as is usual in questions of any difficulty.

The difficulty that chiefly perplexed them was, whether, the accused person being a Frank, the law for carrying off Mahomedan women could be put in full force against him, seeing that the Ambassador of his nation might take it up as a national question. This was the point which Cara Bey and his patron, the Capitan Pasha, attempted to avoid, for probably, by an immediate appeal to the English Ambassador, Osmond would have been liberated; but, as ill-luck would have it for our hero, the Mufti of Kars, who by a strange fatality had been present all the while, seeing that he could throw great light upon the subject, and happy to have an opportunity of revenging himself upon Osmond for his rude treatment at the time of the controversy, stepped up to the Cadilesquer, and disclosed to him all that he knew of the case, making thereupon his own comments.

This explanation was fatal to Osmond. The judge, convinced by the testimony of one of the Mufti's reputation, that Osmond had been guilty not only of what he was accused, but of a great deal more, put an end to the proceedings, saying that he required no further investigation, and no other witnesses; and committing Osmond, Stasso, and Mustafa to the hands of the chaoushes, he dismissed the parties: upon which, there being nothing more to be done, the Grand Vizir arose and returned to his palace.

During the course of the proceedings one of the chaoushes, a man of respectability, had recognised Mustafa for an acquaintance; and knowing him to belong to the British Embassy,

he immediately mentioned this to the Cadilesquer, who, fearing to incur censure for retaining him, ordered his dismissal.

Osmond was hurried away with violence, and treated with insolence. From the hands of the Vizir's chaoushes he was delivered over to another set of men, who seemed to have a method in the tone and manner of their insolence. They were conducting him and his servants through different chambers of the palace, when they were stopped by the chaoush, Mustafa's acquaintance, who announced to them that, by the orders of the Grand Vizir, Mustafa was allowed to depart.

The suddenness, the hurry, the abrupt manner in which he had been carried away, had scarcely allowed Osmond time to collect his thoughts ; and it was only when his steps and those of his conductors were stopped, and he was informed that Mustafa was about to be free, that the hope of immediate release came to his mind. He then made a resolute stand. He inquired whither he was about to be conducted ; and protested against the violence with which he was treated.

Among his conductors, there was one man, enveloped in a large cloak, apparently wishing to escape observation, who came forward when this delay took place, and, the people looking to him for instructions, by his gestures intimated that no indulgence was to be shown to Osmond. Osmond, seeing that resistance was hopeless, asked permission to write a letter, which he wished to send to Wortley ; but that was also denied him. His last resource was to request Mustafa, speaking in English, to go at once to Mr. Wortley, and inform him, from the beginning to the end, of all his adventures, and to beg that the Ambassador would instantly interfere in procuring his release, should he not be put to death in the meanwhile. He desired also that the Ambassador might be informed of the interest which he took in the fate and well-being of Ayesha, and that every assistance should be given her ; and requested Mr. Wortley, if possible, to take both the mother and daughter under the protection of the British Embassy. He would have said much more, but, his conductors becoming impatient, they stopped all farther communication, and hurrying him along to the sea-side, compelled him and Stasso to enter a well-manned boat which was there in waiting. Having so done, they pushed from the shore, and pulled away into the open sea with

the greatest velocity. It was then that the mysterious man, who had kept so closely concealed, showed himself at the margin of the sea, and in him Osmond discovered the eternal Cara Bey.

It will be necessary to explain that, when Cara Bey left the saïque at Elegri, he had done so with the intention of putting into execution the plot which has here been developed. Whilst, impelled by the thirst of revenge, he sought for the destruction of Osmond and his two attendants, he also hoped that he might take advantage of the ambition of Zabetta, and of the beauty of her daughter, to further his views. Making his way sometimes on foot, sometimes mounted, and being well acquainted with the country, he managed to reach Constantinople two or three days before the vessel. He at once proceeded to the palace of the Capitan Pasha. Owing to the frequency of his presents, and to his own ingenuity in intrigue, he had succeeded in securing that great officer as his protector; and on this occasion, when he appeared before him, notwithstanding the disadvantage of being empty-handed, and the tale of ruin and disaster which he had to relate, he so well knew how to advance his own interests and to ingratiate himself, that he succeeded at once in being appointed one of his chaoushes. The principal cause of this success was, in all probability, the interest created in the breast of his patron by that part of his story which related to Ayesha. The Capitan Pasha, it seems, had felt for some time that his influence with the Sultan was on the decline, and was anxious to find a good opportunity for recovering it. When Cara Bey described the charms of Ayesha, and represented the possibility of securing her as a present to offer to the Sultan, he was elated with joy, and determined to leave no effort untried to obtain possession of her. The character and views of the mother appeared to him admirably adapted to forward his object: her history, too, placed her precisely in the situation in which he wished her to be. But as Cara Bey gradually developed the story of the maiden, showing her love of Osmond, and that it would be necessary to get rid of him, the Capitan Pasha began to foresee difficulties, and was not quite so sanguine in his expectations.

“ You say that she is beautiful ?” said the Capitan Pasha to

his protégé, as they were closeted together in one of the small rooms in his palace.

"Let me tell your excellency," said Cara Bey, "that in Turkey, in Persia, in Greece, in Georgia, and in all the various countries through which I have travelled, I never saw anything that could approach her beauty! But that is not all: she is the most accomplished maiden that was ever known. Ask the Mufti of Kars, and he will tell you what great reputation she has acquired."

"But how came she known to the Frank?"

"It was by accident, on the terrace of the house at which he lodged. He, it seems, asserts, from certain ornaments which he has discovered on her dress, that she must belong to his nation. The woman who calls herself her mother, is capable of any act, and it is possible that there may be some truth in what the Frank asserts; so much greater, therefore, is the necessity for getting rid of him."

"And how can that be done?" asked the Capitan Pasha. Upon which, Cara Bey detailed to him the whole plot which he had devised for effecting that object. He said that, for a sum of money, he should certainly be able to secure some one who would swear that he was related to Zabetta, and who would appear as the plaintiff before the tribunal of the Grand Vizir against Osmond. A petition might be easily drawn up, in which so much of truth might be exhibited that it could not be totally denied by the man accused, and which would be sufficient to lead to an investigation; whilst their own assertions might be seconded by as many false witnesses as were necessary, who were always forthcoming at the corner of any street. The great object to avoid would be an appeal to the English Ambassador; and Cara Bey asserted that the Capitan Pasha's influence might easily avert that, and procure a sentence against Osmond upon his mere acknowledgment of having seen and known the women, thus invading the sanctity of a Mahomedan's harem.

"I fear that there will be great difficulty," said the Capitan Pasha, "if this man be really an Englishman. The English are all-powerful here, and will not be trifled with."

"We must act before any one is apprised of his arrival. He

must be condemned, seized, and sent off at once," said Cara Bey most earnestly.

"What sort of a person is this Frank?" said the Capitan Pasha.

"He is a devil," said Cara Bey, all that he had suffered on Osmond's account coming in strong colours to his recollection. "He is much of a man!"

"What sort of a looking man?" was the next inquiry.

"He looks like an Osmanli to all intents and purposes. He is dressed like one; he talks the language so well that nobody would take him for a Frank. What can I say more?"

"Ha!" said the Capitan Pasha, "that is important; that will do. We can proceed against him now without difficulty. If a Frank will make himself look like a Turk, and talk like one too, he must take the consequences. *Pek ayi!*—very well!"

It was evident that the great mistake which Osmond had committed throughout his journey, was quitting the appearance and characteristics of an Englishman, to assume those of an Oriental; for he thus lost his greatest protection. Dragged as Turk before a Turkish tribunal, upon condemnation he was treated as a Turk. Cara Bey had thus acquired a complete triumph over him.

We now return to Osmond. There was a mystery in the manner and looks of those into whose hands he had fallen, which made him apprehensive that his life was in danger. The boat in which he had been placed, was one of the fine long boats, called *besk chiftehs*, used in making long voyages, either along the coasts of the Black Sea, or to the Dardanelles. It was rowed by a band of stout men, and steered by a serious-looking personage, who kept a profound silence. They rowed on without intermission throughout the night, and, by the next morning, had entered the channel of the Hellespont.

During this interval, Osmond had full time to ruminate upon his present situation. Occasionally his mind would be visited by regret that he had not taken advantage of the many opportunities which had been afforded him of putting Cara Bey to death; for he, it was evident, was the author of his present calamity. But when he seriously reflected upon the awful responsibility of taking the life of a fellow-creature, he felt relieved that he had not given way to his feelings. His principal ap-

prehension was for the fate of Ayesha. It was now evident, by the declaration which Zabetta had made of her being a Mahomedan, and by her whole conduct since they had reached the Bosphorus, that she was in league with Cara Bey. Although he had from the first been convinced that she was a woman of very indifferent character, yet it was only now that he was struck by the enormity of her wickedness. He shuddered to think of the danger in which Ayesha was placed. On a former occasion he had depended, in some measure, upon the protection which her mother might have given her; but now that he had obtained a better insight into her character, that consolation had vanished, and he could only view her in the light of one of the most infamous of her sex, a plotter against her daughter's innocence. He concluded that the predicament in which the unfortunate maiden was now placed, was infinitely more perilous than when she was in the castle and the immediate power of Cara Bey. He never before had been so entirely wretched. On the former occasion he had lived in the hope of effecting her release in some way or other, and the excitement buoyed up his spirits; but now, thrown into the hands of the powerful chief of a powerful government, what could he expect but some wretched mode of death, or some future release when she, for whom he would have laid down his life, would be taken from him, perhaps for ever, to be shut up in the confinement of a tyrant's harem, there to pine away the rest of her life in hopeless misery!—Such was the tenor of his thoughts, as the boat in which he lay was carrying him he knew not whither. Occasionally, he would turn himself towards his faithful Stasso, to endeavour to find consolation in his remarks; but he, too, was broken in spirit. They had endeavoured, each in their turn, to elicit from their conductors some information concerning their destination, but they could by no means extract a word beyond an unwilling "*Bakalum!*—we shall see!" or, "*Ne bilirim?*—what do I know?" Osmond had once or twice discussed the possibility in his mind, and even communicated his thoughts to his servant in Greek, of seizing the boat; but when they came to calculate their own unarmed strength (for all arms had been taken from them), as opposed to that of the crew, they found the scheme too ridiculously hazardous to attempt it.

At length they descried a ship at anchor, for which they steered. She was off Galipoli, and appeared to be in readiness to sail at a moment's notice. Osmond having discovered from the mysterious steersman that he was to be put on board of her, and that her destination was Rhodes, determined to make one more effort to communicate with his friend Wortley; and, addressing him in so low a tone as not to be overheard, said, "I will give you five hundred piastres if you will deliver a letter for me at the British palace. Say, will you serve me?" The grave man again repeated "*Bakalum!*" but with so significant a glance that it amounted to an agreement. Upon which, tearing a page from a sketch-book which he always carried about him, he wrote with a pencil as follows:

"MY DEAR WORTLEY.—I have been forcibly seized, and am about to be put on board a ship bound to Rhodes. I suspect that one Cara Bey, a ruffian famous on the Russian and Persian frontier near Kars, now a chaoush of the Capitan Pasha's, is at the bottom of this act of tyranny. Toe rascal is to be discovered by the brand of a horse-shoe on his forehead. His object is to gain possession of a Turkish maiden of the name of Ayesha, either for his own purposes, or to advance the ambitious views of one, by name Zabetta, who professes to be her mother. I have reason to think that Ayesha is not her daughter; but on the contrary, by certain indications, I believe her to be an English girl, who, by some means or other, has been stolen from her parents. I entreat of you, as you value my friendship, to seek out the abode of her mother, from whom you will elicit much that may secure my freedom; and, moreover, I wish you would endeavour to protect her and her daughter until I am released. Mustafa, I hope, will have informed you of the strange events which have led to my present situation: but I do not despair. I depend upon your exertions to obtain my release, unless the rascals in whose hands I am, should previously put me to death. Let my friends in England know that I am in good health.

"Ever yours, affectionately,

"OSMOND."

"I have promised the bearer five hundred piastres should he deliver this safe."

The boat had no sooner reached the ship than Osmond was put on board, accompanied by the steersman, who delivered him over to the charge of the captain, when Osmond at a proper moment slipped the letter into his hand.

He found that the ship was about to convey a Pasha of two tails to Rhodes, condemned to exile for having been found guilty of too much wealth, which, as a matter of course, was seized upon by the Sultan. Besides him, there was a large assemblage of convicts, condemned to hard labour in the Arsenal at that place; whose fate Osmond and Stasso were doomed to share. The ship had apparently been detained until their arrival; for, as soon as they were embarked, she immediately got under weigh. The captain, who was a rough Algerine, scarcely gave himself time to look at the wretched Osmond and the still more miserable Stasso, but, ordering them to be taken care of with the other convicts, instantly busied himself with his duties.

As the vessel glided from her anchorage, Osmond, casting his eyes at the receding shores, was lost in a feeling of despair and despondency at the utter misery of his situation. His adored Ayesha was present to his imagination in all her loveliness, and for the first time he felt that he must abandon all those endearing hopes of possessing her, which had formed the sole object of his past thoughts. His better reason whispered to him that he ought to make up his mind to forget her for ever; but neither his resolution nor his fortitude was yet equal to such a sacrifice. How could he forget that sentiment which had so identified itself with every feeling of his heart! Time alone could work out that consummation. With his present feelings, he vowed that, as long as he existed, nothing should ever deprive him of the consolation of living for her alone; and whatever might be his future fate, he determined never to abandon the hope of one day reclaiming her as his own.

CHAPTER XXXI.

La falta del amigo hace de conocer, no aborrecer.

Cejudo, Refranes Castellanos.

EDWARD WORTLEY was several years younger than Lord Osmond. He was eminently handsome. There was a certain bright and lively expression in his face which bespoke at once the ardour and enthusiasm of his character, and which was but ill-adapted to secure the reserve deemed so necessary in the profession which he had adopted. Whatsoever feeling engrossed his heart, was so quickly brought to the surface in the mirror of his countenance, that, without his lips giving it utterance, it was discovered, almost with the same truth that objects on the margin of a lake are seen reflected in its waters. Were it the custom for faces to pass an examination in Downing-street previously to the enrolment of a diplomatist, he certainly would have been rejected; he never could dissemble. It was well that his first essays in his profession were made in Turkey, where every speech and every feeling is made to pass to its destination through the filter of a dragoman; otherwise we doubt whether the interests of his country would not have materially suffered had they been entrusted to his management.

Both he, and the Ambassador to whom he was attached, had long been in expectation of hearing some tidings from Osmond. The last accounts they had received from him were when he was about leaving Bagdad; since which they had remained in ignorance, and began to be apprehensive for his safety. Piles of letters from his family were awaiting him; and from the anxious tone of those which they had themselves received, it was evident that his return home was as desirable as it seemed impatiently expected.

It had been a question decided by the Ambassador that very day, that a special Tatar should be despatched in quest of Os-

mond; and Wortley was in the very act of writing a letter to him, when his servant came into the room with greater haste than usual, followed by the tramping of a heavy pair of boots.

"What has happened?" said Wortley.

"Here is Mustafa," said his servant. And before Wortley could make an exclamation of delight and surprise, the long-missing Tatar stood before him.

"Why, Mustafa!" exclaimed Wortley; "in the name of wonder, where have you been? We had given you up for lost. Where is Lord Osmond?"

"Lost! yes," answered Mustafa slowly, and drawing a long sigh: "we have been lost, I believe; but we are come at last."

"Where is Lord Osmond?" repeated Wortley, with redoubled animation.

"We came in a saique from the Black Sea—we landed to-day."

"Is he in the house?" inquired Wortley, making a rush to the door, with the intention of seeking him.

"*Ne belirim*—what do I know?" said Mustafa, strangely distressed by the question:—"No, he is not in the house."

"Then where is he?"

"What can I say?" said Mustafa, with the air of one making a great effort over himself—"He came, and is gone again."

"What say you? Gone?—whither could he go, but to this house?"

"He is gone though," repeated Mustafa, shaking his head at the same time, and looking most dejected.

"What has happened? In the name of Heaven! what has happened?" exclaimed Wortley, with intense anxiety in his tone and gesture, struck by the doleful looks of Mustafa—"Where is he gone?"

"We went on very well," said the Tatar, "until our good-fortune turned upon us, since then everything has gone ill. Shall I speak a lie?—no. If our Beyzadeh had not been a trifle mad or so, we should have done very well. *Ama*—but that was not the case; and, therefore, *Allah kertm*—God is great! as we say in Turkey."

"What can you possibly mean?" said Wortley, quite alarmed for the sanity of his friend. "Do you pretend to say that Lord Osmond is mad?"

"May you live many years!" said Mustafa, "and may all the English prosper! but when I say mad, I mean to say that he is occasionally mad, like his countrymen. Had he listened to my words, all would have been right; but he would not, and all is wrong."

"How is this? explain at once, Mustafa," cried Wortley, still more excited by his apprehensions.

"He does not know the Turks," said Mustafa, "and I do—that's all. Our Osmanlies, do what you will, are Turks, and never can act or think like Franks. By the grace of Allah! they are animals—what can I say more?"

"But is Lord Osmond to run mad for that?" said Wortley, not in the least able to make out the meaning of Mustafa's explanations.

"When you hear the story, you will not be surprised at what has happened," said Mustafa. "*Ouf, amān! amān!*" said he, shaking the collar of his jacket at the same time, and blowing out a deep sigh, "our's has been a strange business!"

After a great deal more preliminary matter, which seemed to plunge the subject to be elucidated into greater darkness than ever, Wortley at length managed to guide Mustafa into a track which led directly into his narrative. He invited him to begin his story from the time of their leaving Bagdad, which was like putting him into the right road after having lost his way.

Mustafa then enumerated how frequently they had mounted and dismounted; he extolled some post-houses, and reviled others; he described how well they fared here, and how ill there; how fowls and rice were abundant at one place, and nothing but bread and sour milk to be found at another. He spoke feelingly of the miseries which they had endured in Persia; and did not lose this opportunity of asserting that he had behaved most disrespectfully towards the fathers, mothers, and ancestors of all that worthy people. And at length, having reached the point in his narrative which brought him to the Armenian monastery at the foot of Ararat, he more particularly entered into the details of that part of his master's history, which had led to his present disastrous situation.

"*Wallah!*—by the Prophet!" said Mustafa, "it was then that our luck turned. May I eat Cara Bey's mother and sister, if it be not true that, from the moment we saw his castle, our

misfortunes commenced! First, at Kars, my lord was struck with the sight of a moon-faced maiden. There he ran mad, there he wanted to make Franks of Turks—to convert a whole city of rogues and ruffians, whose profession it is to cheat and cut throats, into Christians and good men. And what did he get by that? he was nearly killed, and was thrust into prison; and if, by the blessing of Allah! he had not seized a rascal of a mufti by the beard, and threatened to shoot him, we should have been torn to pieces by a furious mob. Then, instead of running away when we might, as Allah is great! we proceeded straight into the den of that lion Cara Bey, Heaven knows why! only because Milord would be civil to his rogue of a lieutenant. And then, when we had been treated like slaves, made to fight against our wills, at length we had poison served up to us when dying of hunger. In fine, after God had delivered the fiend into our hands, my lord would not kill him, out of delicacy, but quietly delivered him up to the Russians.”

“And did not the Russians put him to death?” said Wortley, roused by Mustafa’s narrative.

“Certainly, certainly, they did put him to death. They had him down upon his knees, and he cried, ‘*Amān! Amān!*’ and they pointed their guns at him; but then, when Allah was about to deliver our souls from him, and men were beginning to cry ‘*Shukiur*—God be praised!’ who should step in and save his life but our master! It is true, the rascal was branded with a horse-shoe on the forehead, and he was kicked out of the camp like a dog; but still, he lives!—he lives, as sure as you sit there!”

“I recognize Lord Osmond in this,” said Wortley; “he is too good a man to deal with barbarians.”

“A man must be a devil,” said Mustafa, “to deal with devils! How have I got on among them? It is now fifteen years since I have travelled the road, and see what I am! Mashallah! this mustache has not grown thus long for nothing!”

“And what happened after?” inquired Wortley.

“Why,” said Mustafa, “we got on board ship at Poti; we were all happy to have left the rogue behind; and we put the women on board—”

“What women?” inquired Wortley, with animation.

“*Ey vah!*” exclaimed Mustafa; “don’t you know the

story of the women? *Mashallah!* where have you been? Women—to be sure! had it not been for the women, we should now be smoking our pipes, with our caps on one side!”

“Tell me,” said Wortley, “tell me all!”

Mustafa then, in a confidential tone, continued thus:—
“There are two women: one, who is a misfortune, a bad one—a little old—who speaks for ever; in short, a devil! The other is a *peri*. *Akh!* who ever saw such a face—such beauty! She is the wonder of all Anadoli!—she is the daughter. My lord is become mad about her; that’s the secret! The rascal, Cara Bey, carried her off from Kars; my Aga delivered her out of his hands! But for these women—may they perish!—we should all be in fortune’s road!”

He then gave a description of their perils in the Black Sea, and touched with great feeling upon the re-appearance of Cara Bey in the vessel. “You will perhaps say that there are no such things as evil spirits upon earth, but had you seen that man stand before us again, in the middle of the storm; you would have been convinced of the contrary. He is Satan in person, and that is the truth of it. All the Turks on board rose by one common consent, as soon as they saw him, to throw him overboard. A Yezidi, in their eyes, is worthy of death, on shore or on board; and into the sea he would have been plunged, had not our Aga been again visited by madness, or struck by some evil-eye to do that which he ought not, and, at the peril of his own life, he stepped in to save that of the wretch. For this piece of service, the first thing that happened on our arrival at Ortacui, was the appearance of the Bostangi Bashi, bearing in his boat this very Cara Bey in person; and before we could count our beads, our master, myself, and Stasso, were conveyed before the Grand Vizir, and accused of running away with Turkish women. In vain he swore that he was an Englishman; no one would believe him; he spoke our language so well, and looked so like a true believer, that all his assertions were useless; and, to crown our misfortunes, when we least expected it, up jumped a rascal of a mufti, who said so much to the *cadilesquer*, that all hope of redemption was gone. Our Aga was carried off, placed forcibly in a boat; and I, by the blessing of Allah! was released. He was not per-

mitted to write, but he ordered me to inform you fully of his situation, and to request you to protect the women. What more can I say?"

When Mustafa had finished his narrative, he could not refrain from tears, so much was he attached to his master. Wortley, from what he had heard, endeavoured to unravel a sufficiently connected narrative of his friend's adventures, in order to make an intelligible report of his present dangerous position to the Ambassador; and without delay quitted the distressed Tatar, ordering him to be in attendance. He then in haste sought out his excellency, to whom he disclosed what Mustafa had told him. The Ambassador, almost as much interested in Osmond's fate as Wortley, listened to the whole account with the greatest attention; but when he came to that part which related to the women, he shook his head, as much as to say, this will be a difficult business to bring to a happy issue; for, from experience, he well knew how impracticable Turks were on that head. He saw the scrape into which Osmond had fallen, and, impelled by every proper feeling in his favour, determined to act with the utmost vigour until he should have extricated him. He, therefore, immediately sent for his principal instrument of communication with the Turkish government, the head dragoman of the embassy, and it was not long before he made his appearance.

Signor Trompetta, for such was his name, were he taken, *tale quale*, as he stood before the Ambassador, and placed in an English drawing-room to be stared at as a lion, would not fail to create as much astonishment by his appearance as he would by his acquirements. He was a tallish man, wearing on his head a sort of quadrangular pincushion, of the dimensions of a lady's footstool, covered with cloth, neatly padded with wool, and terminated at its lower extremity by a broad stripe of grey lambskin. This, as he approached the Ambassador, making a long graceful bow, he took off with both hands, and showed a crimson skull-cap underneath, which covered his closely-shaven head. From the top of his shoulders to the tip of his foot, he was so entirely enveloped in loose and flowing drapery, that it would be difficult for any one to pronounce what might be the form and materials of his body, except that it was long, thin, and angular. An ample vest, buttoned at the throat,

covered him from top to toe, confined in the middle by a large girdle of shawl. Over this came a cloth robe with short sleeves, above that a lighter one with large sleeves, and under his arm he carried another, so vast that it completely covered him all over when he presented himself officially before one of the Turkish authorities.

His countenance was made up of shrewdness, an habitual expression of obsequiousness, and quick remark. He had an arched nose, sharp grey eyes sunk deep in their sockets; a projecting chin; and a slight mustache covered his upper lip. Every hair excepting these few was most carefully shaved off, so that his ears, his jaws, and his neck, were all completely bare, forming a strange contrast to the prodigal use of hair worn in modern times. His manners were those of a courtier, full of deference, polish, and grace. He was a complete master of five different languages, being able to read, write, and converse in them with almost the facility of a native. He had acquired English with astonishing accuracy, considering that he had never left Constantinople, daily writing official notes in it to the ambassador, and always using it when he talked to him. French and Italian being the languages mostly spoken at Pera among its great diversity of inhabitants, they were hourly practised. Modern Greek was the dialect spoken in his family and to his servants; and Turkish being the language of the court and the country, in that he was learned and eloquent. Of Arabic and Persian he had made a study, and was also conversant with Armenian. With these various tongues in his head, in daily use, and called upon to speak and write in them at any moment, he never was known to make a confused mixture. Certainly, the station which he filled was one full of difficulty, in what regarded his own personal interests, and his case might be called that of many of his colleagues. He and they, mostly descendants from Venetian and Genoese families who had taken root at Constantinople during the time of its partial possession by those powers, were employed as dragomans in the European missions. They were, in fact, subjects of the Porte, although they enjoyed the protection of the power in whose employ they were, as long as that power was at peace with Turkey; but whenever war took place, their position became dangerous—dangerous in proportion as they had rendered themselves per-

sonally obnoxious during the transaction of the affairs which had passed through their hands. In their own defence, therefore, with the fear of war hanging over their heads, they are obliged to steer a middle course, doing their duty towards their employers, whilst they make the words in which that duty is communicated to the Turkish authorities, as palatable as possible. It is their province to sweeten the brim of the cup whenever they have a bitter draught to present, ere they administer its contents.

*Così a l'egro fanciul porgiamo aspersi
Di soave licor gli orli del vaso.*

In the present case, the Ambassador, who was a straightforward man, making at once for his point without unnecessary circumlocution, stated in a few words the awkward predicament in which Lord Osmond had apparently placed himself, showing that it probably arose from his interference in favour of the women, and insisted that, in the representations made to the Turkish government, as a preliminary to all farther proceeding, he should be immediately released and restored to him, free from all harm.

Signor Trompetta, as soon as he heard mention made of women, instantly put on a look of serious apprehension, ominously shook his head, whilst at the same time he made a deferential bow.

"I fear that your excellency will find," he said, "that this will prove a difficult affair. Whenever women are concerned, a Turk will scarcely listen to reason—he becomes entirely engrossed by passion."

"I am aware of that, Mr. Trompetta," said the Ambassador, "and am ready to make every allowance for Mahomedan prejudice. But, ignorant as I am of the real state of the case, whilst I can place every dependence upon the high character of so distinguished a nobleman as Lord Osmond, I must insist upon it that no delay be allowed to take place in setting him at liberty. You will go immediately to the Reis Effendi with this message from me, and request that none of the accustomed delays; so apt to be thrown into the discussion of every trifle, be here allowed to interfere. And in order to show that I am more than usually interested in this, I will desire Mr. Wortley

to accompany you." Upon which he requested Wortley, who was present, to proceed to the Reis Effendi, saying, "This is a bit of diplomacy which I am sure I can safely confide to your management; although I must give you one precaution, which is, not to allow your zeal in favour of your friend to carry you beyond the bounds of moderation, when you are brought face to face with the Turkish minister."

Wortley was delighted to be sent on such an errand. He felt that, if the delivery of the Ambassador's message to the Reis Effendi, in favour of his friend, were left entirely to the discretion of the dragoman, it would lose the whole of the vigour with which it was sent; and as he possessed the Turkish language sufficiently to ascertain the value of words in common use, he hoped, by his presence, to serve as a check upon Signor Trompetta's propensity to dilute the meaning of the message of which he was the bearer, into the sort of phraseology agreeable to a Turkish ear. They proceeded forthwith, taking Mustafa with them as a precautionary measure, and, having reached the residence of the minister, they were introduced into his presence, after passing through crowds of turbaned and bearded attendants.

The Reis Effendi, a most urbane Turk, full of courteousness and demonstrations of politeness, received Wortley with the greatest attentions, whilst a smile of surprise might be seen to play over his features at his extreme youth. Having immediately ordered the never-failing chibouque and coffee, he inquired very tenderly concerning the health of the Ambassador.

"The *keif*—the spirits, of the Elchi Bey, are they in good order? *Inshallah*—please heaven, he is without ailment! *Benim garendashder*—we are brothers of the same bowels. He is an excellent man!"

To all this Wortley answered with appropriate expressions, helped out, in his incipient essays in Turkish, by the interference of his dragoman, who having clothed himself in his ample robe, which covered his person to the tips of his fingers, adopted at the same time that look of humility which Orientals are apt to assume when they stand before a great personage.

The Reis Effendi then complimented Wortley upon his youth; called him an *Elchjik*, or a little ambassador; and hoped, in very polite terms, that this his first essay in the trans-

action of business, would in time lead to good fortune and to the dignities of a full ambassador. He illustrated this by quoting a line from a Persian poet, which was to this effect—"The dews of heaven dissolve drop by drop until they become a sea!"

Wortley was anxious to proceed to business, and, as soon as he could with propriety, evading the preliminaries of an audience, which, in all Oriental proceedings, are sure to take up the principal time, he addressed Signor Trompetta, and requested him to communicate to the Effendi the Ambassador's message, and to add, in as strong language as possible, his desire that no delay should take place in the execution of it.

Wortley paid earnest attention to every word which fell from Signor Trompetta, as he made his speech to the minister, and, when he had finished, endeavoured to give it strength by certain explanatory gesticulations, induced by the excited state of his feelings.

The Reis Effendi heard every word with the greatest patience and urbanity, and with all the proper coldness and gravity of a statesman. He pretended at first to be totally ignorant of the case, saying only, "So! is it so! indeed! we will see!" as the dragoman proceeded; and when he had heard the whole statement, he placed his hand upon his beard, and stroking it, said with great composure, in a sort of suppressed tone, to the dragoman, eagerly watched by Wortley, "If there had been no women in the case, the whole thing would have been easy; but, as it is, there is much difficulty."

"Tell his excellency," said Wortley to the dragoman with much animation; "that the person whom his government has treated as a criminal, and condemned without a proper trial, is an English nobleman of the greatest worth."

The Reis Effendi replied, "My friend, when a diamond falls into the mud, its price is not diminished! Please Allah! all will be well! Tell our friend the Ambassador, not to be under any apprehension. Upon our heads be it! Inshallah! the good understanding that subsists between us is not to be disturbed for such a trifle as this." Then turning to Trompetta, he said in a suppressed whisper, "I think I have heard of this case, which was tried before our lord the Grand Vizir. The man pretended to be a Frank, but he proved to be one Osman Aga, known to the Mufti of Kars—a man of probity, who

denounced him as a brawler and a maker of disturbance; he was accused of stealing women of the true faith, and bringing them hither for sale. This cannot be an English Beyzadeh."

Wortley, who heard the name of Osman mentioned, immediately caught at it, and exclaimed with some violence, "If his excellency knows anything of Lord Osmond, or of the affair in question, I cannot allow him to pretend ignorance of it. We will not put up with the usual procrastination; every moment lost, is so much accumulated misery to an innocent man. But should his excellency be ignorant of the case, let him question Mustapha, the Tatar, who accompanied him."

Upon this suggestion, to which the Reis Effendi assented, Mustapha was introduced, and having taken up an attitude of respect at the end of the apartment, answered to all the questions which were put to him with great animation and interest; and from the explanations which he gave, it was evident that the Osman Aga to whom the minister alluded, and Lord Osmond, were one and the same.

"Tell his excellency," said Wortley to the dragoman, "that there cannot now be the shadow of a doubt how my friend has been treated: He may at this very moment, for aught I know, be dragging out a miserable existence in chains, as a malefactor, in some desolate prison. How can his government answer to this accusation?" said the youthful diplomat with much wrath.

Signor Trompetta interpreted this speech with every qualifying interpolation, at which Wortley would have taken fire, had he sufficiently possessed the Turkish language to make his own explanations. The Reis Effendi, observing his agitation, said with great calmness, "My friend, when a man with the name of Osman, dressed, to all intents and purposes, as a true believer, speaking our language better than I can, without a single token in his person by which he may be recognised as a Frank, is accused and brought before the tribunal of our Vizir, unprotected by his nation, what fault can be attributed to our judges, if they see in him one of their nation, and refuse his pretensions of being an European?"

"My Aga insisted upon a messenger being sent to the English Ambassador," interposed Mustafa, to the astonishment of the Turks, "and he was refused; upon this I will take my

oath. The whole of the affair is a trick of that son of the devil, the Yezidi, Cara Bey."

Wortley took up this observation of Mustapha's with increased violence; he inveighed against the injustice and nefariousness of the whole proceeding, whilst he insisted upon the dragoman giving to the Reis Effendi the whole force of his words; talked much of the vengeance which his government could and would take, if immediate satisfaction were not given for this insult offered to one of its most distinguished subjects; and desired that a Tatar might be despatched whithersoever Lord Osmond had been conveyed, with orders that he should immediately be set at liberty.

At this ebullition of violence, Trompetta was alarmed; but the Reis Effendi was calm. "Tell our friend the Ambassador," said the minister, "that we will investigate the whole affair, and that he will not have to complain of any backwardness on the part of the government of our Lord and Sovereign the Sultan to meet his wishes and give him redress. And let our young friend here be assured," addressing himself to Wortley, "that if the English Beyzadeh had kept to his own costume, had appeared in his proper character, and not interfered with our women, or with affairs that did not belong to him, he might have walked from one end of our country to the other with his head up, carrying gold at the top of it, without meeting with molestation or hindrance of any sort."

Upon this the conference broke up, and Wortley and his suite returned to the English palace.

CHAPTER XXXII.

The rose was yet upon her cheek,
But mellow'd with a tenderer streak.
Where was the play of her soft lips fled?
Gone was the smile that enliven'd their red.

The Siege of Corinth.

It is time to return to the unfortunate Ayesha, who, from the height of happiness, had been plunged into the depth of despair. Those dreams of future bliss in which she had indulged when she was last in company with her beloved Osmond were dispelled, and she now saw before her nothing but wretchedness. She felt herself so totally abandoned, and so entirely in the hands of Cara Bey and her designing mother, that there seemed to be no other resource left than to lay herself down and die.

Cara Bey had prepared a small house for their reception, situated on the rope-walk leading from Galata to the arsenal and the palace of the Capitan Pasha. It was an obscure dwelling, facing the turreted wall that surrounds that suburb, consisting of two stories, entered by a low door, and covered by a shelving roof; and could attract no attention. The large burying-ground, and its thick wood of cypress-trees, situated close to it, afforded an open space for taking the air, and was one of the avenues to the British palace, as well as the promenade, of an evening, to the Europeans and Christian inhabitants of Pera and Galata. The uppermost story was occupied by the women; Cara Bey took possession of the lower apartments, and adopted every precaution that no man save himself should have access to the house; so jealous was he of the possession of a treasure which, in his estimation, was to lead him on to wealth and power. A woman devoted to him, attended as a servant; for Mariam, from the day of Osmond's seizure, had absconded, and returned to her own country; so terrified had she been by Cara Bey's presence.

Cara Bey having, as he thought, entirely got rid of Osmond, exulted in malignant joy at being obstructed by no impediment in pursuing his schemes upon Ayesha. As soon as Zabetta was installed in the house, he lost no time in making known to her his success with the Capitan Pasha, who professed himself burning with impatience to view those charms, which were at once to seal his pardon with the Sultan, and secure a continuance of his favour. He told her, with all the precaution which his brutal nature could devise, that he had been obliged to describe her as his slave, and that as such he had offered her to that great dignitary.

"But what share in the profit am I to have?" exclaimed Zabetta in alarm, lest her interests had been overlooked. "She is mine; I am her mother."

"What share are you to have?" repeated Cara Bey with a sneer. "Are you mad to ask such a question, when you are about becoming a lady of the imperial seraglio?"

"What do I know?" answered Zabetta in a tone of great ill-humour, the whole rapaciousness of the Greek beaming in her countenance: "There is much fraud in the world: professions are cheap; but such beauty as my daughter's is scarce. Let me know what share of the profit is to be mine, and then I will speak to you."

"Woman! are you mad?" again exclaimed Cara Bey, his satanic features breaking out into sudden passion. "Have we not been long agreed? Shall we be seated together in one boat, and the next moment be thrown separately into the sea? *Bé hé!*—This is much, indeed."

"Agreed, indeed! What words are these?" said Zabetta. "You seem to have agreed with yourself to gain all, and to leave me without a cap on my head. You take my daughter, you sell her, and all I am to acquire is the prospect of getting into the seraglio. I am no such fool, praises be to the Prophet! as not to see into a trick, however crafty. If prosperity were to be gained by cunning, mice would prosper."

"Do you talk thus to me, you weak one!" exclaimed Cara Bey, forgetting for a moment that he was no longer the independent chief—the governor of his stronghold. "How came ye hither, but for me? But for my protection you would at this moment be grovelling in the mire,—the slave of a Frank;

whereas now you aspire to be a sultana. Open your eyes, woman, or *Wallah billah!*—by the prophet! I will cut that unceasing tongue of your's from that never-failing mouth."

"You will, will you! wretch of a Yezidi!" exclaimed the infuriated woman, throwing her five extended fingers into his face. "*Na!*—that for you! You think me friendless, and therefore insult me. Because you are a swine, am I to be taken for a post? No: get you elsewhere to rub your hated hide. I have friends here. I will go to my husband's friend, the Mufti of Kars: he will protect me; he will tell the truth. You talk of the Frank; would he were here! He is no pitiful dealer in stolen slaves: he is a man, if ever there was one. I will seek the protection of his Ambassador. Wherefore should I require the help of a branded outcast like you?"

At these words the devil-worshipper, thus taunted, thus excited, would have thrown himself headlong upon the reckless, perverse, wrong-headed woman. Her passions being once brought into a state of fusion, like lava running over a crater, flowing into an undefined channel, bore everything before them. Reason, common sense, prudence, every consideration gave way before her uncontrollable temper; and had she even seen the villain's knife at her breast, of which she was running a considerable risk, she probably would have continued her strain of volubility, taunting in never-ceasing reproach and invective even to the very verge of dissolution. He, however, did not give way to his passion; but, suddenly recollecting how much he had at stake were she to seek the protection of the Mufti, and fearing to lose a prize, of which, by a little good management, he would certainly be the possessor, he all of a sudden lowered his tone, withdrew his frown, called up a demon's smile, and said:

"Wherefore are you thus angry without a cause? Do I say that you shall not share in the profit, if profit there be? *Astaferallah!*—heaven forbid! I am not a man to enter into a fraud thus. But, as you love your daughter, reflect on whom we have to deal with. These are not merchants; these are not Jewbrokers. Here is, first, a lord high-admiral; one who with a wink of his eye cuts off a head; with a nod, sends a soul in haste out of a body. Then perhaps, who knows! will come the great blood-drinker in person, who says, '*Yok,*

no,' and the heavens shake; and pronounces, '*Belli*, yes,' and the clouds, stars, sun, moon laugh. These we have to do with. Shall we then inquire what profit there will be? Perhaps there may be gain, perhaps not. Let us but get our little finger into the hole, we will soon make it wide enough to insert our whole body. Once installed in the royal seraglio, what is the eminence to which a woman of your wit may not attain? With the emperor's beard in one hand, and your daughter's charms in the other, you may ride over the universe. And will you then forego these advantages, to higgler over a few uncertain piastres? If you really are such a fool, you are not the woman I took you for."

These words, spoken with all the wile and cunning of a demon, calmed the woman's rage, and brought her round to a more correct sense of her interests. She gradually subsided into silence, and from silence into thought; she pondered for a while, and then said, "What is to be done? When shall we begin our operations? After so much kneading, when shall we put our loaves into the oven?"

"Patience—eh, patience, friend!" exclaimed Cara Bey. "An egg is not hatched in a minute, nor does the hen cackle before her time. This very night I have agreed that the great Capitan Pasha in person, *tebtıl*—in disguise, is to visit this very house. Be it your business to prepare the maiden for his reception; he must see her—of that there is no doubt: prepare a good cup of coffee, some fruit, and I will get wine. Do you hear? see you to this, and I will now proceed to conduct him hither. But be cautious, and, above all, keep your temper."

Zabetta, having given her assent to this, left Cara Bey to seek her daughter, whilst he betook himself to the palace of the great naval chief.

She found poor Ayesha, as usual, brooding over her miseries, wrapped in thought over the one object of her existence—her absent lover, and pining in hopeless, heart-breaking wretchedness. Her beauty, which had risen to the height of its splendour during her sea voyage, happy as she then was, without a wish ungratified, and with the prospect of future happiness before her, was now daily declining; the bloom had fled her cheeks, her brilliant eyes were dimmed by constant tears; the gracefulness of her healthy figure was gradually relapsing into

extenuation. In vain she attempted to pierce into the gloom by which she was surrounded; no ray of hope broke in upon her. She felt herself doomed to be the victim of the being who she once thought was her mother, but who, it was clear, could not be so, now that she was about to sacrifice her to her unprincipled schemes of ambition and rapacity. To whom could she flee for help, imprisoned as she was in the toils of two such wretches as Zabetta and the monster Cara Bey? Her Osmond was far, far away. "*Ahi!*" would she frequently exclaim to herself, in a desponding sigh, "where are you, dearest, best, most adored of my heart! Are you pining in some lonely dungeon? or, oh horrid thought! have your ruthless enemies wreaked their utmost vengeance upon you?" This idea would so harrow up her soul that it almost deprived her of reason; scheme after scheme succeeded each other in her mind in rapid succession, until she scarcely knew where she was or to whom she belonged. Often did she resolve to leave the hated lodging in which she was immured, and to seek her way back to her father, who she now felt was the only being in the world to protect her. She thought, too, of the Mufti; but he, her Osmond's enemy—what could she expect to meet with at his hands but insolence and contumely?

The disconsolate Ayesha was plunged in the midst of such reflections when Zabetta entered her apartment. Putting on a face of sympathy, the artful woman approached her daughter with every demonstration of kindness.

"My soul, Ayesha," she exclaimed, "wherefore are you so sad? Are we not at Stamboul? is not the world smiling upon us? You, *Mashallah!* you—are you not the most beautiful, the most charming of maidens, and am not I your mother? What is there to make you sad? Open your heart, and let us live to all the delights which this charming place affords."

"Mother," said Ayesha, "be the enjoyments yours, since such you esteem them; I will none of them. I have only one request to make.—Let me return to Kars—let me once more be restored to my father, and there let me live and die. Would that these charms, since such you are pleased to call them, could be wiped away, and replaced by looks the most homely! for then I should pass through this hated world unnoticed and

unobserved. But wherefore repine, since Allah has so decreed my fate?"

"What say you? return to Kars!" exclaimed Zabetta. "Heaven preserve us! will you wrap yourself in your winding-sheet before your time? What is there so hateful in our present situation, which should make you wish to change it? Have you not all you can desire?"

"Mother, wherefore speak you so?" said Ayesha, interrupting Zabetta. "Subject to the power of, and living an inmate under the same roof as that ruffian Cara Bey! can that be a cause of rejoicing to us who have experienced so much misery at his hands? Wherefore do you not skreen me from him—you who are my mother? Wherefore live we with him?"

"What words are these?" rejoined Zabetta, roused into anger; "and who are you, to speak to me thus? If I am your mother, you will act according to my wishes. You have been saved by Cara Bey from the hands of a Giaour—one who would have borne you away to his infidel country; and now that he is preparing the road for your happiness and your elevation, you call him ruffian, and would return to Kars! Are these the words of a Turkish maiden?"

Ayesha held her peace; she felt that it would be madness to venture to argue with one so perverse, and she determined to be silent.

Zabetta, in her usual manner, when her temper was roused, continued to give the reins to her volubility; and when she had exhausted herself, finding that Ayesha did not answer, she at length began to reflect that she was defeating her own purpose. She had undertaken to persuade her to receive the Capitan Pasha, and she had not advanced one step in obtaining her end. She feared to encounter the inflexibility of her daughter, who, she knew by experience, would never deviate from what she conceived to be due to herself; and still she felt it necessary to forewarn her of the projected visit, in order to prevent any disagreeable consequences, were she to resist receiving it.

"How can you," said she, "continue to give up your thoughts to the Frank, now that you have the first agas of the country striving to obtain a glimpse of your charms? Ere this,

he must have returned to his country, and have long forgotten us. After all, he is a Giaour. Infidels can no more mix with true believers, than oil with vinegar."

"I want to see no one," answered Ayesha. "If you ever loved your daughter, allow me to sit in a corner, and to remain unnoticed;—above all, save me from Cara Bey."

"Here is the great Capitan Pasha in person coming to see you this very evening," said Zabetta. "If you fear Cara Bey, seek his protection. He is one of the grandees of the government; you must see him."

"There is no man, according to our law, save the Sultan himself, who can force me to show my face to him," said Ayesha, with great energy; "and unless I am compelled by force, I will not see the Capitan Pasha, or any other man."

Zabetta, for once, succeeded in smothering the anger that was rising in her breast, when she heard this her daughter's declaration. She left her, without saying more, to busy herself in making the necessary preparations for receiving her important guest. She exerted her best endeavours to make a display of her knowledge in cookery; she brought to light the most savoury of pillaus; superintended the most fragrant concoction of coffee, and piled delicious fruits in appropriate bowls.

At about night-fall the door of the house was opened with caution, and the great Admiral in person, attended by two servants, and conducted by Cara Bey, entered, and was ushered into the apartments of the first-floor. He was a stout, broad man, of hale complexion, with a beard tending to red, though sufficiently mixed up with white hair to show that he had passed the middle age of life, and his appearance exhibited little of that refined and courteous demeanour which is so frequently the characteristic of Turks. He was dressed as a galiongi, or sailor, which consists of a jacket highly embroidered, a pair of white trowsers, naked legs, crimson shoes, and a small turban. He was, besides, completely covered with the white cloak common to the Barbary states.

He seated himself with the ease and self-possession of one accustomed to command, whilst Cara Bey stood in an attitude of respect before him. Zabetta was in attendance to receive him, which she did with the most officious marks of attention and servile obsequiousness. But, scarcely noticing her, the

great man, after having taken several whiffs from a magnificent pipe, said, as he looked around the room, "Where is Ayesha. Wherefore is she not here?"

Zabetta immediately stepped forward and answered, "Heaven preserve your highness! the maiden is abashed. She is timid, and is fearful of appearing; she will soon come. Your highness must forgive her. We are poor folks; we are not accustomed to such visits. *Mashallah!*—May Allah protect you! Let me intreat you to take some coffee made by my unworthy hands."

Upon this she served up the coffee, but during this operation, Cara Bey, who acted as an attendant, appeared ill at ease, and anxious at the non-appearance of his victim. He whispered Zabetta to go and force her daughter to appear. Zabetta, apprehensive of her inflexibility, and fearful of producing a scene, did not give a ready ear, but continued to oppress her guest with her volubility and officiousness.

"*Haniah Ayesha?* — where is Ayesha?" again repeated the Capitan Pasha, as he sipped his coffee.

"Go, bring her," said Cara Bey to Zabetta, as if there was no difficulty about it, although, at the same time, he made a sign to her with such a frown on his countenance that his anger and impatience could not be mistaken. She will come immediately, my lord," said he to the chieftain; "she is only in the upper room, and will appear in a minute; she is a child, and knows no better."

Zabetta then proceeded, with slow steps and a hopeless manner, to seek her daughter. She found her in a state of great excitement. She had heard the arrival of the Capitan Pasha, and anticipated the miseries that were likely to fall upon her. "Mother!" she exclaimed, as soon as she saw Zabetta appear, "I know wherefore you come; but I intreat you to spare me; do not allow your daughter to degrade herself to a being lower than the most abject of slaves. I cannot, I will not expose myself to the gaze of men. They are neither my father nor my brother; wherefore should I be thus insulted?"

Zabetta was astonished at Ayesha's impetuosity, for she had ever been accustomed to find her the most gentle and tractable of beings. There was no time for discussion, she saw how hopeless was her attempt, and returned whence she came,

without saying a word more, and, gently opening the door of the room in which the Capitan Pasha was seated, she whispered to Cara Bey to come out to her.

"What has happened?" said the great man.

"*Bir chey yok* — there is nothing," said Cara Bey, "I will soon return."

Upon which, with his anger excited, the ruffian approached Zabetta, saying, "Wherefore does she not come? By the standard of Yezid! I will have her blood, if she does not come." And thus saying, he sprang up the stairs. Throwing open the door, he found the excited maiden standing in the middle of the room, with her veil fast clenched in her hand, drawn tightly over her person, in an attitude of dignified resolve.

"Wherefore will you not come, child of iniquity?" he exclaimed with a voice of rage.

"Wherefore come you here?" said she. "Who are you who dare intrude upon a woman's privacy? This is the harem — away!"

"Come with me; come immediately, or, by Allah! I will force you."

"Monster!" cried the intrepid Ayesha, "by what right do you command me? You are neither my father nor my brother. I stir not from hence."

"We will see!" said he, darting forward to seize her.

Ayesha fled from him towards the window, which was open, as if to throw herself from it, uttering at the same time a shriek which rang through the room in piteous accents. He sprang forward and seized her by the arm; she resisted with all her might, and at the same time continued to utter loud and repeated cries of distress. In the midst of their struggles, the door was thrown open, and in rushed the astounded dignitary, followed by Zabetta, who, having heard the cries and the sounds of the scuffle, had ascended in haste to ascertain the cause. As soon as Ayesha perceived her mother, she rushed towards her, leaving her veil in the hands of her assailant, and hid her face on her breast; her fine form and the whole beauty of her person being open to the gaze of the astonished Capitan Pasha.

"What has happened?" said he, in an angry tone to Cara Bey, as he took his stand in the room. Looking with great

intenseness of admiration upon Ayesha, and seeing in her one who probably on some future day might exercise great control over the Sultan, he felt a quick flash of apprehension lest she might exercise that control to the detriment of those who were now treating her so rudely. He went up to her, and with as soft a tone as he could throw into his voice, said, "*Korkma, guzum*,—fear not, my eyes! no one shall harm you. We are not come here to excite your displeasure; we are your friends; we wish your happiness. Inshallah! in a short time every pleasure will attend you."

"If you are a man," exclaimed Ayesha, with indignation in her accent, and covering herself at the same time with part of her mother's veil—"If you are a man, I ask you to protect me from that monster," pointing to Cara Bey. "We are Turkish women—we are children of the true faith, and not worshippers of Satan, who acknowledge no law. Is not the harem sacred in Constantinople? Are we to be treated as heretics and base women, in the capital of the Sultan, and that under the very eyes of one of his ministers? Are you not ashamed to enter a harem by force, and to assail a weak woman when she is unprotected?"

"How is this, Cara Bey?" said the Pasha, addressing himself to the villain; "you told me these women were your slaves. Speak, man, how is this?"

"His slaves!" exclaimed Ayesha, the blood of indignation rushing into her face as she spoke, and fire flashing from her eyes. "We his slaves! by the head of the Sultan, sir! by every thing that is sacred, that man has spoken falsely. We are Mahomedan women; we belong to a man of worth; from his house the monster stole us by a dastardly stratagem, and, had it not been for the valour and sagacity of a Frank—of an English, whom, through his false accusations, he has perhaps ere this caused to be put to death, we should to this day have been his prisoners. Let him show you the brand on his forehead, and ask him how it got there? You do not know him—you are dishonoured by his services, how much more then by his acquaintance! Shame, sir, shame!"

The grave Turk, who had never been acquainted with any women but those accustomed to submit blindly to his will, upon hearing these words, and seeing the energy and commanding

manner of the beautiful person by whom they were spoken, felt a degree of awe and admiration which was entirely new to him. He never could have conceived that so much strength of character, and such great love of virtue, as were now evinced by Ayesha, could belong to woman; and, like one who sees some great natural phenomenon for the first time, he remained staring and stupified, not knowing what to say, or how to express his astonishment. Catching the infectious energy of her manner, and siding with her, he looked towards Cara Bey with indignation; and although he was conscious that he had allowed himself to be implicated in that villain's designs, by lending himself to his proposals, still he had been left in ignorance of the greatest part of what Ayesha had now communicated to him.

Cara Bey, on the other hand, was writhing under the lash of the heroic maiden's words, with the feelings of one who, bound to the stake, was under the infliction of torture. He felt that she had now emancipated herself from his protection, and placed herself under that of a power over which he had no control. He cowered under her presence, as the worker of iniquity shrinks from the glare of daylight. All he could say, his hypocritical eyes turning towards the Pasha, was, "She lies—she is false—your highness must not believe her;—ask this woman," pointing to Zabetta; "she is her mother, and knows all."

The Capitan Pasha, happy to escape for a moment from the feeling of self-degradation which Ayesha's accusations had awakened in him, turned to Zabetta, and said, "How is this? Are you and your daughter slaves of this man? or did he steal you from your home by stratagem?" Speak!"

Zabetta had been as much thunderstruck by Ayesha's energy of conduct as Cara Bey. She stammered out a few incoherent words, which only the more evinced her confusion. "*Ne bili-rim, Effendim*—What can I say, my lord?" she said. "We are Mahomedan women, that is true; we are your highness's slaves, do with us what seems best to you. We are poor folks, and are not accustomed to such a visit as this. Our Ayesha is a child, she does not know better; pardon her faults; we have always lived in the country, we are unacquainted with the ways of Constantinople. Whatever your highness may command,

that we are ready to do; pardon us. Would not your highness take more refreshment? everything is ready below. *Bismillah!*—in the name of the Prophet! it is ready;" upon which she showed the way to the door.

The Capitan Pasha was not slow in taking advantage of the invitation of Zabetta; for, strange to say, the retiring, the tender, the feminine maiden had more awed the rough sailor, the man of storms and violence, in the few minutes which he had spent in her company, than he could have been by the taunts and threats of many men. As he was about to go, he turned towards Ayesha, and taking one long admiring look at her, said, "*Korkma kizem*—fear not, my daughter, everything will go well with you, *Inshallah!*" Upon this he left the room, and at the same time ordering Cara Bey to follow him, said, "As you value your head, man, never approach that maiden again. She is ours."

The foiled wretch, clenching his hands with impotent rage, and looking at her under his dark and ominous brow, followed without uttering a word; and thus the grief-stricken Ayesha was once more left to her solitude. When she found herself relieved from their presence, she retreated to a corner of the sofa, and burying her face in her hands, resting them upon her knees, her fine hair streaming over her shoulders, and her graceful figure bending into a form which painters would love to design, she freely gave up her heart to prayer, whilst her whole frame shook with the violence of her sobs. She called upon her Maker for protection, whilst the image of her lover came before her in all its bewitching charm and tenderness. She trusted that she was for the present delivered from her greatest affliction—the presence of the odious worshipper of Satan; but what were the trials and the sorrows still in store for her from the new protector which she had acquired, she dreaded to think!

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Gent. Faith! once or twice, she heaved the name of father
Pantingly forth, as if it press'd her heart.

King Lear.

THE Capitan Pasha, upon leaving the house, gave Zabetta assurances of his future protection; recommended her to take the greatest care of her daughter; told her that she should want for nothing; and, as an earnest of this, made her, upon stepping from the door, a handsome present in money. Ordering Cara Bey to follow him, and the night being far advanced, he returned incognito to his own palace.

Zabetta could hardly sleep, from delightful anticipations of the grandeur and worldly prosperity in store for her; whilst Ayesha, from apprehensions of that same fate, was equally unable to close her eyes. The former had no other visions before her than of rich dresses, gilded palaces, fine equipages, splendid boats, and never-ceasing pleasure; the latter could not divest herself of the horror of being subject to the power of some rude and barbarous master, in common with other unfortunate women; whilst her own lover, her fond and devoted Osmond, might be wasting away his existence in a prison, forgotten and despised.

The succeeding day had not long appeared, when their attention was awakened by a knocking at the door. Zabetta looked out of the upper window, and, seeing several men in waiting, and among them a Frank, ordered the servant not to admit them before she had ascertained who they were.

"*Kim der?*—Who is it?" said the old woman, as she stood with her hand on the latch, and with her ear towards the door.

"*Atah*—open!" said a Turk.

"Who are you?" repeated the old woman.

"*Atch*—open!" again said the voice.

By this time, Zabetta, having thrown her veil over her head, had come to the assistance of the servant, and repeated the question in her shrillest tone of voice.

"Who are you, and what do you want?"

A different voice from the first then answered from without, "I am Mustafa Tatar. You know me, Zabetta Kadun. We are friends. Open."

Upon which, Zabetta huddling up-stairs to the room on her first-floor, ordered the maid to open the door and admit the visitors without farther delay.

Ayesha too, who was alive to every noise, had ventured to peep through the lattice, and, perceiving a Frank among the intruders, her thoughts immediately recurred to Osmond. With her curiosity and her imagination all alive, she covered herself closely over with her veil, and, hoping that this visit might throw some light upon the fate of him whose existence was identified with her own, she timidly determined to join her mother in the room below.

The visitors were five in number. A Chaoush of the grand Vizir, and his attendant, a *Hoja*, or scribe, Mustafa, Signor Trompetta, and Wortley. Their visit was caused by the reception of Osmond's letter to Wortley, which we have already set before our readers, in which he was enjoined to discover the abode of Zabetta and Ayesha, and to elucidate from their lips such parts of the truth of his history as would be necessary to secure his emancipation. The Ambassador, upon perusing this letter, immediately made a communication of it to the Reis Effendi, and insisted that, for the better satisfaction of his excellency, who still remained convinced that Osmond was not an Englishman, but a Turk, an examination of the women implicated in his adventures should be made; and requested that one of his officers, together with his own secretary and dragoman, should be allowed to proceed to their abode for that purpose. The Reis Effendi acceded to the request, and this visit was the result.

Zabetta was seated in a corner of the room, whilst Ayesha had taken post immediately behind her. The Chaoush (one of the officers attendant upon the Vizir's court, and usually employed upon such like occasions), Wortley, the dragoman,

and the Turkish scribe, were seated opposite to them, whilst Mustafa stood near the door.

"Which is Zabetta Kadun?" said the chaoush.

"I am your slave," said Zabetta in a low and tremulous voice, evidently much alarmed at the whole proceeding, and keeping her face closely concealed by her veil. "*Ne istersin?*—What do you want?" she continued to say, as she cast her eyes upon the different individuals before her.

There was an agitation and an incoherency perceptible in her whole manner, which showed that she was greatly affected by the appearance of those present. Wortley seemed to attract all her observation. She gave little heed to Mustafa, who, being her old acquaintance, it might have been supposed would have inspired her with confidence; but, absorbed as she was by some predominant feeling, she was silent, and apparently greatly disturbed. Ayesha, too, remained perfectly motionless, her eyes fixed upon Wortley: whether from the consciousness that he was her Osmond's friend, or from some other motive, she seemed to be taken up with him alone, and heedless of the presence of all else.

"Now open your eyes," said the Chaoush to Zabetta; "you will answer the questions of this aga," pointing to Trompetta, "and you will speak the truth, the clean truth. Do you hear?—this is no play. We are here upon the service of your Lord and Sovereign the Sultan—have you understood me?"

Zabetta made a sort of nervous movement, and willingly would she have been spared this scene, but said nothing.

"Now write," said the dragoman to the scribe, "whatever you will hear." Then addressing himself to Zabetta, whilst Wortley was at his elbow to prompt him, he inquired of her, "Are you acquainted with a Frank—an Englishman of the name of Osmond—Lord Osmond?"

She could scarcely utter, so thoroughly did her senses appear to be confused.

"Do you hear, woman!" said the Chaoush, in a voice of authority. "Why do you not answer?"

"Answer, mother," whispered Ayesha, whose whole soul was wrapped up in the proceeding.

The question having again been put to her, she answered,

"Did you inquire about Osman Aga, the Frank?—yes, I know him."

"Relate how you became acquainted with him?" said the dragoman.

Zabetta made several essays to begin her narrative, but, finding herself unable to proceed, she fairly burst into tears, through excess of agitation.

"Wait a little," said Wortley to Trompetta; "allow the poor woman time to recollect herself, for she appears greatly distressed;" whilst his eyes were fixed alternately upon her and upon Ayesha, with an expression which seemed to say how much he desired that their veils did not form an impediment to the gratification of his curiosity.

"Speak!" said the Chaoush; "we are impatient!"

Having a little recovered herself, Zabetta then proceeded, through sobs and sighs, and innumerable pauses, to give an account of her first acquaintance with Osmond, occasionally prompted by Ayesha, and set right by Mustafa. She gave a tolerably clear account of Osmond's adventures until his leaving Kars through the intervention of Hassan; but when she came to narrate that which related to Cara Bey, she became confused, and her account was so full of hesitation that it was difficult to be understood.

Mustafa, however, who was greatly alive to the whole scene, did not allow her memory to fail her, but constantly plied her with such pertinent questions, that, little by little, the whole story was elicited.

"So then," said the dragoman, "you were made slaves by Cara Bey? How then does it happen that you swore Lord Osmond brought you to Constantinople as his slaves?"

"What can I say?" said Zabetta, in evident confusion.

"Write this down," said Wortley to the scribe. "You see what falsehoods have been invented."

"Now tell us," said the dragoman, "where is this Cara Bey? You must occasionally see him; where is he?"

"What can I say?" said Zabetta, in still greater confusion. "We are poor women, and new to Stamboul. We put our trust in Allah!"

"I can tell you!" exclaimed Ayesha with great animation,

opening her lips for the first time ; “ he is to be found with the Capitan Pasha ; and, if ye have the souls of men, let us in-treat you to save us from his presence.”

These words, spoken with an accent which went to the heart, and which sounded throughout the whole frame of Wortley like the reverberations of his own feelings—as if they belonged to his very existence, produced such an effect upon her auditors, that there was a tacit pause in the whole proceeding, and silence ensued for some minutes.

“ Signor Trompetta, we must discover this man wherever he may be,” said Wortley with intense interest, looking towards Ayesha, as he spoke, and smiling at her with a glance of approbation.

“ Now ask the woman,” said Wortley to the dragoman, “ whether that young person is her daughter : it is one of Lord Osmond’s requests that we should investigate this matter.”

“ This is Mr. Wortley, the friend of Lord Osmond,” said the dragoman to Zabetta, “ and he wishes to know whether that maiden is your daughter.”

At these words, Zabetta became entirely and completely overpowered ; she seemed all at once to be struck by some unaccountable affliction, as if her whole frame was paralysed. She shook from head to foot. Ayesha became alarmed at her state, and endeavoured to soothe her, and give her courage to answer. She seemed afraid to look up ; there was such a total loss of mind for some minutes, that every one present was convinced that something more was connected with this question than met the eye. At length, as if gathering her senses, and making a sort of desperate effort upon herself, she exclaimed, “ She is my daughter ! What do you want more ?”

“ Have you ever been acquainted with English people before ?” inquired the dragoman, at the instigation of Wortley.

This question called forth another struggle, and after some moments of hesitation, she said, “ No ! how should I ? I am a Turkish woman.”

“ You were once a Greek,” said Mustafa, “ that you know ; and you attended the Greek church in the Russian camp in Georgia. What words do you speak ? We know things.”

"If you were a man," exclaimed Zabetta, her anger roused, "I would answer you. What is it to you who and what I am? Look to your saddle and your post-horses, and leave honest folks alone. If you come here to insult us, let me tell you we are not without our protector. We have a shade to sit under. Although you may shake your elbow at me, I can throw my five fingers at you." And thus she would have continued to run on in idle vituperation, for, when once roused, her passions and her tongue knew no control, had not Wortley broken up the meeting, by saying to Signor Trompetta and to the attendant officer,

"We have learned all that is necessary for our purpose, and as it is not our intention to produce a scene of confusion, let us depart."

Upon this they took their leave, and proceeded straightway to the Reis Effendi, in order to give him an account of what had taken place; whilst Zabetta and Ayesha were left each to their different speculations, as to what might prove the result of this unexpected visit. Contrary to her usual custom after the departure of a visitor, whose merits or demerits, according to the rules of gossips, she freely discussed, Zabetta remained absorbed in thought. Something of more than ordinary interest had struck her mind, and seemed to have paralysed her tongue. She did not even by sign, gesture, or exclamation, exhibit to her daughter what might be passing in her mind. There she sat in a corner of the room, sullen and dejected; the only symptom of her being alive was an occasional deep-drawn sigh, which involuntarily caused her breast to heave; and one who knew her might have supposed that she had been struck by some invisible spell. Ayesha, on the contrary, had been greatly relieved from her apprehensions concerning Cara Bey, and his patron the Capitan Pasha, by the appearance of the persons whom she had just seen, and particularly by that of Wortley. She now felt that Osmond had not been totally abandoned to the malignity of his enemies. The investigation which had just taken place, taught her to hope that there was no fear for his safety, and that, with the exception of the miseries of delay, he might hope to be released from his present bondage. In Wortley she had seen her lover's friend; after the lover himself, one invested with that

character is generally the most interesting and the most beloved ; and during his stay her eyes had been riveted on his features under a degree of fascination for which she could not account. She felt that she loved him, and still nothing told her that that love was unpermitted. What would she not have given to have been allowed to open her whole soul to him concerning Osmond, to learn from him all the intelligence which he might have received relating to his fate, and to communicate all her hopes, her expectations, and those innumerable nothings, which, to those not in love, seem foolishness, but to those who are, become matters of serious and weighty import ? Different from her mother, she would now have expressed her feelings by words, had she met with any encouragement. She observed how much her mother's conduct was changed by this visit, and remarked her silence and abstractedness with astonishment. She waited some time before she ventured to open her lips, but at length the desire to give vent to her spirits prevailed, and she exclaimed, " Mother, did you ever see anything so charming as that young Frank ? I wonder if all the English are like him !"

To this Zabetta gave no answer.

" I wonder if they ever have beards like our Osmanlies ! He had none, not even a mustache."

Still Zabetta said nothing.

" His hair was the colour of mine ; and then, he has such expressive eyes !"

" Hold your tongue," said her mother in a peevish accent ; " are you mad, child ? How dare you look at a man ? what are his eyes to you ?"

" Nothing," said Ayesha—" that is true ; but, as I have never seen much of Franks, I could not help looking at him. Besides, he is Osman Aga's friend, and I felt that he would protect us from that odious Cara Bey."

Zabetta still maintained her reserve, and only seemed vexed by Ayesha's observations. The maiden remained silent, and turning away her head, she opened the window and looked at the confined view before her. As she cast her eyes along the path leading by the rope-walk, she observed two grave Turks of respectable appearance, who, with slow and solemn gait, were making their way towards her, every now and then stop-

ping and looking about them, their eyes directed towards the row of houses in which she lived, as if in search of some specific house. As they approached, the maiden first uttered a slight exclamation, as she looked intensely upon one of them. "Allah, can it be!" she said; then again, "By the Prophet! it must be." In a moment after she cried out to Zabetta, "Mother, mother, it is—it is he!—come here, *bak*—see."

"Who?" said Zabetta, sullenly; "are you out of your senses?"

"As you love Allah," exclaimed Ayesha, "it is my father—it is Suleiman Aga himself! and there is the Mufti with him." Upon which she thrust her head and hand out of the window, and, unable to restrain her feelings, exclaimed, whilst she waved her hand, "*Babam*—my father, *bourda*—here, *gel*—come."

The well-known sound of her voice caught the ear of the old man, for it was indeed Suleiman Aga; and straightway, scarcely altering his pace, he stepped up to the door with his companion and knocked. Zabetta, at this discovery made by her daughter, was suddenly and effectually roused from her previously abstracted state, and, having ascertained that it was her very husband himself, she was thrown into the greatest agitation. When anything unusual happened to discompose her mind, either sudden joy or sudden grief, she generally gave vent to her feelings in her mother-tongue. On this occasion, upon seeing the well-known heavy caouk bound round with white muslin, the thick grizzled beard, the round shoulders, and the phlegmatic bearing of her husband, she exclaimed to herself, "*Na to ne o kakomeros*—there he is, the miserable wretch! where shall I go now? May the evil one take him! The man who said, 'Welcome, Misfortune, if you come alone!' has spoken truth." She said this in a sort of bewildered state, half-conscious, half-demented, without making a step towards the door to receive her husband; and when she saw Ayesha rushing from the room for that purpose, she stopped her with violence, and would have prevented her. "What are you doing?" she angrily cried.

"It is my father;" said the maiden, "shall we not admit him? It is Suleiman Aga."

The knocking at the door was repeated; still the wicked woman remained in a state of hesitation, more alarmed than

the wretch who fears the presence of an injured benefactor, or a just creditor. At length both mother and daughter, the one resisting and the other urging his entrance, were released from their suspense by hearing the door open, the maid having transgressed her orders on this occasion; and soon after the heavy step of one ascending the staircase was distinguished. Ayesha would no longer be restrained, but rushed out to greet her father. The old man had just reached the head of the stairs, when his daughter met him. She seized his hand and the hem of his sleeve, to kiss it, as children are wont to do in Turkey, whilst he kissed the top of her head, and said, "*Alhemdullilah!*—praise be to heaven! Well found, O my eyes! where is your mother?"

Ayesha conducted him into the room, where Zabetta stood a picture of defeated intrigue and indecision.

"It is you, is it?" said she, with bitterness of heart and accent.

"It is I," answered Suleiman, "what do you want more? *Khosh bûldûk*—well met!"

A dead silence ensued. She could scarcely believe her eyes, as she looked at him from whom it had been the daily wish of her few last years to escape; whilst he, who was but little apt to indulge in much feeling, was struck by the coldness and repugnant manner of her reception.

"We are come," said he (for Turks speaking in courtesy use the plural number), "to look after the rascal who invaded our city and carried off our women; and our fate, *Mashallah!* has been to find you. Our friend the Mufti has shown us the way to your dwelling, and, please heaven! he will aid us in detecting the wretch, whoever may be his protector. May Heaven pour misfortunes over their heads!"

"If you expect me to return to Kars," said Zabetta, "you are mistaken. You can't put daylight into a bottle. We have got to Stamboul, praises be to the Prophet! and so no more of your Kars." Saying this, she shook the hem of her vest, and her head at the same time.

"Look ye, Zabetta," said the solemn Suleiman, with much determination in his manner. "You know me. I am a straight-forward man. My words are *yok*—no, *belli*—yes. Whatever has happened has happened. So be it. Allah is

great; and man cannot oppose his decrees. The spoiler came, seized, ran off, and was successful. We were without help, and our house was ruined — be it so ! God be thanked for all things. All has been communicated to me from beginning to end. I will not look back ; I look forward. This is Constantinople, and justice is open to every one — if you choose to return with me, well — no more need be said ; if not, open your eyes. You know me.”

“ Are you come all this way,” said Zabetta, “ to make us sick ? If you have protectors — so have we. You are not a man, if you look only to your own pleasure. Where is the place we are now in, and where that which we have left ! One is paradise, the other jehannum. I go not hence — this I have said, and never will I say otherwise.”

“ *Sen bilirsen*, — you know best,” said Suleiman, rising from his seat with a determined manner, as if bent upon putting into practice some preconcerted scheme. “ I am a quiet man, and want but little ; but I am a Mussulman, and, as Allah is great ! whatever is just that will I do — so look to yourself.”

Zabetta, in this state of perplexity, was deprived of that active spirit of rebellion to all his wishes which she could so well exercise as long as her conduct in other respects was irreproachable. In her own harem at Kars she felt that she could throw her five fingers into her husband’s face, and say “ *Nah !*” with impunity ; but to live out of his house, an alien from his protection, and to reject him as a husband, she knew was more than she could venture to do, if she valued her life. She felt it necessary, therefore, to smother her violence for the present, in order that she might have time to concert measures for ridding herself of his presence. When he arose to depart, she opposed herself to this step, and adopting a conciliatory tone, of which she was the complete mistress, she seemed to take interest in his welfare ; made inquiries upon what had happened since she had left Kars, endeavoured to make him feel the miseries which she and Ayesha had endured, and finally coincided with him in the view he took of Cara Bey’s atrocities, and of the necessity of bringing him, if possible, to punishment. This, in great measure, softened him towards her ; and the enjoyment of his never-failing chibouque, with an accompany-

ing cup of hot coffee, presented to him by Ayesha's fair hands, succeeded in restoring his naturally placid temper to its usual composure.

Adopting this specious conduct, she made a show of cheerfulness in meeting her husband's wishes ; but bitterness sat at the bottom of her heart, like a snake coiled up, only waiting a fit opportunity to emit its venom. She well knew, how entirely a Turkish woman is in the power of her husband if he chooses to exercise it ; she felt that, with a man of the law at his elbow, Suleiman Aga, aided by the Mufti, might insist upon her obedience, and that there was nothing to prevent his treating her with every sort of cruelty. At the same time she hoped that the charms of her daughter might already have produced their proper effect upon the Capitan Pasha ; and that, whilst she broughat part of her scheme to a happy conclusion through the agency of Cara Bey, she might also effectually get rid of her husband. She, therefore, did all she could to overcome the violence which the presence of her husband had excited in her breast ; and whilst she made a fair display of good intentions towards him, busying herself in the duties of the house, and adopting that appearance of bustle and loquaciousness so common to her, yet her mind did not for a moment cease to revert to her situation, and to spin the never-ending web of her thousand resolves. Her great object for the present was to get her husband to leave the house, in order that she might run to seek an interview with Cara Bey.

" We hear that the Padishah is to hold a great meeting of archery at the Ok Meidan to-day," said she, as she passed her husband, with a coffee-pot in her hand, which she had been cleansing ; " why don't you go ? "

" *Bakalum* — we will see ! " said the passive Suleiman ; " there is time for all things ! "

Having once taken root in a corner of the sofa with a pipe in his mouth, he was not so easily dislodged. " I will first bring my effects from the *khan*, or inn," said he ; " and then, *Inshallah* ! — please God ! we will see. "

This was exactly what Zabetta did not desire. She dreaded his establishing himself in the house, for that would effectually deprive her of liberty, and put a stop to her schemes. " This is

not our house, Suleiman Aga," said she, "we are here only for a day. You cannot come here."

"Houses are plenty in Constantinople," said he; "we will procure another."

"Had you not better go to the Mufti of Kars?" answered Zabetta, throwing out a hint; "he is a man of understanding and knows things. Rogues abound here, and, before you make engagements, you must make use of other people's eyes as well as your own. You are a good man, that is true; but, Mashallah! you can no more make a bargain than I can take the Sultan by the beard. Come, go; the noon-day prayers are over, and he will have left the mosque."

"*Yavash, yavash!*—slowly, slow!" said Suleiman Aga, as he knocked out the ashes of his pipe, and fumbled into the recesses of his tobacco-bag, in order to replenish it. "Bring me some fire, Ayesha, my eyes!" said he to his daughter, who, since she had seen her father, felt more security and peace than she had enjoyed for a long time. As she placed a bit of live charcoal on the top of the well-tufted tobacco, which she did with the alacrity of affection, Zabetta turned her head towards them, with a frown of malignity and hatred upon her features, which seemed to say, 'Curses on you both! I will have my revenge!'

In this manner did Suleiman keep the ardent Zabetta in a state of irritation, until she was almost ready to burst with impatience at his dogged tenacity on the sofa—he seemed positively glued to his seat. At length the evening prayer was announced from all the surrounding minarets, when, as he was ever a devout son of the true faith, he thought it time to rise; having duly washed himself, according to the most scrupulous forms, he sallied forth to make his devotions in one of the principal mosques.

No sooner had he left the house, than Zabetta was heard to sigh forth an audible '*Alhemdullilah*—praises be to Allah!' from the bottom of her heart; and straightway seeking her veil, without saying whither she was going, she took the path across the adjoining burying-ground, leading to the Capitan Pasha's palace, with the intention of seeking an interview with Cara Bey.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

And the King loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins.

Esther, ch. ii. v. 17.

ABOUT the time of this our history, it was a report universally believed at Constantinople, that the present dynasty of the Ottoman Emperors was in danger of becoming extinct for want of an heir to the throne. There was not an old woman in the capital, nor along both the shores of the Bosphorus, who did not speculate, and wonder, and express surprise at what would happen for want of a chief, should Sultan Mahmoud, young as he then was, die without progeny. Some thought, should this calamity prevail, that it would be necessary to have recourse to the Tartars, and from among their tribes find one whose descent from the original stock of the Seljuks was undoubted, and thus revive the exhausted tree. Others apprehended that an old prophecy, often referred to, namely, that the seat of empire would, in the course of time, be transferred from the shores of Europe to Damascus, was about to be accomplished; but all were unanimous in laying the imputation of the evil at the doors of the dames of the seraglio, who were condemned, one and all, as unworthy of the proud distinction of being the associates of royalty. There were as many wise heads among them for discovering an infallible method how to meet this national misfortune, as there are among ourselves ingenious contrivers how to destroy the evil of the national debt. Every mother hoped that her daughter might be the fortunate person who was to revive the expiring hopes of the nation; and every father speculated whether in his tribe the germ of a future monarch might not still lie dormant, awaiting only the fortunate hour to fructify.

As soon as the Capitan Pasha had obtained a sight of Ayesha, his hopes almost amounted to a certainty that he had at length seen the individual upon whom this glory and distinction was

about to devolve. Such purity, such appearance of health, such dazzling beauty, he never had seen, nor ever had imagined could exist among the daughters of men ; and he congratulated himself that, through his means, his sovereign would become possessed of one who would realize every idea which he might have formed of the perfections necessary for a favourite sultana. He had been so smitten by her charms, her manner, and, more than all, by the superiority of her mind over everything in the shape of woman which he had seen before, that love would have prevailed over him, had not ambition maintained its ascendancy. He dwelt with complacency upon the increased honours and powers which would not fail to be heaped upon him : already feeling himself, in fact, the ruler of the empire, he fondly imagined that, whilst the Sultan would be enthralled by the fascinations of his sultana, the lives and destinies of his subjects would be entrusted to himself. He determined without delay to seek a private audience, and disclose to his royal master the discovery which it had been his lot to make : and he made no doubt that, ere many revolutions of the sun, the lovely Ayesha would be installed supreme in her ascendancy in the seraglio, whilst his diminishing influence would at once be restored to its former greatness, only preparatory to still greater elevation.

Leaving him to put into practice this fond scheme of ambition, we must return to the irate and disconcerted Cara Bey. At the conclusion of the scene which had taken place in Ayesha's apartment, and upon his return with his patron to his palace, he felt, by the manner and mode in which he was spoken to and considered, that his sun for the present was set. His sensations were those of the rapacious man who had divulged an important secret without having secured to himself any adequate compensation. Clenching his hands, he beat his head in agony at his own imbecility, and felt a disposition to wreak his vengeance upon every one but himself, for his own want of success. All his hopes of reward, honour, and distinction had merged in the person of the Capitan Pasha ; he had freely made over his interest in the perfections of Ayesha to one who did not show the least inclination to be grateful, and who, to this moment, had made no acknowledgment for the great benefit which it seemed probable he had received.

He felt that his plans had been ill-laid, and, such as they were, that they had been disconcerted by a young and inexperienced girl, who, by a few words, had exhibited him as a liar, and had turned the trap which he had laid to enslave her into an instrument of mischief against himself. The only feeling in his mind which could in the least mitigate his mortification, was the reflection that he had destroyed Osmond so effectually, that there was no chance of his appearing against him. Apprehensions he certainly had, if it were known that he was existing in a state of prosperity at Constantinople, that, among his numerous enemies, some one might arise who would denounce him to the government; but he hoped, through the patronage of the Capitan Pasha, which he still enjoyed, that no harm could accrue to him, and that, if he managed his future conduct well, he might still rise to eminence, notwithstanding the enmity of Ayesha, and the imbecility of her impetuous mother.

Brooding over these reflections, seated in one of the small rooms of the Capitan Pasha's palace belonging to the attendant officers, he was found by Zabetta, when she called to see him in the evening of the day, the events of which we have before described. She could not in the palace indulge freely in the communications which she was about to make to him; she, therefore, invited him to follow her to the burial-ground, and there seating themselves each under a cypress-tree, near an ancient tomb, like two birds of ill-omen, they began their conversation.

"What can you want with me?" said Cara Bey. "All my hopes are destroyed. We met in an evil hour."

"Well you say," said Zabetta, "the stars are turned against us. When I tell you what happened this morning, you will say something more than that the hour was evil when we met."

"What has happened?" exclaimed Cara Bey, always under the apprehension of something rising up in judgment against him.

"May misfortunes overtake them!" said Zabetta,— "the ill-born! The day had not long begun its career, before we were visited by a Frank, and several people from the Reis Effendi, headed by that little cur of a Tatar, Mustafa, for the purpose of making inquiries concerning the Frank—Osmond?"

"What say you?" said Cara Bey in alarm; "did they enquire concerning me? did they assert that Osmond still exists? What did they say?"

Zabetta explained all that had taken place, manifesting an unusual degree of bitterness in what she said, and expressing herself with much agitation, whilst she apparently endeavoured to gain courage for the future from the words and observations of her confidant and adviser. He evidently was much struck by her communications, and continued to meditate in silence, contracting his brow, and occasionally rubbing his broad forehead with his hand.

She feared to increase his irritation by communicating what she conceived would prove a still more unwelcome piece of news; but, when she informed him of the arrival of Suleiman Aga, to her surprise, after a moment's reflection, he appeared pleased. He immediately felt that this circumstance would throw an impediment in the way of the Capitan Pasha's obtaining easy possession of Ayesha. However great may be the despotism of men in power, still he was aware that a true believer could not at once, by a blow, be deprived of his wife and daughter; and he hoped that there would, in some manner or other, again be occasion for his interference. He felt quite certain that the Capitan Pasha was now so thoroughly interested in securing the possession of Ayesha, that he would go to any lengths in getting rid of Suleiman Aga; but, whilst he knew that there would be but little difficulty in securing this, considering the great means which he had at command, he still felt that Ayesha's love for her father might be an impediment. But, whilst he pleased himself by taking this view of the case, he was struck by the possibility that his own safety might be endangered by the representations which he and the Mufti might make touching his invasion of their city.

"Did Suleiman Aga say anything concerning me?" said Cara Bey to Zabetta.

"What can I answer?" said Zabetta, not willing to excite her companion into anger. "He did say something."

"What did he say?" exclaimed the other, "speak—fear not."

"He said then," answered Zabetta, "that he was come to seek you out, and to bring you to justice. The Mufti was upon the same errand."

"So," answered Cara Bey, in deep thought—"So be it. I will sell their fathers and mothers—they will bring their beards to a bad market."

They continued to converse until the shades of night had completely closed in upon them, and then separated, with this result to their deliberations, that Cara Bey should without delay secure the means, through his patron, of getting rid of Suleiman, and that until he succeeded, Zabetta should continue to treat her husband as if nothing had occurred. She was to behave to Ayesha in her usual manner, and to let him know should anything new take place. Upon this they separated.

The Capitan Pasha's interview with the Sultan had been eminently successful. He returned to his palace with his head touching the skies, his mind teeming with hopes of future elevation, and full of the scheme by which he was to place Ayesha in the possession of his lord and master. He had succeeded in exciting the Sultan's curiosity and raising his expectations; and, moreover, had impressed him with the necessity of preserving the strictest secrecy, since there seemed to be much mystery in her history, which, if brought to light, might throw impediments in the way of his wishes. He did not conceal from his royal master any part of her previous adventurous life; and thought it right to state to what extent Osmond was implicated in it, showing how he had been disposed of, and urging the expediency of throwing every impediment against the steps which the English Ambassador was taking to procure his freedom, and which would be productive of a delay, ultimately of little consequence, whilst it would procure to himself an undisturbed possession of the maiden. He proposed a plan by which the Sultan might obtain a sight of Ayesha previously to sending the Kizlar Aga, or chief superintendent of the seraglio, to lead her in state to her prescribed apartments; and he was pleased to find that all his proposals were accepted; and, moreover, that he was lauded for the zeal which he had displayed in devising so agreeable a mode of administering to the pleasure and advantage of his royal master.

Cara Bey had watched with impatience the best opportunity for an audience of his patron; for he was anxious once more to make himself of importance, and to secure some share of the advantages likely to accrue from an event in which he had

been the principal agent. The Capitan Pasha, who now wished to take all the credit of the discovery of Ayesha to himself, was, on the other hand, anxious to keep Cara Bey from his presence; to make him feel that he was to expect no other advantage from its result than the solitary one of being allowed to continue in his service; and to make him feel, moreover, so much dependence upon his power and protection, that he would not venture to take a step in opposition to it, lest it should bring with it his entire destruction. However, upon his request, Cara Bey was allowed to appear before him.

"*Ne oldou?*—what has happened?" said the Capitan Pasha, when he saw him.

Cara Bey, with all humility, and with as much eloquence as he could command, made a full communication of all he had heard from Zabetta; dwelling strongly upon the circumstance of her husband's appearance, and showing how great was the love of Ayesha for her father, and of her father for her. He urged that point as very likely to prevent the separation of father and daughter; since she seemed determined, let what might be the consequences, never to relinquish her love for the Frank, but rather to cling to her father for protection. He then recommended that Suleiman Aga should be immediately disposed of in such a manner as to remove all further difficulty on his account.

The Capitan Pasha, at this disclosure, was thrown into utter dismay; for he foresaw that it would materially interfere with the plan already concerted with his sovereign. Thinking awhile, he said, "*Aferin!*—well done! Cara Bey. You are a good servant—you have spoken in good time. We shall be mindful of you. What is to be done?"

"My lord!" said Cara Bey, elated with the thanks he had just received; "your servant is less than the least: whatever you may order, that will he do. We must send Suleiman away from Constantinople this very day. He has a friend in the Mufti of Kars, who is a man much esteemed and respected by the Ullemah; and, if he be not prevented, may, with his assistance, destroy all our scheme. He will forthwith gain possession of his wife and daughter; then, who can venture to invade his harem?—none!—no, not even our lord and sovereign the Sultan, upon whom be blessings!"

"You say right," said the Capitan Pasha; when, after a pause, he drew a piece of paper from under a cushion, and writing a few words upon it with his own hand, he folded it up into a note, sealed it, and desired Cara Bey to carry it straight to his *kiayah*, or deputy, who would superintend its due execution.

Cara Bey, upon receiving the note, instead of immediately departing, lingered with hesitation imprinted on his features; upon which the Capitan Pasha said, "Wherefore do you stay? What is it?"

"My lord," answered Cara Bey with much humility, "I am a poor man: except Allah and yourself, Cara Bey has no other protection in the world. You were pleased to express your approbation of my services. Your slave waits your orders!"

"*Pezevenk!*—wretch!" exclaimed the chief in a rage; "What abomination are you eating? Go and be abused! What sort of a dog are you? Go!"

Upon this, the disconcerted wretch left his presence, with all the fierce and unavailing wrath of a demon in his heart. "*Akh! akh!*" said he, beating his breast at the same time, as he proceeded slowly to execute his errand; "when will the day come, when I may shed blood and say 'Thank God for it!'" But then reflecting that, by securing the expulsion of Suleiman Aga, he had rid himself of an enemy, his irritation was in some measure assuaged, and he straightway delivered the note, of which he was the bearer, to the active and efficient deputy of the naval chief.

The moon had now risen; and was glancing her mild beams athwart the dark and dismal gloom of the cypress-trees in the cemetery: there was a solemn stillness throughout the air; silence began to reign in the great city; and nothing was heard save, here and there, the distant chaunt of sailors preparing their bark for sea. Ayesha had taken post at the open window, expecting the return of her father; whilst Zabetta, who during the day had complained of indisposition, lay extended on the sofa, her thoughts full of ambition, anticipating the result of her various schemes. Upon looking out, Ayesha saw a person walking slowly towards her, whom she recognised to be her father. He was alone, and had nearly reached the door, when, to her dismay, she saw suddenly rush from behind

a projection of the opposite wall a gang of some five or six men, who ran up, seized him, and forcibly compelled him to accompany them. She was so much frightened that, at first, she could only exercise her eyes, without being able to give vent to her fears by cries. Suleiman Aga scarcely made any resistance, so entirely was he overpowered. He looked towards his daughter, whilst she held out her hands to him. "*Babām!*—my father! father! where are you going? Here we are!" she exclaimed, crying and sobbing out his name, "stop, as you love Allah! Whither are you taking him?" These words, uttered in a piteous accent, brought Zabetta to the window. She scarcely exhibited any feeling, but, on the contrary, used her best endeavours to suppress that of her daughter; who, seeing that her appeal was unheeded, now uttered the most piercing and heart-rending cries.

Instead of endeavouring to soothe her by kindness, the wicked woman, on the contrary, upbraided her in harsh and violent words, and shutting the window, in order to prevent her cries being heard, seemed determined to harden her heart against any soft emotion. There was a sort of dogged satisfaction in her manner, which beamed through her hard and perverse nature, and which formed a strong contrast with the soft and compassionate bearing of her daughter.—"Wherefore do they take him from us?" said Ayesha. "What has he done? This place is full of bad men; let us run to save him." Upon saying which, she would have left the house, in pursuit of her father's persecutors; but Zabetta interposed with violence, and said, "It is nothing, he will soon return—this is Constantinople. Here is a padishah, who dares to interpose against his authority? We are women, what can we do?"

A long interval elapsed, during which Ayesha, oppressed and overpowered by the events which had taken place during the day, retreated to a corner of the room, and gave way to her grief, full of despondency at her apparently hopeless situation, and of dismal forebodings at what might be her future fate. She saw in her mother one who, being opposed to her in every feeling, was evidently scheming to attain her own ends, entirely heedless of her happiness. Her father had been seized and carried away a prisoner from under her eyes, and her

lover perhaps, ere this, had fallen a victim to the revenge of his enemy, the monster Cara Bey. She felt herself utterly deserted—her only trust was in the merciful providence of her Creator; and were it not for the constant resignation to his Almighty decrees, to which she had ever accustomed her mind to submit with faith and humility, she must have sunk under her misfortunes.

This eventful day in her existence was not destined to close without the intervention of another circumstance of importance. Zabetta, who had been roused by the event which we have just described, had again thrown herself on the sofa, complaining of a racking head-ache, and of other symptoms of illness. She spoke little, though every noise appeared to agitate her. She rejected every advance which Ayesha made to give her relief, and only required to be left to herself. When they were thinking of retiring for the night, which among Turks is usually at an early hour, several knocks were heard at the door, so loud, and struck with such an appearance of authority, that both Zabetta and Ayesha started up in dismay, and for the moment, each forgetful of their different causes of misery, listened with attention. Again the door was assailed with more violence than before, when they rushed to the window to see who might be the intruders. They discerned several well-dressed Turks at the door, and at some distance two others standing aloof, in observation of the result.

“Who are you, and what do you want?” said Zabetta.

“Open quickly,” said one of the men.

“There are none but women here,” she said; “you have mistaken the house.”

“Open, and fear not,” answered the other. Upon this she descended, and having again made inquiries in a low voice, one of the men said, it was the Capitan Pasha; upon which, without farther delay, she opened the door. She then returned to her room, and immediately busied herself in lighting such candles and lamps as she possessed, and setting her apartment in proper order for the reception of her magnificent guest. Ayesha stood by, so bewildered and alarmed at the whole proceeding that all she could do was to cover herself with her veil; and fearing that the other person might be Cara Bey, she determined to hide herself from his sight. She was about leaving

the room, when she was stopped by the appearance of the Capitan Pasha, followed by his companion, whom she recognised not to be her so much dreaded persecutor. Zabetta then forced her to remain, and she found herself face to face with the visitors.

The man who accompanied the Capitan Pasha was of middle stature, about twenty-five years of age, wearing a peculiarly black and tufted beard, with arched brows that overshadowed eyes of great brilliancy and expression; his complexion was pale, and his aspect severe. There was considerable dignity in his whole deportment, and every look and gesture denoted one accustomed to command. He seated himself without ceremony, taking the whole circumstance of the visit apparently upon himself; whilst the Capitan Pasha seemed to pay him the most unbounded adulation and attention. Ayesha kept herself in the back-ground as much as she was able. She retreated to a corner of the room, closely covered with her veil; whilst Zabetta put herself forward in the most officious manner, making complimentary speeches without end, and asking how she might best render her services agreeable. The stranger took no notice of her, but kept his eyes steadily fixed upon Ayesha. He said nothing, but there was that in his appearance which made every one present uneasy, and full of undefined awe and apprehension. The Capitan Pasha stood, and said but little.

At length the stranger, looking at Ayesha with a smile, and addressing her, said, "*Korkma*—fear not; we are not come to do you harm—wherefore do you sit thus far from us?"

"I am a Mahomedan maiden," said Ayesha, fearlessly; "this is a harem, and if you are men of the true faith, you must know that you sin in coming here. We want you not—we wish you to depart."

It was impossible to hear the beautiful and touching tones of Ayesha's voice without emotion, and coming, as they did, from under an impenetrable veil, the appeal to the imagination was irresistible.

"How came you here alone and unprotected?" said the stranger.

"Ah! we are strangers in this city," answered Ayesha, "and, moreover, we have been struck by misfortune. If you are men,

these circumstances alone should prevent you from insulting us—we pray you to depart.”

“What are your misfortunes?” said the stranger; “misfortunes may be averted when power is at hand.”

“If power is at hand,” exclaimed Ayesha, suddenly elated with hope, “and if you can command it, then may Allah shed blessings upon you, should you grant us your protection! This very evening, my father, our only support, has been taken from us—here, from under our windows! Restore him to us, and we will ever be your devoted slaves!”

“What is the meaning of this?” said the stranger to the Capitan Pasha; “has the maiden a father?”

The Capitan Pasha, at this question, for which he was evidently unprepared, was struck with dismay. After a faltering explanation, he said, “I know nothing of this; we must investigate the matter.”

The stranger was too much taken up with Ayesha to give great heed to this answer, and seemed only anxious to prolong the conversation. He led Ayesha on to converse, and every word she uttered, served only to make him anxious to hear more. She, at length, recollecting what was due to herself, and the impropriety, in her estimation, of this interview with unknown men, arose to leave the room, saying, “It is shame that ye linger here: were our Sultan to be aware of this indignity, he would protect us! What sort of government can his be, when a harem is not secure?”

“Stay!” said the stranger; “go not—I command you!”

“You command me!” exclaimed Ayesha with indignation; —“and who are you that can command?”

The Capitan Pasha seemed ill at ease, and would have seized her by her veil.

“Touch me not!” said Ayesha with dignity.

“Touch her not!” said the stranger; “at your peril, touch her not!”

“May Allah bless you for this!” cried Ayesha with grateful emotion; “then, let me depart!”

“Stay, I command you!” said the stranger; “we can command you! — I am the Sultan!”

On hearing these words, Ayesha remained fixed in utter

amazement ; while Zabetta shook from head to foot with apprehension ;—a dead silence ensued.

“Ayesha, fear not !” said the Sultan ; “ we have heard of your perfections, and are come to ascertain the truth with our own eyes. Capitan Pasha,” said he to his officer, “ you may withdraw. We claim the privilege which no other man in our empire can claim.”

The Capitan Pasha, making the lowest prostration, left the room with an attitude full of humility, when Ayesha, with a movement, in which the most exquisite grace was combined with the most unaffected modesty, drew her veil from her face, and discovered to the astonished and enraptured monarch those charms which were well calculated to enslave his heart.

“ Too little has been said of you !” said the Sultan, as he gazed at her with undiminished admiration : “ You are our’s ! By Allah ! too little has been said. You are our’s, Ayesha ; by this, you become mine !” Upon which, he drew a costly ring from his finger, and, presenting it to her, said, “ Take this as the token of your sovereign’s love !”

Ayesha instantly knelt down before him ; and, with an humility of action, and, at the same time, a decision of manner, which marked the energy of her character, said, “ Let not my sovereign and master afflict his devoted slave, by making her do that which she cannot. She asks to be restored to her father, and to live in that seclusion from the world and its dangers, for which only she is fit. She asks this as the greatest boon which her sovereign can bestow. She is totally unworthy of his notice—grandeur was not made for her enjoyment. Oh, leave her to her insignificance ! she asks nothing more !”

This appeal, which only a thousandfold increased the rapture and admiration with which she had inspired the Sultan, was received by him as words without a meaning, as expressions flowing from a heart struck by awe at his presence. Zabetta, however, who knew her daughter better, who was acquainted with the secret of her heart, and the resolution of her character, when she heard her speech to the Sultan, would have stamped with rage, and choked the words in their exit had she dared so to do. She made unavailing signs, and threw out hints by gesticulation, but they were unheeded by her

daughter, who having risen and retired, she in her turn threw herself before her dreaded guest and said, "Let not our Lord and master give heed to the words of the maiden: she is a child, and knows not what she says. We are your slaves! we kiss the dust of your slippers! Our heads have touched the skies—do not heed her words. She has lived in the country all her life, and what can she know of the honour which has been done her? Let the shadow of your kindness be extended over us!"

These, and such like phrases, she continued to string together, until she was stopped by a look from the Sultan, who now having satisfied himself thoroughly of the truth of what had been reported to him, without more words turned to leave the room, whilst drawing from his breast a purse of gold, he gave it to Zabetta, and straightway departed.

When the whole party had quitted the house, and the mother and daughter were left to themselves, Zabetta, in the fulness of her joy, which had sustained her amidst the increasing symptoms of her indisposition, ran up to Ayesha, and, embracing her with an appearance of affection quite unusual to her, said, "*Mobarek!*—good fortune attend you!—Praise be to Allah! it has at length come to pass! You are a sultana, and I am your mother! What can we want more? Whatever may happen, we are now safe! Suleiman Aga may come; Cara Bey may come;—they cannot now molest us, seated as we are under the shadow of royalty. Well done, Ayesha! well done! you have performed your part to admiration!"

"Desist!" said Ayesha, "do not talk thus: you do not know your daughter. What I have said, I have said; the world may go round, our destinies may change, but the mind of Ayesha is fixed! The Sultan may enslave my person, but my life is my own. I never will belong to any one, be he who he may, but him to whom I have pledged my faith!"

She said these words with a fervour and earnestness that quite alarmed her mother, who, having lost the excitement caused by the presence of the Sultan, now so strongly felt the pressure of the illness which had overtaken her, that she could no longer combat her daughter's feelings, but sank down in a state of great exhaustion. Ayesha, forgetting every grief of her own in her anxiety to contribute to her mother's comfort,

gave herself up entirely to her ; and, administering to her such refreshing cordials as she could command, with the help of the servant succeeded in putting her to bed upon that couch from which she was destined never more to rise.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Taluno già agonizzante e non più atto a ricevere alimento riceveva gli ultimi soccorsi o le consolazioni della religione.

I Promessi Sposi.

As soon as Wortley had paid the visit, described in a former chapter, to Zabetta and Ayesha, he turned his steps towards the dwelling of the Reis Effendi, accompanied by Signor Trompetta, and demanded an interview with that minister. He was so elated with the result of his visit, and with the success of his investigations, that he conceived there could no longer be any good reason for refusing to set his friend at liberty. Moreover, he had been so greatly interested by what he had seen of the lovely creature who had so much engaged the attentions of Osmond, that he had received a new incentive to attempt his liberation, and longed to write to him a full and detailed account of every thing that had taken place.

He was received by the Reis Effendi with his usual urbanity. Wortley was too anxious to bring the subject of his visit before him to allow much time to be spent in preliminary compliment; and as soon as he had made the usual affirmation that his *kief*, or spirits, were good, and that his day had begun under favourable auspices, he requested the dragoman to inform his excellency of the whole proceeding of their visit to the women, and its result.

Signor Trompetta then, in his very best Turkish, commenced an oration to the Reis Effendi, in which he gave a full detail of Osmond's adventures, from the time of his arrival at Kars, to the period of his seizure by the Bostangi Bashi : to which

the minister seemed to give his undivided attention, never interrupting him but by such slight exclamations as these, "*Pek ayi*—very well! *hay, hay*—so, so! *tchok, tchok*—much, much! *ajaiib*—wonderful!" He wound up his eventful narration as follows:—"The result is, that our Osmond Aga is a British subject, and not a Mussulman; that he saved two women from slavery, instead of making them slaves; and that, consequently, he is entitled to every indemnification from the Turkish government for the miseries which he has endured by a false and unjust imprisonment."

Wortley looked significantly at the Reis Effendi as these words were said, suiting the action by a nod of confirmation: when the minister, after a moment's consideration, taking his pipe out of his mouth, coolly said, "If your subjects will dress themselves up like ours, so that one cannot be distinguished from the other, is it our fault if mistakes happen? If a horse chooses to put on the skin and horns of a buffalo, whose fault is it but his own should he be driven to the slaughter-house, and have his throat cut, instead of being left free in the field? You ask too much."

Wortley, who had studied the Turkish forms of speech as much from duty as for amusement, told the dragoman to request his excellency not to throw cold water upon a dish which was already dressed and ready to be eaten; but at once to agree, that an order should be issued for Osmond's release, and that an express Tatar should immediately depart with it for Rhodes.

The Reis Effendi smiled at the young negotiator's attempt at eastern figures of speech, and said, "*Pek ayi dostoum*—very well, my friend! May you live a thousand years! and may you soon become an *elchi bey*—an ambassador! May your beard grow as plentifully as your wit!"

The minister having made this concession, expected the whole question would be allowed to rest; but Wortley continued the subject by saying, that it was not enough to relieve the innocent from oppression,—that it was necessary also to punish those who had been the unjust cause of oppression. "We hear," said he, addressing himself to the Reis Effendi through the dragoman, "that the cause of all this mischief to our friend and countryman, is a man whom it is a disgrace to

any nation to number amongst its sons—one who has been branded as an outlaw, a worshipper of the evil spirit, and one unworthy of life. This monster is now in Constantinople; his name is Cara Bey, and he is a servant in the pay of the Capitan Pasha."

When these words had been duly interpreted, the grave Turk stroked down his beard and looked very serious. After some moments of cogitation, he turned towards Signor Trompetta, and said, "*Terjuman Bey*—Mr. Dragoman, can one take two skins off one sheep? *Olmaz*—that is impossible!"

"How!" said Wortley, with eagerness.

"What does your excellency mean?" said the dragoman.

"Have you not made the Grand Vizir less than the dust?" said the Reis Effendi, with more animation than he had hitherto shown; "and will you also attack our lord the Capitan Pasha? What proof is there that this Cara Bey has injured your countryman? We must have a fresh trial. We do not condemn our subjects without a hearing. It is unfair to kick an ass only on one side!"

Wortley felt that he was not strong enough in his proofs against Cara Bey to urge his complaint at present; and having satisfied himself with thus feeling the minister's pulse on the subject, he determined to let the matter drop until he should better be able to follow it up. He therefore took his leave, but not without making an exclamation common in the mouth of a Turk, "God grant that none of his faithful servants may fall into the hands of doctors or judges!" This coming from the lips of so young a man, much amused the Reis Effendi; they parted in very good-humour; and, whilst Wortley returned to the palace to give an account of his proceedings to the ambassador, the Turkish minister felt delighted that a subject so delicate, as interference with the servant of so great a personage as the Capitan Pasha, had been thus easily dropped.

As soon as Wortley had reported to the Ambassador the progress which he had made in procuring Osmond's release, and the promise which the Reis Effendi had given to forward an order to the authorities of Rhodes to that effect, Mustafa was ordered to hold himself in immediate readiness for his departure. Wortley then sat down and wrote the following letter:—

“ At length, my dear Osmond, I am happy to be able to despatch Mustafa to you; and if we are to put faith in the promises of that old fox, the Reis Effendi, he will take with him an order for your liberation from what, I fear, has been a miserable state of bondage.

“ Ever since we heard of your seizure, and the reception of your letter, I have not ceased to deplore the miseries which you must have suffered, and I have taken no rest in my endeavours to alleviate them. The Ambassador has seconded me spiritedly, and has allowed me, armed with Trompetta’s eloquence, to attack the wily Turk with a vigour that has brought on as speedy a capitulation as could be hoped for. Your great crime, it seems, has been, talking the language so perfectly that you could not be supposed to be anything but a true believer, looking like one, and bearing a name which was never given but to the second in succession from the Prophet, and to those who chose to take his name. My dear friend, I expect to hear after this that you will be entirely cured of your Turcomania; that for the future you will return to Christian practices with undiminished satisfaction, and be happy to abjure a name which has brought with it imprisonment and suffering. Although I do not covet the discomforts which you have endured, yet on the other hand I must say that I do occasionally envy you your strange adventures; for how rare is it the lot of a traveller to be so blessed! No one is a hero now a-days. Everything is rendered so easy; the road to the top of the great pyramid is as open as the steps to the top of St. Paul’s; and a jaunt up the Nile to Cairo is made as agreeable as one up the river to Richmond. Let not your miseries, then, be esteemed as of no value; for, believe me, they will hereafter turn to pleasure and amusement, if not to yourself, at least to your friends. Mustafa has made me stare with his account of your hair-breadth ’scapes during your confinement in that fiend Cara Bey’s castle; although, were I to believe him, he was the knight and you the squire in that adventure. I have had a transient view of your dulcinea, and those brilliant eyes of hers, which beamed over the hem of her veil, are now before my imagination, whilst her silver-toned voice still thrills in my ears. I would with pleasure have followed your injunctions, and have taken her under my protection; but, my dear Osmond, recollect that

I am no knight-errant, whatever you may be ; and that in this land of harems, of jealousy, and yatagans, one might as well break the seventh commandment without ruinous consequences, as attempt to hold converse with a Turkish maiden without some tragical result. The mother of your charmer, during my short visit to her, appeared to be nothing more or less than a skinfull of wickedness. I never saw anything which promised so much beauty as the daughter's eyes, and which possessed so indescribable a charm as her whole manner. Trompetta has brought me many a strange report from the Turkish world of gossip concerning these ladies, which I will not repeat, fearing they might break your heart ; but of this be certain, that you have bought your freedom from the silken chains by which you were bound, at a cheap rate, by the iron chain of misery which has been inflicted upon you.

“ You know the hopeless situation of this empire, which for the present is left without an heir, and which is likely to fall in reversion to some vagrant of a Tartar, who, seated on his rug in some corner of Cathai, is thinking more upon the means of getting a meal than of acquiring a throne. The Capitan Pasha, it is said, has cast his eyes on your blooming Turquessa as a fit subject to present to his sovereign ; who, poor man ! having a whole continent of women at his command, is still hoping for an heir. His character has not yet been defined. Some think him weak and frivolous, others look upon him as the sternest of Mahomedans—as one likely to revive the days of the Suleimans and Othmans. He puts in practice the old custom of the Caliphs, of going about in disguise ; and it is said, knows more of the manners and habits of his subjects than any other individual of his capital. Probably he may one of these days turn this knowledge to account, considering how much there is to reform in the horrid abuses incidental to this form of government.

“ We have not been able to make out a case against Cara Bey yet—the villain ! Our eyes are upon him, and sooner or later be assured he will be brought to justice. He possesses, we hear, great influence over the Capitan Pasha.

“ I say nothing of European news ; the accompanying newspapers will disclose everything. I envy you the luxury of reading over your letters, of which I send you a cart-load.

There has been some talk of my going home with despatches, but that joy, I fear, has evaporated. I dread to think that I am here for a long and indefinite period. Send us back Mustafa as soon as you can; let us hear of your welfare, and believe me, my dear Osmond,

“Ever faithfully yours,

“EDWARD WORTLEY.

“P.S. A young Russian officer, Ivanovitch by name, has just arrived at the Russian palace with despatches from the governor-general of Georgia. He brings, among other things, a complaint against this government for harbouring and giving countenance to the wretch Cara Bey, a branded outlaw; and, it is said, demands satisfaction for the injuries which he has inflicted upon the subjects of the Emperor. This is well. He tells me that he was your fellow-sufferer, and talks in raptures of you. He is to dine with us to-day. Never was man destined to be so pumped as he will be! Once more adieu.”

Having prepared his letters, Wortley summoned Mustafa to his presence, in order to give him directions concerning his route. The Tatar appeared in his full travelling costume, having divested himself of the Janissary's dress which he wore when in attendance at the gate of the palace. His conical cap, with its yellow cloth cushion at the top, was on his head; his Tatar coat was fitted tightly to his person, by means of the great girdle of shawl bound round his waist, in which were inserted a huge pair of pistols and a yatagan; his boots and heavy cloth stockings were on his feet, and his long whip, stuck behind his back, exhibited a heavy thong pendant in winding folds.

“You are now to proceed with all haste,” said Wortley, “to seek your old master, Lord Osmond, and to discover him wherever he may be. We suppose him to be at Rhodes; you will therefore go there first. You will take a boat for the scale of Menemen, then proceed to Smyrna, thence by Ephesus to Moglah, and so on to Marmotice on the coast of Carmania, where you will hire a vessel which will convey you to Rhodes.”

“Upon my head be it!” said Mustafa, delighted with the prospect of the journey, and of once again seeing Osmond.

"We hear that there are some disturbances in the country of Elez Oglu," said Wortley, "and that there may be robbers on the road; but you are a wise man, and will use your own discretion."

"I will sell their fathers and mothers!" exclaimed Mustafa. "My mustache has not grown to this length," at the same time touching his scanty sprouts, "that I should not know how to deal with such rascals. Be you but well, and as for the rest, *Allah kerim!*—God is merciful!"

"Here then," said Wortley, "are the despatches for Lord Osmond, and here is a letter from this government to the governor of Rhodes, which will secure his liberation. Now take them; go, and God be with you!" Mustafa took possession of the papers, folded them up carefully in his handkerchief, and, making his selam, without further delay proceeded on his arduous journey.

Wortley felt like a man relieved from a heavy responsibility, as soon as he saw his back turned; and putting up a hearty prayer for his safety, and for the speedy emancipation of his friend, he was joyfully preparing to meet Ivanovitch at the table of the Ambassador, when his servant came in, and said that a Greek *papas*, or priest, apparently in haste, requested to see him without delay. Wortley ordered him to be admitted, when a man whom he had never before seen stood before him.

"What may there be for your service?" said Wortley, who had given himself pains to acquire the modern Greek language, and spoke it with some fluency.

"*Effendi*—sir," said the priest; "may you live many years! I come from a sick and dying woman, who insists upon seeing you ere she leaves this world. She says that it is upon a business of the greatest consequence, and intreats you, as you are a faithful servant of Christ, not to delay a moment in hastening to her call."

"Do you know who she is?" said Wortley, extremely surprised at this message, and doubtful as to the propriety of acceding to the request, without a reference to his chief.

"She is my sister, sir," said the priest; "I have ascertained her to be such by a miraculous and strange accident. She has been missing from her family for several years, having aban-

doned her own faith, and adopted the Mahomedan. Terrors of conscience have visited her on her death-bed, and she sent for one of her own church to receive the avowal of her repentance and recantation, being determined to die in the faith in which she was born. As good-luck would have it, I was at hand, and went to her, and, in the dying and penitent Zabetta, I have found our long-lost sister. Hasten, sir, ere death closes her eyes, to receive her parting confessions, for her breast seems heavily laden with some important secret."

Wortley was immediately struck by the name and circumstances of the dying woman, and concluding that what she might have to communicate must relate to Osmond, and would probably be the means of elucidating more facts connected with his late adventures, did not for a moment hesitate to accompany the priest; and they left the palace together.

During the whole of the night after the Sultan's visit, the disorder which had manifested itself in the wretched Zabetta, had been gradually developed, and in the morning it was without hesitation pronounced to be the plague. The fatal and well-known symptoms were too decidedly evinced, to leave her state a matter of doubt; and all the horrors of speedy and inevitable death stared her in the face. Ayesha had entreated the servant-maid to seek out the first doctor whom she could find; and as she was a Turkish woman, and not in the least conversant with Franks, she straightway brought the only one of the sort whom she knew, namely, an aged and decrepit Jewess, who practised an art, if such it might be called, which every old woman might practise just as well as herself. However, her knowledge was sufficient to distinguish the plague at the first glance: which having done, cautioning the disconsolate Ayesha against its deadly contagion, she took her leave, and never more returned. Little, however, did the heroic maiden heed the caution, although she well knew to what danger she was exposing herself.

Strengthening her resolution and fortitude by mental prayer, she zealously applied herself with the most unwearied attention to give relief to her mother; and as she contemplated the great probability of her speedy death, and thought upon the state of her mind, which, devoted to ambition and worldly views, never seemed to have turned to the awful event about to take

her from this world, she determined to apprise her of her imminent danger. She approached her with caution, and seating herself by her bed-side, as she took her hand between her own, said: "Mother, dearest mother! are you aware that the Jewish woman has seen you?"

"Has she?" said Zabetta, her eyes lighting up with animation. "What says she? Shall I soon be cured?"

Ayesha held her peace for some time, and as her eyes filled with tears, shook her head, and said: "God be merciful to his miserable creatures! The issues of life and death are in his hands. What can we do but submit?"

"What say you?" said her mother. "Submit! Surely we must submit; but why submit when the time is not yet come? Am I not at Constantinople? Are not you a sultana? Are not we both the Sultan's slaves?"

"Speak not thus, O my mother!" said Ayesha, her heart bursting with grief at hearing such sentiments from one who she felt was condemned to death. "What is this world but a precipice on which we all stand, and from which, from hour to hour, we each in our turn are certain of falling down! Mother! do not despond; but, as I am your faithful friend and daughter, I must repeat to you what the Jewess disclosed to me—that your disorder is the plague, and—"

"*Ahi!* the plague!" exclaimed Zabetta with a thrilling scream. "What do you say, Ayesha? Oh, God!" Upon which she fell inanimate on her pillow, and presently her whole frame seemed convulsed with the last throes of death.

Ayesha applied her best energies to restore her to animation. She rubbed her hands, chafed her temples, poured a cordial into her mouth, and at length succeeded in her endeavours. But what pen can hope to describe the agonised state of the unfortunate woman when she returned to a consciousness of her real and perilous situation! Her expressive face, now livid and ghastly; the mouth drawn down, the lips blue, her eyes bright with excess of fever, her brow overspread with wild and dishevelled hair,—all wore a cast of such despair and mad excitement, that the most frantic of lunatics could scarcely be compared to her, as she sat in tortures, both of mind and body, on this her last couch.

Ayesha did all she could to compose her, but with scarcely

any effect. Her mind wandered from worldly ambition to the fears of future punishment. All the torments promised to the wicked, both by the doctrines of Mahomet and the denunciations of the Christian Gospel, were arrayed before her mind at one and the same time. She knew not where to turn for comfort. She felt herself culpable in her conduct towards Ayesha, yet still at one moment she would recede from her with horror, whilst at another she implored her pity and pardon in terms the most penitent, and even abject. At length, as if struck by some sudden thought, a horrid smile broke out upon her demented face; and she cried out, "Ayesha, as you love me, as you forgive me, let me see one of my own religion!—let me see a priest! Send for one immediately! he will teach me how to pray to the Holy Virgin! She alone can save me! What else is there left for a poor sinner? He will guide me! He will receive my confessions!"

Ayesha, too happy to have any means pointed out to her by which she might give relief to her unfortunate mother, immediately determined to go herself in search of a priest of the Greek church; and although she was not at all versed in the ways of Constantinople, still she resolved to do this rather than entrust the undertaking to the discretion of her servant. Wrapping herself up in her veil, and leaving her mother under the care of the woman, she sallied forth, and soon found her way to a Greek church and convent, situated not far from the limits of the cemetery. By the assistance of a Greek woman, whom she had met on the road and had enlisted in her cause, she gained access to a priest, and relating her story, persuaded him to accompany her, more by the eloquence of her voice and manner, than by any impulse of duty on the part of the priest; for Greeks are always backward in interfering with any concerns in which Mahomedans are involved.

The priest, the moment he entered the room which Zabetta occupied, would have retreated when he perceived her state; for he soon discovered that she might have the plague; but to his surprise, as soon as she had fixed her eyes upon him, she exclaimed, "Micheli! is it you?" The astonished man was struck with awe at what he supposed to be a supernatural intervention, for his name was really Micheli; but when he heard her once again pronounce his name, call him brother, and add,

“Do you remember your sister Zabetta?” he came forward, and in her, in truth, discovered a long-lost sister.

Zabetta, for a while, forgot her danger in the pleasure of having found a brother and a comforter at a moment when she most wanted him; and the excitement had given her such animation, that she could fain hope that her danger was not imminent, and that she might still overcome it. Ayesha left the room to enable them freely to discuss their mutual concerns, and to afford her mother an opportunity to disburthen her whole heart. She began herself almost to hope that a crisis might take place in the disorder, such as she had heard described as sometimes occurring, and that recovery might ensue; in consequence, perhaps, of the sudden revulsion which had been caused by her meeting with her brother. But such was not Zabetta's destiny. After a short interval had elapsed, Ayesha was surprised to see the priest rush hastily out of the room and leave the house; and when she returned to her mother's bedside, she found that a reaction from the former excitement had taken place, and that she had sunk into a state of almost entire exhaustion. She, however, appeared sensible of her daughter's presence, and taking her hand into her own, kept it fast locked therein, whilst her lips moved respondent to the thoughts that were passing in her mind. Ayesha remained thus until she heard footsteps ascending the stairs, and, as soon as she found that it was the priest who had returned, accompanied by a Frank whom she recognised to be her lover's friend, she left the room, and remained in attendance, ready at the least call.

Micheli had brought with him the necessary materials for administering the last sacrament to his wretched sister, which he did whilst Wortley was in the room, who stood looking on, struck with horror at the whole scene, but, at the same time, little suspecting that he was incurring the danger of contagion. There she lay extended, almost without animation; her whole body overspread with infectious sores; her eye sunk; her mouth parched with fever; her look, one of approaching dissolution, though still full of consciousness. As soon as the sacrament had been administered to her, she beckoned to Wortley to approach; and he having obeyed, she made a sign to her brother to leave the room, with which he complied. She then re-

quested Wortley to kneel down, which having done, to his astonishment, the wretched woman, whom he thought to be on the very verge of dissolution, arose, and leaning her head on her hand, her breath, which at first had apparently forsaken her, again returned, and she spoke. With great pain, she uttered at first a few words, which to him were inaudible; but when he heard her pronounce Osmond's name, he was aware of the subject, and redoubled his attention. Little by little she became more animated; her sunken eye lighted up, and a small hectic colour came into her withered cheek, as one may sometimes see the passing verdure of a blasted field reddened by the rays of the setting sun. Evidently, what she had to say was of great consequence to the composure of her mind. She stopped to draw breath, and looked into Wortley's face, as if entreating for pardon and commiseration. She then said a few words which excited all his attention; and he drew in his breath, lest he might miss even a syllable of what she had to unfold. She spoke again—his looks became intense with interest;—again she went on—a chilly damp bedewed his forehead;—he heard a slight agitation of the door; he turned round, and shook his hand, as if entreating not to be interrupted. Her eyes now shot out a bright, and, as it proved, a parting ray. She held out to him the locket which had so frequently been the object of Osmond's curiosity, and which she had held fast clenched in her hands. She would have said more; but her last words fell unintelligible on the ear. Wortley was so agitated that his senses appeared to be entirely suspended: he saw the poor woman dying;—he watched her looks—her eyes sunk—still there was life;—he watched again, for he would have heard more;—her limbs seemed to stiffen down—when, all at once, she uttered one long and plaintive moan, and he saw her a stiffened corpse before his eyes!

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Laudabunt alii claram Rhodon.—HORACE.

It is high time to return to our hero, whom, in a former chapter, we left on board a Turkish vessel with his faithful Stasso, numbered among a gang of rogues and convicts, the off-scourings of the metropolis, bound for Rhodes, to be deposited in the arsenal there, and there to be employed upon the public works. Rhodes, from the earliest days celebrated for the beauty of its climate, the offspring of Venus and Apollo, the delight of the gods, abounding in wealth, and mistress of the seas, is now a poor island belonging to the Turks, usually under the superintendence of the Capitan Pasha, and at the time we write was converted into a place of exile for delinquent pashas. An arsenal had recently been formed in the port of the town, in which occasionally a man-of-war was constructed; and hither it was found necessary, when the bagnio at Constantinople was overcrowded with prisoners, to convey the supernumeraries.

Osmond's feelings, on finding himself mixed up with a gang of the most nefarious-looking villains that could be seen, may better be imagined than described. When he had reached the deck accompanied by Stasso, he looked about him almost with the same dismay that the wretch who is brought out for execution beholds the face of nature for the last time. He seemed to have bid adieu to the world, as the world had apparently bid adieu to him. Every feature which met his eyes wore the character of villany: the dark brow of the murderer, the squalid cheek of the libertine, the sunken eye and emaciated form of the broken-hearted spendthrift, and the rude and clamorous bearing of the hardened ruffian—all in rotation met his observation, and made his blood curdle at once with disgust and indignation. These wretches were admitted, by small numbers

at a time, to work upon the deck, with fetters on their legs, looking like detachments from the infernal regions permitted to inhale the air on the earth's surface, and then doomed to return into the horrid depths of their dreaded abode. Osmond's whole appearance, his dress, his manners, so little like a criminal condemned to hard labour, spoke so much in his favour when he came on board, that although the captain of the caravella had been enjoined to treat him as a convict, yet by a little negotiation, in which money was the principal agent, he forbore to put his commands into rigorous execution. Moreover, as good luck would have it, Osmond discovered that the Turkish *yûzbashi*, or captain, who, with a small company of soldiers, had been put on board to guard the convicts, was the identical officer who had been a fellow-passenger with him on board the saique in his voyage in the Black Sea; and this man, recollecting with gratitude that it was owing to Osmond's behaviour during the storm that he had been saved from a watery grave, not only treated him with great attention himself, but caused others to do so likewise. The captain of the caravella, who was no great proficient in navigation, felt a sort of security in possessing an Englishman on board, who had already proved himself an experienced sailor, and therefore did not fail to consult him whenever there was a likelihood of danger. The weather was fine and the wind fair, and nothing occurred during the passage which called forth the exercise of much seamanship. The exiled Pasha, with his attendants, occupied the cabin on the poop; and although he was looked upon as one destined in the usual course of things to lose his head, still he was treated with respect, and smoked his pipe in peace. Fellow-sufferers in adversity become easily acquainted, and Osmond and the exile were soon seen smoking their pipes together, each becoming the confidant of the other. The poor man's misfortune proceeded from a cause so characteristic of the Turks, that Osmond could not help being interested as well as amused by his narrative. He found that his companion had originally been a slave-merchant trading to Egypt and Alexandria; that in the exercise of his calling he had made several successful voyages, navigating up and down the Nile as far as Cairo, backwards and forwards between Alexandria and Constantinople, without a reverse; and that, at length

having realised considerable wealth, he became ambitious, and wished to advance himself at court. Having, as he conceived, acquired considerable experience at sea, he felt himself equal to take the command of a ship, and accordingly, by presents and adulation, making himself acceptable to the Capitan Pasha, he succeeded in being appointed to the command of one of the Sultan's frigates. He was sent to Alexandria upon public service, but, as he still had an eye to trade, could not resist taking advantage of his situation to buy a considerable quantity of slaves, which he took on board his ship, and which, on his arrival at Constantinople, he disposed of to considerable profit; making presents of value at the same time to his chief, by way of propitiating him in case this abuse of his situation should ever be brought up against him; for he had taken the liberty to class his slaves among the ship's company, and appropriate their rations and allowance to himself. In a short time, he was made a Pasha of two tails, and appointed to command one of the Sultan's seventy-fours. Several of these fine ships were ordered to anchor off the place of Beshiktash, there to await the Emperor's pleasure, becoming in the meanwhile the objects of his daily admiration. For his misfortune, one fine day, when a fresh breeze was blowing, the Sultan, surrounded by his court, seated in the great kiosk, situated near the Seraglio Point, was pleased to give an order that his ships should get under weigh, and manœuvre about before the place, in order to afford him and the ladies of his harem the pleasure of seeing his fleet under sail.

As soon as this order was brought to Emin Effendi, for that was the name of Osmond's companion, the poor man streamed at every pore from fear and apprehension; and taking his turban from his head, he threw it on the ground, exclaiming "*Amān ! Amān !*—pity ! pity ! what fate was ever like mine ! Here am I ordered to manœuvre, when it is as much as I have ever done to get my ship away without running ashore." However, there was no help for him, he did his best, he tried to make a display of skill; but in going about, the ship missed stays, fell on board another, ran aground, and at length was obliged to let go her anchor, with manifest tokens of confusion on board. His awkwardness was soon noticed by the Sultan, and his enemies were open-mouthed against him. His delin-

quencies were set forth, particularly that of selling part of his ship's company at the slave-market; and from that moment the devoted man incurred the Sultan's displeasure. He was ordered into exile, his fortune confiscated; and here he was at once an instance of defeated ambition and of the injustice of despotism. Notwithstanding this reverse, such was the strength of his philosophy, that he sat smoking his pipe with the indifference of a stoic, whilst every rising sigh was quickly suppressed by an exclamation of "*Allah kerim der!*—God is merciful!" and by a shrug of the shoulders, accompanied by the word *kismet*—fate.

Osmond endeavoured to drive away all desponding thoughts from his mind upon the misery of his present situation, by interesting himself as much as possible in the extraordinary scenes, so characteristic of the people of Asia, which daily took place under his eyes. He felt that with patience his misery might be endured, for he knew that his cause was in good hands at Constantinople, and that in the course of time he should not fail to be relieved; but the great difficulty was to keep his thoughts from dwelling upon Ayesha. The whole history of his acquaintance with her now appeared to him as a dream; and when he considered what might be her present situation, and to what temptations she might be exposed, suspicious as he was of the intentions of her mother, and of her association with Cara Bey, he became almost frantic with complicated emotions. He had no one to whom he might open his heart, but Stasso, who was himself so overpowered with despondency at the turn which their affairs had taken, that he could scarcely be induced to move from the spot upon which he had seated himself when he arrived on board.

There were many in the ship, however, infinitely more worthy of pity than either our hero or his valet. One morning, as Osmond was seated near his friend the Yûzbashi, smoking a soothing chibouque, and talking upon those nothings which make up a Turk's conversation, on a sudden they heard a great outcry, accompanied by a tumultuous gathering on the forecastle. It was occasioned by the attack of several Turks belonging to the crew, upon a miserable-looking Jew, one of the convicts, whose appearance of abject wretchedness was well calculated to call up every feeling of commiseration.

The Jew was an ugly, sallow, hopeless-looking fellow, wearing his face bandaged up by a piece of rag, whilst the whole of his dress consisted of little else than a pair of blue trowsers and a blue shirt, his miserable starved limbs peeping through a succession of curiously situated holes. The words which he uttered, or rather mumbled, struck Osmond's ear as importing a story so strange, and at the same time so comical, that he could not help lending his whole attention to the scene.

"I am not a dentist, by my faith! I am no dentist," exclaimed the Jew.

"You are—you are," roared out the assailants. "Strike him! break his head! dog of a Jew, he is a dentist!"

"Here," said Osmond to himself, "here, in truth, is a *médecin malgré lui*. Would that I were a Molière!" The noise still increasing, he rose from his seat, in order to lend his assistance to the unfortunate wretch who so emphatically disclaimed being a dentist.

"What has happened?" said Osmond.

"What has happened! do you ask?" said one. "Why, here is a *chifout*, a Jew—pig—dog that he is, who is a tooth-drawer, and who asserts that he is not!"

"But in the name of Allah, why strike him?" said Osmond. "Is it a crime not to be a dentist?"

"A Jew not to be what a Mahomedan wishes, not a crime! say you?" said another; "we will make mince-meat of his father. But he is a dentist. He refuses to pull out a tooth for our *Nostruomo*,"—so they called the chief officer.

Osmond was so much amused with the whole scene, that he could scarcely refrain from unbounded laughter. "Stop, stay your hand, I will be your dentist," said he, wishing to release the unfortunate Israelite from what he apprehended might be his death, should he persist in denying his profession. This diversion in favour of the poor Jew proved effectual, for every one's attention was now directed towards Osmond, anxious to observe how he would extract a tooth which was racking the *Nostruomo* with pain. "Bring me a ball of twine," said he, with all the self-confidence of an experienced practitioner; then, recollecting a story which he had read in some book of school-boy jests, he gravely went up to his patient, a coarse

rough Algerine, and asking permission to inspect his aching tooth, ordered the twine to be tied round it, which having been done, was fastened, or, as the sailors would say, belayed to a gun. On a sudden, brandishing a yatagan, he made a feigned blow at his patient, who, as suddenly drawing back his head, extracted his own tooth in the neatest manner possible. This feat filled the Turks with surprise, and increased Osmond's reputation among them for sagacity and ingenuity. They looked upon him as a miracle of a man, and on all occasions he was called upon to decide in cases of difficulty. He took advantage of his ascendancy to protect the forlorn Jew, who, but for his help, must have become a prey to accumulated ill-treatment. The unfortunate wretch willingly told his story, which was as follows :—

“ He was, in truth, a tooth-drawer, and a leech, by profession. Having been called upon to draw a tooth for the Bostangi Boshi, unfortunately he extracted a sound instead of the decayed one. Discovering his mistake, he secreted himself for several weeks, fearful of the vengeance which might be wreaked upon him, and when at length he ventured to leave his house, he always kept clear of the great thoroughfares, and skulked about at night-fall. Some six months had elapsed, when, hoping that all was forgotten, to his dismay, one day crossing the Bosphorus in a boat with a pair of oars, he saw the great barge of the Bostangi Bashi rowing towards him. He lay down in the bottom of the boat, occasionally turning his eye over the gunnel. To his horror the barge still followed, and, ere he could look round, it darted alongside, and immediately two men seized him, and dragged him before the dreaded comptroller of the Bosphorus in person. ‘ Dog of a Jew !’ said he, ‘ Do you think I have forgotten ? look at this,’ shaking his tooth at him at the same time. ‘ I will pay you in your own coin. Here, men, draw out all this wretch's teeth.’—Upon which,” added the Jew, “ I was thrown upon my back, and a ruffian, strong as a lion, drew his dagger, and by thrusts, knocks, and tugs, succeeded in pulling the few teeth—and God be praised that there were only a few!—out of my devoted head. He almost killed me in the attempt, and then, by way of hushing up his cruelty, conveyed me hither a prisoner and a convict. What more can I say ?” Lord Osmond

consoled the unfortunate man as well as he was able, and he had the satisfaction to find that through his influence he was no longer molested.

A short time after this event, the ship anchored in the harbour of Rhodes. Every one on board was anxious to see the place of his future abode, and the sides of the vessel were thronged with the motley groups of those who composed its passengers, eyeing with curiosity the numerous buildings which reared their heads in picturesque outlines around them. Osmond was surprised at the apparent strength of the place, the fortifications of which were evidently not of Turkish construction, and he was not long in discovering that they must date from the time when the island was the principal seat of the Knights of St. John of Acre, who took possession of it in the year 1308. He thought he could trace the treble wall with which it had originally been fortified, strengthened by turrets. One very lofty tower was conspicuous among the rest, at the base of which several large guns peeped through their heavy embrasures. At the mouth of what he supposed must be the arsenal, he observed a sloop of war on the stocks, almost ready for launching; and here he was not slow in remarking the manner in which the convicts were intended to be employed, and what probably would be his own fate should he not be fortunate enough to make interest with the authorities to prevent it.

In the course of the day the convicts were all landed. The Yûzbashi, whose office was now at an end, promised Osmond that he would immediately use his influence with the governor to obtain from him a dispensation from labour among the common herd; whilst his friend, the exiled Pasha, assured him that he would exert himself with the same view, and he hoped with success, since by good fortune the wife of the governor was his own sister.

The Arsenal was a sorry abode, surrounded by walls; at one end of it were open sheds secured by bars, and in these places at night the convicts were enclosed. The intervention of Osmond's friends proved successful, and, making a liberal use of such money as was left in his purse, he secured for himself and Stasso a small separate lodging, to which he might retire from the noise and turmoil of the convicts and their la-

hours, and wait for the result of the interference of his friends at Constantinople in his favour. Days passed away; sometimes his spirits were not proof against despondency, and he would devote whole hours to solitary meditation, strengthening his mind by prayer, and turning his thoughts from the things of this world to those of eternity. At others, he would console himself with the hope that his release must be near at hand; and then he would converse with the unfortunate men, his fellow-sufferers in confinement, and make them relate to him their histories, and the causes which had led to their captivity. He had collected a sufficient number of anecdotes for as voluminous a record as the Newgate Calendar, relating to crimes worthy of the severest punishment; whilst, at the same time, as in the history of the poor Jew, there appeared cases so trivial, that, evidently, private revenge, or capricious despotism, without any reference to justice, had alone been exercised. There was one case which was highly characteristic of the Turks. Osmond had observed among the convicts a young Turk whose spirits seemed never to flag, who was foremost in work as well as in fun, and whose general appearance interested him in his favour. He made his acquaintance, and learned his story, which was as follows:—

“He was a *gülbengi*, or sailor. He had been pressed into the service of the fleet at Constantinople, and was allowed to wear arms, which is otherwise interdicted in the capital. Being short of money, he and a companion in the service devised this ingenious mode of acquiring some. Having bought a fat hen, they went into the suburb of Galata, which is situated on uneven ground; and one standing at the top of a street, the other at the bottom, when a passenger went by, the man at the top of the street obliged him to buy the hen for a given price, and when he had got to the bottom, the other took it away from him by force: thus selling and stealing the hen by turns, they reaped an easy harvest. They had succeeded beyond their expectations on the first day, and determined to continue their speculation. On the next, having taken post as before, a slow and solemn Turk, looking like a merchant, was seen making towards them. The man at the top of the street immediately stopped him, and exclaimed, ‘Here, friend, here is a fowl.’—‘So be it,’ said the merchant.—‘You must buy

it, in the name of Allah!'—'In the name of Allah! I will not.'—'You will not,' said the armed man, then we shall see.' Upon which, he drew his yatagan, and with his hand uplifted, said, 'Buy, or you die!'—'If such is the case,' said the merchant, not in the least discomposed, 'then I buy.'—Upon which he paid his money, took the fowl in his hand, and walked down the hill. When he had reached the other rogue, he was again stopped.—'To my surprise,' said the narrator to Osmond, "I saw the merchant turn round and make a sign, as I thought, to me; but lo! a body of three or four men rushed down the hill, and seizing my companion, one of them drew his sword, and before the poor devil could look round, his head was cut off as clean as a pumpkin might be from its stalk. I immediately took to my heels, and ran for my life—the race was one of life or death, until I came to the sea, when I immediately plunged in, and saved myself by clambering up the side of a boat and rowing off. I found that the supposed merchant was the Sultan in person; he had been informed of our trick, and had himself come in disguise to punish it. Orders were sent to the fleet to discover me—an offer of pardon was announced if I would give myself up—I did—here I am—What can I say more?"

Weeks had now elapsed, and still there was no appearance of relief. Couriers arrived to the governor, and no mention was ever made of Osmond. His money was now nearly expended; misery stared him in the face; he saw that he should shortly be doomed to the fate of a common malefactor, that he must enter among the ranks of the convicts, labour like them, eat their food, and make one of their filthy community. The comptroller of the arsenal had hitherto treated him with more leniency than he could have expected from a rude man accustomed to scenes of violence; to his sorrow he heard that another had been appointed to fill that office. The sloop-of-war which we have before mentioned, was now ready to be launched, and it was announced that, on the day appointed for this ceremony, the new comptroller was to be installed.

Few events disturb the dull monotony of a life at Rhodes; a launch, therefore, became one of importance. On the morning, the whole population was astir to see the sight. The governor of the city, with all the dignitaries, had a place assigned to them. The walls, the towers, and the fortifications, were

lined with people : the women conspicuous by their white veils, the men producing a pleasing variety by the brilliant colours of their dress. The moment had arrived. Expectation was alive; every eye was directed to the gallant vessel, covered with flags and filled with anxious passengers. A signal-gun was fired; the hammers were heard; she began to move; a murmur of delight ran through the assembled crowd; when lo, on a sudden she stuck in her progress. Apprehensions were now excited; the whole arsenal was in motion; a cry was heard to summon all the convicts. Every one ran to the spot; Osmond and Stasso were not spared, they were forced to lend their aid on the emergency. A hawser was immediately drawn from the launch to a capstan; the bars were fitted to it; they were manned by the convicts, and with shouts and cries unceasing, they began to heave with the intent of drawing back the ship to the spot whence it had started. Great was the labour, and little the result. Every man applied his shoulder to the bar with his whole strength, not a muscle or a sinew was thrown away; still the exertion seemed useless. The comptroller, wishing to distinguish himself in his new situation, stopped the proceedings for a moment, and taking a heavy cudgel in hand, mounted the capstan; having seated himself thereupon, he ordered the heaving to begin again, and, by way of quickening the exertions of the convicts, did not cease to belabour their backs with his cudgel. He was a most solemn-looking personage—this new comptroller. Slow and deliberate in his motion, wearing a long grizzled beard, and covered with an ample cloak, whilst his head was fitted with a caouk of vast dimensions, his whole appearance, seated aloft on the summit of the capstan, surrounded by the hundreds of closely-packed heads of the convicts, might be compared to a huge weather-cock, of which he was the vane, they the points of the compass. He uttered no other word than “*chek,*” which answer to our “give way,” after the repetition of which he let fall an indiscriminate blow of the cudgel. Whenever the blow fell upon some prominent head above the rest, a shout of laughter was set up by the convicts, which did not in the least discompose the phlegmatic man, who, without let or hindrance, persevered in saying “*chek,*” and administering his blow. Osmond, who was stationed the outermost at one of

the bars, was at first greatly affected by finding himself placed in so degrading a situation; whilst Stasso, his neighbour, was perhaps more so. But after the first anguish had passed over, little by little he caught the prevailing spirit of hilarity, and the whole scene appeared to him so ludicrous, that he fairly laughed outright at his own thoughts.

He then turned his eyes up towards the principal cause of the merriment, and to his surprise, whom should he see but old Suleiman Aga of Kars, the supposed father of his Ayesha, and one of the principal causes of his misfortunes? He looked at him with anxious and curious scrutiny to satisfy himself that he was not mistaken, and the more he gazed, the more his interest was excited; for there was the solemn man going round and round, saying "chek," and giving his blows, with the same doggedness that he exhibited in saying his prayers, or in performing any other act of every-day life. At length a decided stop was put to the whole proceeding; all the heaving in the world could not stir the vessel; the groaning capstan moved not an inch; all further efforts were in vain. Upon this Suleiman Aga stayed his hand, in order to hear the words of one of the principal officers, who recommended the hawser to be let go, in order that it might be tried in some other position. The convicts were ordered to crouch down, the words "let go" were given, when all at once, with the rapidity of the swiftest coach-wheel in motion, the capstan was left to its own evolution, and it went round, bearing Suleiman on its summit, with such excessive velocity, that all traces of the man were lost, and all that could be seen of him was an undefined lump, supported by two arms that were holding on on either side. The shouts of merriment that were set up by the convicts, on seeing their governor performing so extraordinary a caper, apparently in the air, were reverberated in echoes all round the shores of the harbour. So intense was the laughter which it produced, that the wretches absolutely rolled one over the other as they indulged in the spasmodic excitement; and indeed the contagion was such that the whole town of Rhodes might at one time have been said to be afflicted with a horse-laugh. When the capstan at length came to a full stop, the circumstance proved anything but a source of merriment to poor Suleiman. He appeared more dead than alive; he was sick at stomach;

his face was pale; his beard was utterly discomposed; he was obliged to be lifted off his perch; and his services as a comp-troller for some days were rendered useless by the unceasing sickness with which he was visited.

Osmond determined to make himself known to Suleiman, and to break through the prejudices and customs of the Turks, which prevent inquiries concerning their women, by asking him whether he was acquainted with the fate of his wife and daughter. Upon the first opportunity he accosted him, and told him who he was. The old man, for the first time in his life, almost started when he saw him. He could scarcely believe his eyes; but as he was unhappy himself, he easily shook off the first feeling of disgust upon seeing one who in truth was the origin of his misfortunes, and communicated freely with him, seeing that he also was a companion in adversity. Osmond began by soothing his mind, and showing him that, but for Cara Bey, who had so forcibly invaded his house, he would never have become a prey to such accumulated misery. He gave him a detailed exposure of his adventures since the day when he had fled from Kars, showing him how destiny, and not any preconcerted plan, had made him the protector of his wife and daughter; and exposed in its fullest light the infamy of Cara Bey's proceedings. He dwelt strongly upon the doubts which had been raised in his mind concerning Ayesha's parentage, attributing to those doubts the great interest which he had been led to take in her fate.

Whilst he was making these observations, Osmond observed that the old man looked very much disturbed; and as he conceived that through him some discovery might be made, he pressed him so hard with questions, that at length he seemed on the point of making a confession. He, however, waved the subject, and screened himself from farther importunity by relating all that had happened to himself, how and in what manner he had recently met Zebetta and Ayesha, and described the violent and abrupt manner in which he had been torn from them at Constantinople.

Osmond listened to his narrative with breathless attention; for in Suleiman he saw one who gave him as recent intelligence as could be attained of her whom he held dearer than life. There was no end to his questions; and as he endeavoured

to connect the course of events, he plainly saw that she was still under the influence of the intrigues of Cara Bey and her mother, and his heart smote him with the fearful apprehension lest, excepting indeed by some miraculous intervention, his adored and unfortunate Ayesha should fall a prey to their infernal machinations. He returned to his confinement with such an accumulated load of despondency weighing upon his spirits, that his life became indifferent to him, and he would willingly have laid it down, but for that high and invigorating feeling of resignation to the decrees of the Almighty, which never left him, and which, upon great emergencies, always brought with it rest and peace, and every other blessing attendant upon a good conscience.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

The thousand shapeless things, all driven
In cloud and flame athwart the heaven
By that tremendous blast.

The Siege of Corinth.

OSMOND'S situation had now become so hopeless and wretched, that, in order to keep soul and body together, he felt he must submit to the fare and fate of a common convict. His money was entirely gone; little by little he had sold his arms, his clothes, his watch, and every valuable which he possessed; his faithful Stasso had done the same, and without some one to whom they could have recourse, it was plain that they must either eat the black bread of the convict, or starve.

They had slept their last sleep in the small hired apartment, and on the following day it was determined that they were to take up their abode in the sheds, when, to their infinite surprise, they were visited by Suleiman Aga, accompanied by several dignified-looking Turks, servants of the governor of the city, who approached Osmond with every mark of respect, and announced to him, on the part of their master, that he was

free : an express Tatar, they affirmed, had just arrived from the Porte with the news, and they were ordered to conduct him forthwith to the presence of the governor. Whoever has watched the countenance of a sick friend when told all at once that he is out of danger ; or has observed a prisoner when about to die he receives his reprieve, may perhaps form some idea of the delight which broke out in the heart of Osmond on hearing the announcement of his deliverance. His first impression was that of unbounded gratitude for the kindness of Providence so manifested in his favour, and he offered a mental prayer expressive of his feelings. The effect upon poor Stasso was quite different ; from a downcast, broken-hearted man, he burst forth into all the exhilaration of a merry madman. He began to talk faster than any Greek had ever talked ; he could scarcely refrain from clasping his master in his arms. He straightway hurried to busy himself in his usual manner, to pack up and arrange, to fold and unfold, not recollecting that there was nothing left either to pack or to arrange. No other words were heard to issue from his mouth than, " May the fiend take Cara Bey ! I will break his head, God willing ! May anathemas fall upon him ! "

It was soon rumoured throughout the arsenal that the Frank was about to leave it. Osmond had proved himself the friend of the prisoners, by doing all in his power to alleviate their miseries ; occasionally giving them money, helping them in sickness, and soothing their minds in distress. When he was about leaving its walls, they formed a lane for him to walk through, and he received their expressions of regret, made after the Asiatic manner, by assurances on his part of the interest which he should ever take in their welfare. As he stopped to speak a few words of consolation to the poor tooth-drawer (the Jew), telling him that he would do his utmost to procure his freedom, he suddenly encountered a pair of eyes beaming upon him with peculiar expression, the eyes of one whom he had not before remarked among the convicts, which were immediately averted, but which he felt were familiar to him. He thought no more of this circumstance at the moment, but proceeded on his road to the governor's, where he arrived, attended with all the respect due to a man of consequence.

The governor of Rhodes was a dignified Turk, bland and

courteous in his manners, and of a generous and liberal spirit. When Osmond entered the room, he rose from his seat, insisted upon his taking the place of honour, and treated him with more attention and civility than are commonly shown to Europeans. After the usual compliments were over, the governor said, "Our emperor has ordered us to express his regret at the unworthy treatment which unintentionally you have received in his country. I am prepared to make you, Osman Aga, every reparation which you may demand. Money, clothes, a vessel to bear you away if you require it, are at your disposal. We ask nothing of you, but that you agree to forgive the past, and that you acknowledge yourself satisfied with my treatment of you to the British Ambassador at our Sublime Porte."

What could our hero do but make his ready acknowledgments for a proceeding so straightforward? His first impulse was immediately to return to Constantinople, in the hope of being able to regain possession of Ayesha. With the certainty before him of proving that she was not a Mahomedan born, he hoped, in defiance of every difficulty, to withdraw her from the protection of Zabetta, and in time to claim her as his own. In the meanwhile, delight at this happy change in his fortunes drove from his mind his many past miseries, and he repeated his acknowledgments to the governor for his kind offers; who on his part did not rest until he had fully put in practice every profession which he had made, lodging him in his house, fitting him out with clothes, and giving him such money as he might require. An Austrian vessel was on the very point of sailing for Trieste, and by her the governor urged Osmond to take his departure, and in a manner so pressing that it was evident he had strong reasons for so doing. When Osmond, however, manifested no desire to accede to his wishes, but talked of an immediate return to the capital, the governor, dismissing every one from his presence, in confidential terms showed Osmond that there was an imperious necessity that he should not return; hinting, indeed, that he had received strict orders to prevent such a step; and recommended him, as he valued his life, not to attempt it. Osmond took fire at this interdiction, which he termed an infraction of the friendship between the two countries, since, the subjects of Turkey having free egress from and into England, with liberty of travelling about whithersoever

they might please, those of England ought to enjoy the same privileges in Turkey.—“My friend,” said the polite Turk, “that is true; you say right; but there is an exception in our case, and such an exception as cannot be overcome.”

“What can be the exception?” said Osmond with some warmth: “I have done no harm.”

“I have been enjoined not to mention it,” said the governor, “unless I see a positive necessity. Know then, that the maiden whom you seek (for your history is not unknown to me) claims our sovereign lord the Sultan as her master and protector. You are aware of the strictness of our laws concerning women, and of the sacred nature of our harems; and you must also be aware that the Sultan would never willingly allow of your approach to a spot where your appearance might produce mischief. Do not persist upon going to Constantinople, either by land or sea. By land, I must prevent your going; and should you return by sea, you will be taken from the ship by force upon your arrival there, and made to submit to the penalty of being a rival to the Sultan.”

This information cast a gloom of despair over the mind of our hero. He now saw that Ayesha was lost to him for ever. What could he do but submit to the orders of the governor? In vain he devised schemes for evading them; his whole conduct was now strictly watched, and he had no resource left but to embark in the prescribed ship. Instead of that alacrity and happiness which he had at first experienced, his whole manner was changed, and he became mournful and pensive. He seemed to be left without an object in the world.

The day before his embarkation, he determined once more to visit the arsenal, in order to take leave of the convicts, his former companions in misery, and to administer to their several wants, by making them a donation in money; a liberality which he could now exercise, since, owing to the interference of the governor, he had been able to negotiate bills with a merchant at Rhodes upon his banker at Constantinople. Followed by Stasse, and accompanied by Suleiman, he entered the walls of that dreary abode, at a time when all the gang were at work. By Suleiman's orders, their labours were suspended, and they were called together to attend in a body. Osmond's heart smote him with commiseration when he saw so much misery,

and when he compared the state of the poor wretches who stood before him with his own free position. They hailed him with delight ; they were permitted to gather round him ; and as he distributed money to each, he received the expression of their gratitude with feelings well becoming one of his excellence of heart and liberality of sentiment. He again promised to interest himself in favour of those who had been unjustly imprisoned. All the squalid, wretched, and care-worn faces, for a moment seemed divested of their misery, and were clothed in smiles. The young Turkish thief exclaimed "*Allah es-marladek !*" The poor Jew kissed his hand, others were pressing around to bid him adieu, when on a sudden, an uplifted arm, brandishing a short dagger, was seen to raise itself in the crowd, and anon fell with a quick and violent blow upon the breast of the unsuspecting Osmond. He was almost beaten down with its violence. He staggered, but was not hurt ; for most providentially a thick sketch-book, which he always wore in the breast-pocket of his beniche, intervened, and warded off the blow, which, but for that circumstance, must have proved fatal. Stasso's quick eye had seen the action, and no sooner was the blow struck than the murderer's arm was fast clenched in his grasp. A terrible struggle ensued. A yell of indignation burst from the assembled crowd. The murderer would have fled ; Stasso still held on with inevitable strength ; and having at length mastered him, he threw him down on the ground, whilst at the same time he wrenched the weapon from his hand. All were eager to see who the villain might be. He turned his face to the ground, anxious to conceal it. He was a strong, broad-shouldered man, wearing a thick and ample beard, and dressed as a sailor.

"Who is it?" roared out old Suleiman, firing up into animation uncommon to him.

"It is the Devil!" said Stasso between his teeth, as he kept struggling on the ground, and dealing some awfully-sounding blows upon the head and temples of the culprit. As soon, however, as he had caught a glimpse of his eye, he roared out, "Did not I say so?—it is he!—it is Cara Bey, the Yezidi!" And there, true enough, lay extended this man-fiend! He had disguised himself by allowing his beard to grow, but his eyes no one could mistake who had ever seen them.

"It cannot be," said Osmond, who, having recovered from the blow, now stood forward and looked down upon him. "How came the villain here?"

"You say it is not he, O Effendi!" exclaimed Stasso; "then look at this!" Upon which he drew up his turban and large red skullcap, which were drawn down tightly as low as the eyebrows; and there the print of the horse-shoe was seen almost as fresh as if it had been stamped but the day before.

"If you want to see your real enemy, Suleiman Aga," said Osmond, addressing himself to the old Turk, "there he is. This is Cara Bey; look at him!"

Suleiman Aga opened all his eyes, and exclaimed with reverential gravity, "*La illaha illallah!*—there is but one Allah!" and then added, "Dog without faith!" All the convicts, in turn, came and spat upon him, some saying, "Dog!" others, by way of taunt, "*Lahnet be shaitan!*—Curse upon Satan!" others, "*Pezevenk!*" and "*Giaour!*"

The murderer, having been caught in his own toil, remained absorbed in dogged and moody silence; he eyed Osmond with the looks of a wild animal deprived of its prey. With his arms strongly pinioned behind his back, he was dragged forcibly on towards the house of the governor, whither Suleiman Aga invited Osmond to follow him, whilst, occasionally looking at the prisoner, he mumbled to himself, "As Allah is great! I think that fellow came here in the same ship with me. Great are God's works!"

The whole party reached the governor's house, followed by an immense crowd: Osmond was invited to be seated; Suleiman Aga also took his place on the sofa, and the culprit was placed before the governor, divested of his turban, his hair streaming wildly about his ears, whilst his horse-shoe scar stood revealed in the strongest manner. When the whole murderous proceeding had been related to the governor, he turned to Osmond, and said, "What can I say for my countrymen? We have bad men among us,—that you know, to your cost; but I hope you will also acknowledge that there are some good. I at least will do my duty; and, therefore, I place this wicked man's ear in your hand: do what you like with him—pound him in a mortar; impale him; bake him in an oven; bowstring him; or simply cut his head off; only speak the

word, and it shall be done. We are Mussulmans, and the servants of the Prophet!"

Stasso, who was standing near the prisoner, every now and then giving his arms an extra twist with his bonds, looked as if he would have preferred the adoption at one and the same time of all the different modes of killing proposed by the governor, so great was the impulse of revenge which raged in his heart.

Osmond answered, "Sir Governor, may your shadow never be less! I will not deprive your law of its victim. Whatever your law ordains, that do. This wretch is too wicked to live: I do not oppose his death, however much I abhor bloodshed. I am now about to leave your country, perhaps for ever; therefore, were he even permitted to live, we never more might meet again. But as the same evil passion which has impelled him to seek my life, may be exercised against the life of another, I repeat that, in justice to the public good, I ought not to oppose, and I do not oppose myself to his death. I leave him entirely in your hands."

"But what do I see?" said the governor, as he turned his eyes towards Cara Bey; "that mark on your forehead, villain, pronounces your fate, whatever else might interpose to prevent it." Then referring to his scribe, he inquired whether orders had not been transmitted from Constantinople, to keep an eye upon one of the convicts, whose forehead was branded with a horse-shoe, and, should he be found transgressing, instantly to put him to death. Such were, in fact, the orders received; and such was the wicked man's doom.

The governor, after again condoling with Osmond for the constant ill-treatment which he seemed destined to receive as long as he remained in the country, would have congratulated him upon the prospect of his speedy departure, had he not observed how ill those congratulations would be received; and they then separated.

The next morning being fixed upon for Osmond's departure, he was escorted with all due ceremony to the water's edge by the governor and his officers. Upon taking an affectionate leave of that personage, he delivered to him a letter expressive of his entire satisfaction with the treatment which he had received at his hands; to be forwarded to the ambassador at Constantinople, although he did not conceal that he complain-

ed of the restraint which had been put upon his person. A boat from the ship was in readiness to convey him on board; Suleiman Aga accompanied him. Osmond was about taking leave of him also, when the grave man, with more feeling than he had ever before exhibited towards him, took him aside and said, "Osman Aga, God is great, and sees into the hearts of men! If I have ever done you harm, forgive me. I have only one word more to say;" and then, evidently with a severe mental struggle, he added, "The maiden is not my daughter—nor is she Zabetta's: more I cannot say, for more I know not. And now Allah protect you!"

Osmond was so struck by this piece of intelligence, that he would have detained his informant; but he turned away, and walked with a hurried step from him. To have delayed longer, he saw was impossible; stepping, therefore, into the boat, in another second he found himself on board. Seated on the poop, deeply pondering over what he had just heard, and his eye glancing over the scenery of the harbour, his attention was fixed by the appearance of several men in the embrasure of one of the large guns situated at the foot of the high tower, apparently preparing to fire it: he saw the charge of powder first rammed down, then a ball introduced, and last of all, he perceived a man with his arms pinioned behind his back, brought forward and placed before its muzzle. With a spy-glass, he soon discovered the intent of the whole proceeding. The prisoner was Cara Bey! There was no mistaking him: pale and haggard, he stood with his face outwards, apparently already more than half dead, awaiting the dreadful termination of his wretched life.

The governor had evidently intended this scene as, in his mind, the best mode of doing honour to Osmond. It was certainly an original mode, and indeed one purely Turkish, of showing 'a piece of delicate attention.' The poor wretch, with outstretched hands, seemed to implore the forgiveness of the departing vessel. He had so often been on the point of death, and still had been permitted to live, that, flattering himself with the hope of escaping on this occasion, he had remained arrogant and confident to the last; but now he felt that all hope had vanished, and, becoming proportionably abject, his cries were audibly heard. As his eyes looked towards the

harbour, he could perceive Osmond on the deck of the ship: he entreated, he implored. There never was, in the whole catalogue of crimes and punishments, an execution more awful in its termination, and so striking in all its circumstances, both as forming a great moral lesson, and an exhibition worthy of being recorded by the painter's art.

The ship had already weighed anchor; the topsails began to fill; she was slowly beginning to glide out of the harbour, when suddenly the gun was fired, a flash was seen, an immense explosion took place, the murderer was launched into eternity, and his miserable remains scattered unto the four winds of heaven!

A sensation of awe ran through every heart, as the echoes of the shock reverberated throughout the harbour. A shout of mingled pity and execration came from the assembled convicts. The mangled pieces of the wretched man's body fell here and there in splashes in the sea, and attracted the birds of prey that hovered about the city. A dead silence ensued: those who were at work stopped to reflect; those who had assembled from curiosity walked thoughtfully away. The death of a fellow-creature must ever be a subject of deep and awful import to the survivors; and on this occasion, where the guilt was undoubted, the exercise of the power which punished was applauded, because its decrees were indisputably just.

The last emotions which filled the breast of our hero, as the ship left the island, and slowly turned towards the broad expanse of the sea, were deeply tinged with melancholy. That the last honours which he should receive from the hands of the Turks, as a sort of compensation for the miseries which he had endured at their hands, should have been a discharge of the whole person of his enemy almost into his very face, was a circumstance which struck him with horror. At any other moment (putting out of the question the odium of spilling human blood), this act, so characteristic of a semi-barbarous nation, might have amused him; but now it inspired him with an undefinable feeling of gloom and dreariness, particularly as it was mixed up with the feeling that he was leaving his cherished Ayesha, who he now knew for certain was not a Turkish maiden born, to drag out her existence among a people to whom by birth she had never belonged. These

thoughts entirely occupied his mind during his passage, almost to the exclusion of the joyful anticipation of seeing his country again, and being restored to his friends and relations.

Stasso, on the other hand, was all life, joy, and alacrity. When the catastrophe of Cara Bey's death had taken place, he was standing near his master, watching for the moment of seeing the villain receive the death so long his due, with a sort of credulous anxiety, as doubting whether it were in the power of man ever to compass the destruction of one whom he really thought to be the evil spirit in person. When the gun at length was fired, and he saw the extinction of the poor wretch, between wonder and excitement he could scarcely draw breath; at last, when he could speak, he exclaimed, "Well! God be thanked! I really thought it had been the devil—God be thanked!"

The passage was prosperous. A steady breeze carried the ship in succession along the shores of Candia; then, skirting Cerigo, she made the coast of the Morea, steered close by Cephalonia and Corfu, and, running up the Adriatic with a strong easterly wind, cast anchor in the harbour of Trieste, the tenth day after her departure from Rhodes. The morning after, she warped into the lazaretto, where Osmond was installed in the possession of certain rooms, to perform the prescribed quarantine.

Who that has ever returned to Europe after having passed a long time among Asiatics, does not enjoy exquisite delight at the transition, feeling that he returns to take his place in the civilized world, after having been exposed to the vicissitudes and vexations of an intercourse with semi-barbarians! Although Osmond felt this in a high degree, for, in setting foot on shore at Trieste, he was in fact almost restored to his family, still the image of Ayesha, which was ever before his eyes, seemed to reproach him that he had not attempted to return to her, and that, in quitting Turkey without at least ascertaining what had been her fate, he had forsaken and abandoned her to hopeless misery. But he consoled himself by the reflection that he was obliged to cede to necessity; and he could not dismiss from his mind a lurking hope that she was not lost to him for ever. He determined that he would leave no stone unturned to discover who might be her parents, and, should he be so fortunate as to

ascertain that fact, insist that, whether she might be a captive within the Sultan's seraglio or a free woman elsewhere, she should be restored to them.

He heard of ships sailing almost daily from Trieste to the Levant, and was seriously contemplating a return to Constantinople ere he proceeded to England, in spite of the governor of Rhodes' denunciation, when he was visited by the English Consul, who, although without news of consequence to communicate, still had it in his power to dissipate much of the ennui of quarantine, by sending him a long series of newspapers, which would give him a general history of the world since his seclusion from it. Osmond had so long been deprived of news from his own family, that his first object was to acquire some intelligence concerning them; and, as several members of it were persons in office, in parliament, and attached to the King's person, he expected to find mention made of them in some manner or other. One of the first paragraphs which met his eye was as follows :—

"We regret to announce that a noble family has been thrown into the deepest distress, owing to intelligence just received from Constantinople that its heir is supposed to have fallen a victim to Mahomedan jealousy. The young and distinguished nobleman in question was known to have formed an *attachement de cœur* with a beautiful Turkish woman, and this entanglement is said to have led to the abovementioned ever-to-be-regretted fatal *dénouement*."

He was almost choked with emotion as he read this. Loving his parents with the most ardent affection, he saw at once the misery into which they must have been plunged by his long absence. This circumstance put to flight all ideas of returning to Turkey: had he been at liberty, he would not have delayed a moment in proceeding to England with all haste, and he made instant application that the term of his quarantine might be abridged as much as possible. He resolved, first, to see his parents, and then, according to the intelligence which he might receive from Wortley, to return and seek his love.

Acting up to this resolution, as soon as the measure of his confinement was over, he purchased a carriage, and set off by the shortest route, having previously written a letter to his father, announcing the probability of his speedy arrival.

Stasso, who had never been in Europe before, was in the seventh heaven at all he saw. The transition from the back of a lean post-horse to the cushions of a dicky-box, was one of unceasing delight; and although he had no means of making himself understood but by signs, still he seemed to comprehend everything almost intuitively.

Osmond travelled day and night in a straight line to England, and did not allow himself to take rest, even in the great towns. Stopping in the café of a small place in France, whilst his carriage was being repaired, he took up a French newspaper, and passing his eye over its columns, came to the following paragraph:—

“ Selon les dernières nouvelles de Constantinople, il paraît que la civilisation y fait des progrès rapides. On nous assure qu’il s’y débite un roman, dans lequel le chef suprême de cette nation hautaine joue un rôle très-marqué, et dont les détails piquans et intéressans feraient honneur aux temps les plus chevaleresques de notre belle France. Il paraît que le Sultan est devenu amoureux en vrai troubadour. Parcourant les rues de sa capitale à la belle étoile, il vit une jeune et charmante personne à sa fenêtre, avec laquelle il eut un entretien des plus intéressans; de propos en propos l’entretien s’échauffe—le souverain amoureux veut se faire recevoir—la belle refuse—voilà des sermens, des vœux, qui sont écoutés favorablement: nn enlèvement s’ensuit, et voilà notre Sultan le plus heureux des mortels. Le roman cependant ne finit pas là, car il paraît que la belle était déjà promise à un jeune lord anglais, qui l’avait enlevée à un voleur de grand chemin dans quelqu’endroit, à ce que l’on assure, entre l’Egypte et la Perse. Le Sultan, par droit de son caractère administratif, a fait décapiter le jeune lord, et, par une espèce de coup d’état, s’est mis en possession légale d’une de ses sujettes, pendant qu’il expédie celui qui avait usurpé des droits qui n’étaient aucunement les siens. Le jeune lord, dit-on, s’appelait Lordosmon.”

This paragraph, however full of absurdity it might be, did not fail to produce a serious impression upon Osmond, and he now felt that all his hopes of ever possessing Ayesha were indeed totally, utterly blasted. His only desire was to reach England; he was rapidly approaching its shores, and at every step his heart beat in anxious anticipation of once again embracing

his parents; in whose society he resolved he would endeavour to forget her who so long had held the first place in his thoughts and affections.

CHAPTER XXXVIII,

AND CONCLUSION.

Lo mas dificultoso para la postre.

CEJUDO, *Refranes Castellanos.*

It was early in the morning of one of the last days of September, when, descending one of the hills above Boulogne, Osmond caught the first view of the white cliffs of Dover:—his heart glowed at the sight, although the general tone of his feelings was full of melancholy. A few hours after, he crossed the channel; and as the day closed, he found himself safely landed, and in an hotel at Dover.

It was some time past midnight before Osmond could proceed on his journey. He had in part preserved his Turkish costume, not having been able to renew his European attire; his appearance, therefore, which was a mixture of the Oriental and the European, both odd and original, was highly picturesque. His Tatar pelisse, the pendent sleeves of which hung behind after the fashion of the Hungarians, was fastened before by thick braiding and tassels, whilst it entirely enveloped his person; and instead of a hat, he wore a fur cap, which gave to his head an Asiatic character. Stasso also preserved his Oriental dress.

A little before noon his carriage stopped at his father's door, in Grosvenor Square. The town was a perfect desert, and the loneliness of the streets suited the mood of his mind. As he drove through them, he thanked his stars that he had arrived at the present moment; for he was in no wise prepared to meet the rush of friends, and those numerous inquiries which would have awaited him had he arrived when the town was

full. The knock which the postilion gave at the door, resounded throughout the square in faint echoes, like the ghost of the many thousand knocks which had been heard during the departed season. A noise of bolts undrawing and chains removing, and other symptoms of solitude, were heard ere the door was opened. Then, as it slowly turned upon its hinges, it discovered an astonished individual in the shape of a housemaid, who, half surprised, half in doubt, seemed to be thrown into a state of uncertainty as to the propriety of admitting such outlandish-looking people into the house. As soon, however, as she heard the questions put in quick and anxious succession, "How is my father? How is my mother? Where are they?" her muddy complexion reflected a variety of hues; and supposing there "might be some mistake," and that her young lord had not been dealt with so hardly by the foreigners as reported, she dropped her curtesies in rapid succession, and, opening shutters, which threw light upon broad gleams of dust, ushered Lord Osmond into his father's library. Having discharged the postboys, and finding his parents were at the family place in the country, he ordered a fresh set of horses, being determined to continue his journey without a moment's delay.

Osmond scarcely asked a question beyond ascertaining the state of his parents' health: he looked over the house, feeling the approaches to their presence, as it were, by the inspection and touch of those objects of daily use which were seen throughout every room, and which reminded him of their habits and daily avocations.

Stasso eyed everything around him with astonishment; and when he had ascertained that he was in the paternal mansion of his lord and master, looked upon it with an interest which seemed to imply that he also was a sharer in its possession.

The horses were now at the door. Osmond got into the wayworn carriage, Stasso ascended his seat, and away they went, driving across the square, intending to make their way, through Upper-Grosvenor-street and the Park, to the high road. Osmond recollected that the house of Sir Edward Wortley, the father of his friend at Constantinople, was the corner-house of the square; and as the carriage drove along, naturally cast his eyes towards it. Instead of being closed like

the others, every window and every shutter was open; flowers and shrubs were disposed in profusion throughout the balconies; a fat porter stood picking his teeth at the door, dressed in the gayest of liveries, and there was an appearance of habitation about the house which nobody could mistake. Osmond could not refrain from asking a few questions concerning the family, and particularly with respect to his friend. He ordered the postboys to stop, and alighting inquired whether Sir Edward Wortley was in town.

"Yes, Sir," said the porter, with a face beaming with contentment, as if he was happy to say 'yes.'

"Is there any late news from Mr. Wortley at Constantinople?" said Osmond.

"Oh yes, Sir," said the porter, "there is."

"What news?"

"Why, he is only here, that's all, sir," said the janitor, with a sort of happy chuckle that evidently was intended to intimate more than it expressed.

"Is he indeed!" said Osmond in a rapture of delight. "Is he at home?"

"Yes, I believe he is, sir," said the porter; upon which he sent for the proper servant to show Osmond into the drawing-room.

There was such a marked expression of satisfaction in the faces of all the servants, that Osmond could not help feeling that Wortley's return must have caused it; and well it might, since his amiable qualities were calculated to attract universal regard. Osmond was introduced into the drawing-room, which bore the marks of having been recently occupied by Lady Wortley; for her writing-table was spread with letters and books, and work and every other accessory lay scattered around. He stood for some time looking about him, when, turning towards an open door which led into an adjoining room, his attention was caught with the reflection of a female head in a mirror which fronted him. It was not dressed according to the English fashion; he could not well define how it was dressed. The face, which was partly concealed by a hand on which it reclined, was, by its position, looking downwards. He could have wished to see more of it; for what he did see was eminently beautiful: besides, the hand was fairer than any

he had ever before beheld. The hair fell down in profusion, but in a manner new to his eye in Europe; still, somehow or other, it was not altogether strange to him. He gazed on for some minutes without daring to make the least noise. At length, tired of standing in one position, and impelled by curiosity, he advanced some steps towards the open door. The noise he made, caused the object of his attention to look up; and when the full face was disclosed to him, he started with an emotion almost amounting to terror. She, upon seeing him also reflected in the glass, suddenly stood up, trembled from head to foot, put her hand to her temple, and, uttering one long, thrilling, searching cry, fell down senseless on the floor.—In another second, Osmond was at the feet of his long-lost Ayesha!

Who can venture to describe what followed! Surprise was the feeling which principally filled the breast of Osmond, when first he saw before him one whom he firmly believed to be shut up within the walls of the seraglio. This was succeeded by such raptures of joy, love, and gratitude, that he was like one demented. In the excess of his joy he probably would have forgotten to alarm the house, or to seek help in the dilemma in which he was placed; but the cry which Ayesha uttered had reached the ear of her mother, who, without delay, rushed to her assistance. When Lady Wortley saw a man of Osmond's strange appearance standing over her daughter, she also uttered a loud cry, and at the same time rang the bell violently. Presently the room was filled with servants; a report ran through the house that Miss Wortley was dying, and a sensation of alarm set every one in motion. Sir Edward was called from his own room, and his son, soon hearing what had happened, also rushed to the drawing-room. No one could make out who Osmond was, or how he had got there: some conceived that he was an evil-intentioned person, and had frightened Miss Wortley into fits: others thought he might be some Turkish Blue-Beard come to take her away;—but the moment Wortley appeared, throwing himself into the arms of his friend, he pronounced his name, and the whole mystery was cleared up.

Slowly the astonished and bewildered Ayesha (for we must still call her by that name) came to herself: but it was only to swoon away again, so great had been the concentrated shock

of joy and surprise. She was removed to her bed, and every restorative having been resorted to, and Osmond being no longer before her eyes, she gradually recovered. It was then that the history of his return was cautiously disclosed; and when she was really assured of her happiness, her whole being seemed to dissolve itself in tears of joy and gratitude.

Never was there such a scene of unmixed delight as that which took place between the lovers. As it defies the power of description—for what words can ever paint the eloquence of lovers' looks and lovers' sighs?—we must for the present leave them to themselves. In the meanwhile we will endeavour to afford those explanations to the reader, which he may, or possibly may not, wish to seek at our hands.

Sir Edward Wortley in early life had devoted himself so intensely to the study of classical literature, and particularly of Greek, that it became his ruling passion. His first wish was to visit Athens, to reside in Greece, and to collect everything that could throw a light upon his favourite studies. He married young; and after his son was born, the times being propitious for such an undertaking, he determined to put his project into execution.

Accompanied by his wife and family, he reached Athens in safety. Shortly after their arrival, Lady Wortley presented him with a daughter, and the most beautiful Greek maiden that could be found was procured from Tino to act in the capacity of nurse. The infant was Ayesha, the nurse Zabetta. When the child was above a year old, and Sir Edward and Lady Wortley were about to return to England, they one day became alarmed at the absence of the nurse and child. They had been seen walking towards the close of day under the columns of Jupiter Olympius, and from that time all traces of them were lost. Sir Edward immediately set on foot every sort of inquiry, offered large sums, despatched messengers throughout the country,—but all to no purpose. In the meanwhile Lady Wortley, who at first had borne up against the calamity, fell ill, under the thousand conflicting emotions with which such a misfortune would naturally fill her heart. She lived in hope again to see her child; but, as time wore away, that hope was changed to despair. At length it was clearly ascertained that a boat had been wrecked on the rocks of Sunium; fragments of

dress were found which were called European; and, in short, so much was said and done, that there was no doubt that the child and its nurse, and whoever might have been their conductor, had perished in the sea.

Sir Edward, alarmed at the drooping health of his wife, thought it much better at once to cut off all hope, than allow her mind to remain in hopeless uncertainty; and he was right. Although it was long before she recovered, yet Time, the great assuager of grief, eventually restored her equanimity. Any allusion to the loss of the child was strictly prohibited; no one ever mentioned it in the presence either of Sir Edward or his wife; the son was brought up in ignorance of it: in short, the whole event remained buried in oblivion.

Things continued in this state, when, at no long period before Osmond's arrival, a carriage drove up to the door of Sir Edward Wortley's house in Grosvenor-square, and from it alighted the heir of his name and wealth, leading a young person dressed in a costume which had never before been seen in England in civilized life. As it was the season for gaiety, some thought they might be returning from a fancy-dress ball; others, that the fair Circassian had come again into the world. But who can ever express the emotions which filled the breasts of Sir Edward and Lady Wortley, when they received their son and their long-lost daughter at one and the same moment? Lady Wortley, and indeed her husband, had scarcely recovered from the effects of the sudden joy, when they were called upon to administer relief to their daughter in the same manner, on the sudden apparition of Osmond.

Young Wortley had so often related the story of his interview with the dying Zabetta to his own family, as well as to their numerous friends and relations, that he was considering whether it would not be advisable to print a short account of it, to save the trouble of further repetition. However, he was obliged again to narrate the whole story to his friend, from the moment of Mustafa's arrival to his own departure from Constantinople. He made a faithful report of all the circumstances, many of which being already known to our reader, we will not repeat, but take up his narrative with the event which brought him to the knowledge of his sister, namely, his interview with Zabetta.

"I found the unfortunate woman," said Wortley, "extended on a bed, and death painted on her face in colours not to be mistaken. When we were alone, raising herself upon her hand, and evidently making a violent effort over herself, she said, 'You are Edward Wortley; I know you; I knew your parents at Athens: I nursed you; I nursed your sister too.' As you may imagine, I started at this intelligence; for, although it had ever been supposed that I knew nothing of the loss of my sister, still I had in fact received some intimations of it from different people. 'Your sister lives,' she continued; 'I am a wicked woman!—oh, will you ever forgive me? Protect her, take her away from this place, lose not a moment, I am dying—there, there she is,' pointing to the next room—'And take these things, they belong to her and you—there, go!' She continued to talk by short snatches, until I saw her gradually sink and die. She held a locket in her hand, and some coins, which I took from her. As you may suppose, I did not lose a moment in rushing to Ayesha, and, as it was night, I conveyed her at once to the palace. I consulted with the Ambassador what was to be done: he advised me instantly to hire a swift-rowing boat, to proceed in all haste to one of the king's ships at anchor off Tenedos, and there to take refuge; until that was done, he assured me, I could not call my sister safe. Accordingly we acted up to his injunctions; we embarked that very night, she under an European disguise, and reached the ship in safety. The ship soon sailed for Malta, and from Malta to Portsmouth, whence we reached our home without the smallest accident. The only drawback to our happiness was anxiety about you; but, as I had despatched Mustafa a short time before to Rhodes, I concluded that there could be no doubt of your speedy liberation."

"And you and Ayesha escaped the plague, my dear Wortley!" exclaimed Osmond with great emotion.

"It was indeed a wonderful interposition of Providence in our favour," said Wortley;—"escape it we did, and most miraculously; for, by a letter which I received from Trompetta the other day, it appears that every one else who approached that devoted house, fell a sacrifice to the fatal disorder. But I must read you that letter; it will give you the history of what took place after our departure, and also throw some light

upon the fate of your enemy Cara Bey. Accordingly, taking from his pocket Signor Trompetta's letter, he read as follows :

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I HAVE the honour to inform you, that the day after your departure from the British palace, his Excellency the Kislär Agassi, or chief of the black eunuchs, went in state, on the part of his Majesty the Emperor, to the house of Zabetta Kadun, for the purpose of bearing off with him her supposed daughter, your amiable sister, that she might become the favourite sultana. You may guess, sir, the surprise and dismay of that officer, when, instead of a young and blooming bride, he found nothing but death and putrefaction. Zabetta lay dead in her bed, and her servant-maid in the last agonies beside her. The Kislär Aga immediately retreated from the scene with horror, and went to his imperial master to make a report of what he had seen. As there was nobody in the house to say whither the supposed daughter had gone, although a very active search was instituted, no discovery was made. The whole circumstance produced a great sensation throughout Constantinople at the time, but I am happy to say it has entirely subsided so far as regards your sister, although it has excited the Sultan's wrath against the Capitan Pasha, who has utterly lost the good graces of his Majesty, and may perhaps also lose his situation, if not his head.

“ I am happy to inform you, that the Cara Bey question has been agreeably settled. In consequence of the application of the Russian Ambassador to the Porte, in which that minister complained of the insult offered to his imperial master, in allowing so great a delinquent to go about with impunity as the accredited officer of one of the high dignitaries of the state, and in consequence of our representation also, the said Cara Bey has been ordered to leave Constantinople, and has been sent to work as a convict in the arsenal at Rhodes. In this case we cannot complain of the want of good faith in the Reis Effendi ; but I am sorry to hear that Mustafa Tatar has been detained for some time at Guzel Hissar, and that, I fear, by the order of the government. But now, as there can be no object in his detention, he will be allowed to proceed, and I hope that, ere this,

the letters of which he was the bearer, have produced Lord Osmond's liberation.

"I have the honour to be, &c.

"ANTONIO TROMPETTA.

"P.S.—We hear that the Greek priest, brother to Zabetta, is dead of the plague: this fatal disorder is daily gaining ground here."

The whole town was very soon apprised of the circumstances which we have just recorded. It became as great an object to obtain a sight of the beautiful Ayesha, as it ever is to see any curiosity imported into England. Luckily, the principal lion-hunters were out of town, or else she might have regretted the seclusion which she had enjoyed as a Mahomedan; indeed, as it was, so strongly had the practice of keeping the face concealed from the gaze of man taken root in her mind and habits, that throughout life she never entirely overcame it. Osmond was soon blessed with a sight of his parents, who, under the circumstances in which he was placed, eagerly hastened to him; and, the hearty sanction of all parties having been given to his union with his lovely mistress, nothing but the necessary formalities delayed the completion of his happiness. The foundation which Osmond had laid for Ayesha's conversion from Mahomedanism to Christianity, had not been in vain; her mind, as it were by instinct, threw off its errors, and became renewed by truths which were congenial to it. She had originally been christened by the name of Mary, and to that name she reverted, although she insisted upon undergoing a second time the serious and imposing form of baptism.

It was intended that Wortley should return to Constantinople, as soon as the marriage ceremony should be over; and he was charged by his friend to seek out those who had been in any way interested in his fate, and to advance their fortunes in the best way he could. To Mustafa he sent so large a present in money, that he could not fail to secure a handsome pelisse to his back, and an amber-headed chibouque, not to mention pillau and kabob, for the rest of his days. But it was for Hassan, his deliverer from prison, the preserver of his life, that he was the most solicitous. He gave Wortley minute directions how to discover his place of abode, and recommended

that, whenever he could procure for him some situation, Mustafa should be despatched with the intelligence. And for the satisfaction of the reader we must tell him, that, not long after, Osmond was rejoiced to hear that his friend had been taken into great favour at the Porte, and from having been made the *kiayah*, or deputy, of the Pasha of Kars, was in the course of time invested with the pashalik itself, and had the proud honour of seeing two horses' tails carried before him for the rest of his days. As for old Suleiman, although he had been a principal agent in the tragedy of Ayesha's abduction, still, in consideration of the affection with which he had always treated her, Osmond entreated Wortley to take him also under his protection; and he was in time, after having made his pilgrimage to Mecca, installed in the situation of chief of the law in his native place. The poor Israelitish tooth-drawer was liberated from the arsenal at Rhodes; the life of the Pasha who had been so unskilful in nautical evolutions, was saved; and every person who had been, directly or indirectly, concerned with either Osmond or Ayesha, was rewarded and protected.

As for Stasso, he became a sort of foreign major-domo in his master's establishment, or, as we might say, the foreign department was placed in his hands; and whenever he was tired of England, he went to Constantinople, where he was always sure to find an asylum in the Embassy.

A more brilliant marriage-ceremony had never been seen in London than that which will bring our narrative to its close. A series of fêtes succeeded. One of the principal dancers, and he who was specially appointed by the happy bridegroom to lead off the dance with the bride, was a handsome young Russian,—no less a person than our old friend Ivanovich, who was attached to the embassy in England, and had arrived just in time to witness his friend's happiness. That happiness, which had been preceded by so much misery, let us assure the gentle reader, was as great and as lasting as the instability of so frail a possession in this world would allow it to be; and in drawing our history to its conclusion, we feel that we may fairly say, few were ever so happy as Osmond and Ayesha.

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